



City of Franklin

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Meeting Minutes

Sustainability Commission

Friday, February 14, 2025

8:00 AM

Admin 2-B

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cassity called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Commissioners Present: Keith Gordon, Alderman Beverly Burger, Christina Christiansen, Brian Stone, April Eaton, Jim Mahurin, Mike Cassity, and Anna Timme

Commissioners Absent: Al Pramuk

Staff Present: Blake Harper, Eric Conner, Andrew Orr, Joel Aguilera, and Kelly Dannenfels

Other: John Cal and Ned Dannenburg

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Open for citizens to be heard on any issue or concern, including those related to items on the agenda. Please submit a Speaker Card at the beginning of the meeting if you would like to address the Commission. If you would like to speak on an agenda item, the Chair will hold your comment until the public comment period associated with the item. As provided by law, the Commission shall make no decisions or consideration of action of citizen comments for items not on the agenda, except to refer the matter to the Planning Director/Staff for administrative consideration, or to a schedule the matter for consideration at a later date. Those addressing the Commission are requested to come to the microphone and identify themselves by name and address for the official record. The Chair may restrict the period for public comment, including the length of the public comment period, the number of individuals who can speak and the length of time each individual may speak. When time allows, the standard individual public comment time is two minutes.)

Chair Cassity asked for citizen comments.

Commissioner Mahurin asked if the city is scaling back EV chargers.

Alderman Burger asked if the use of EV chargers could be monitored.

Mr. Orr responded yes. There are charging locations behind the Harpeth Hotel and at Pinkerton Park.

Mr. Cal commented that he works on small projects to restore pollinator gardens and offered the commission to visit one of their restoration projects.

Comments on agenda items may be made in person at city hall or by emailing planningintake@franklintn.gov before noon on the day of the meeting. Emailed comments will be provided to the Commission and included in the minutes, but not read aloud in their entirety during the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Consideration Of Approval Of Minutes

Sponsors:

A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner Christiansen, to approve the Minutes from the November 8, 2024, meeting. The motion carried 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Elect Chair and Vice Chair

Sponsors:

A motion was made by Alderman Burger to elect Commissioner Christiansen as Chair. The motion carried 8-0.

A motion was made by Chair Christiansen to elect Commissioner Stone as Vice Chair. The motion carried 8-0.

3. Solar Expansion Update

Sponsors:

Mr. Orr. The contract amendment with Energy Source Partners was approved at the December BOMA meeting. Ron Merville is working to finalize pricing and get approval from Engineering before applying for city permits. The total size will be 1.5 megawatts with storage.

Commissioner Stone asked if there are protections for the city if the IRA goes away for solar projects.

Mr. Orr said the city is contributing the land.

Mr. Harper responded that the city is locked into the contract for ten years, and can make changes after that point. There is no cost to the city.

Mr. Orr will invite Mr. Merville to the April meeting.

4. Downtown Electric Vehicle Charging Relocation Update

Sponsors:

Mr. Aguilera. The city has an agreement to lease 4 EV charging stations from Blink. Blink bears the cost associated with service and maintenance, plus any additional costs. The current contract allows 50% of generated revenue from EV stations to be shared with the city. In a six-month period, there were 905 total connections with only two days when no charging took place. The city revenue for 2024 was \$2,839.40. There was more usage in the fall versus other months. The two that had the most usage were in the 4th Avenue parking garage. There were only 13 times when all four charging stations were used at the same time, while there were 83 times when three charging stations were used simultaneously. The data shows three EV stations met demand.

Mr. Orr commented that cars parked in the EV space must be actively charging to park in the spaces.

Mr. Aguilera said the EV stations in the garages will be moved to the exterior wall of the 4th Avenue parking garage. Part of the discussion is to get a recommendation on how many charging stations to keep and where to move them. The updated contract would include the following modifications:

1. Only leasing 3 EV stations.
2. Allow for a 4th EV station to be added if the demand rises.
3. Move all 3 EV chargers to the 4th Avenue parking garage.

Commissioner Mahurin asked how busy the EV chargers get during downtown events.

Mr. Aguilera said there is some correlation between downtown events and more usage of the chargers.

Mr. Orr commented that there is no enforcement of the EV charging stations during the weekends. Most of the charging does take place during the week.

Commissioner Stone asked if a faster charge could be implemented in the new contract.

Mr. Orr said he's not sure if that would meet the needs of the community but that he could ask about it.

Mr. Orr restated that the fire department has clearly stated their desire to have all EV charging stations moved outside of garages.

Commissioner Cassidy asked if charging stations could be moved to the top floor.

Mr. Orr responded no.

Commissioner Eaton asked about the impact of moving the charging stations outside the 4th Avenue garage.

Mr. Orr displayed on the map where the charges would be moved. There would be more spaces inside the garage for anyone to park once the charges get moved outside.

Commissioner Stone asked when a recommendation was needed from the sustainability commission.

Mr. Aguilera said there's not a huge rush but that updating the contract soon would be helpful.

Commissioner Mahurin asked how often all the charging stations are full.

Mr. Aguilera said there were many events with three chargers being used, and a few when all four were full. The 4th Avenue garage gets the most activity.

Commissioner Stone asked if there would be charging stations at the new city hall.

Mr. Dannenfelser said no, since most new spaces will be underground where chargers are not wanted.

Commissioner Stone said it might be worth looking at adding charging station infrastructure during the construction of the new city hall.

Mr. Orr responded he was unsure of who would be responsible for setting up infrastructure during construction.

Motion

Commissioner Eaton motioned to recommend the installation of three charging stations outside the 4th Avenue parking garage, with the option to expand to four chargers in the future, seconded by Alderman Burger.

Commissioner Timme asked what usage would determine when to implement a fourth charger. She is concerned if stations are extremely popular, that it would take a long time to install a fourth charger.

Mr. Orr responded, stating that the data can be reviewed on a daily basis. He noted that every two weeks, all four stations are used simultaneously. Therefore, if a fourth charger were installed, it would likely see infrequent use, while also occupying a regular parking space in a garage that reaches full capacity daily. He can do an annual update on data.

Mr. Conner raised the question of how easily the contract could be amended if there was an increase in the usage of charges. He believes Blink would be open to providing more charges, as the infrastructure is already in place.

Mr. Orr responded by noting that while Blink doesn't necessarily have to be the provider, they have been a reliable partner for the past few years, and the relationship has worked well. He also mentioned that Blink would likely want to know the duration of any potential contract extension.

Chair Christiansen then inquired whether other companies could be considered.

Mr. Orr expressed a preference for not exploring other options, given Blink's history of ease of collaboration and their responsibility for handling any damage repairs.

Amendment

Commissioner Stone restated there is an opportunity for a super-fast charger. He believes people in the area would pay for faster charging. He amended the motion to ask for the same deal but with one of the three being a super-fast charger, seconded by Commissioner Mahurin.

The amendment carried 8-0.

Motion As Amended

The motion to recommend as amended carried 8-0.

5. Bee City USA Status Update

Sponsors:

Mr. Orr. The first Bee City USA pollinator garden has been planted at Fire Station 1. Staff have been maintaining weeds in the garden beds. Staff lead, Annette Dalrymple, is creating an informational pollinator sign for the multiuse path. Arbor Day on April 12th at Pinkerton Park will feature a Bee City booth where native seed packets and educational bookmarks will be given out.

Bicentennial Park will open within the next few months. The Parks Department has identified a 4,600-square-foot area for a pollinator garden. Staff have agreed this would be an optimal place for a company-sponsored garden and staff have connected with a potential partner for this project.

6. Litter Survey

Sponsors:

Mr. Orr. Around this time of year, litter in the community becomes more noticeable since there is less landscaping during the winter and more daylight hours. The litter surveys break down the city into different corridors where litter will be rated on a scale of 1-10, depending on the severity. Each commissioner is asked which coordinator they want to monitor and to make notes of their findings.

Mr. Orr then asked for volunteers for each area and commissioners made their selection.

The due date for surveys is the end of March.


OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Christiansen asked if there was any further business. There was none.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Alderman Burger to adjourn. The motion carried 8-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 AM.


Chair

April 11, 2025
Date