



## Meeting Minutes

### Sustainability Commission

---

Friday, April 11, 2025

8:00 AM

Admin 2-B

---

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christiansen called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM.

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

Commissioners Absent: Keith Gordon, Mike Cassity, and Al Pramuk

Staff Present: Andrew Orr, Joel Aguilera, Kelly Dannenfelser, Eric Conner, and Tia Holden

Other: Ron Merville and John Kell

**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 Christiansen asked for citizen comments. There were none.

**Comments on agenda items may be made in person at the meeting or by emailing [planningintake@franklintn.gov](mailto: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 Mahurin, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to approve the Minutes from the February 14, 2025, meeting. The motion carried 6-0.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### 2. Announcements

- Arbor Day (April 12, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Pinkerton Park)
- Bee City USA Update
- Mayor's State of the City
- Litter Survey Results

**Sponsors:**

Mr. Orr. Arbor Day will be celebrated on April 12, 2025, featuring a variety of vendors showcasing trees and tree-related products. A Bee City booth hosted by our staff will be there giving out free seed packets and informative bookmarks about pollinators and planting. The Bee City Committee continues to meet bi-monthly. Maintenance efforts at the pollinator garden located at Fire Station One are ongoing, including regular monitoring and weed removal. A potential partnership is in development with Gresham Smith at Bicentennial Park for a sponsored pollinator garden. The proposed garden would span approximately 4,000 square feet. Coordination with the Parks Department is underway to determine next steps.

The Mayor's State of the City will be on May 7th, 2025, starting at 7:30 AM at Rolling Hills Church on Columbia Avenue.

Litter Survey results noted a few areas for having excessive litter, including Mack Hatcher and Franklin Road.

Alderman Burger mentioned an area on 96 around the interstate having trash.

Commissioner Stone commented on how clean the Cool Springs area looked.

Alderman Burger shared that she collaborated with the Cool Springs Mall manager to tour the property and identify areas where trash was removed, and dead trees were cleared. She applauded them for how helpful they were.

Commissioner Eaton asked how often litter surveys are conducted.

Mr. Orr explained that these cleanups are conducted every February through March, as trees are bare and trash is more visible during the winter months when litter tends to be less frequently addressed.

**3. Discussion of Solar Expansion Update****Sponsors:**

Ron Merville. Mr. Merville gave a project overview for the 1.5 MW solar system paired with a 0.5 MW battery energy storage system. It is designed to offset municipal energy usage and improve grid resilience. The estimated annual generation is approximately 2.1 million kWh, which is enough to power 200 homes per year. Currently, the project is having the site assessed and an interconnection study completed. The engineering design is 60% completed. His team intends to have all permitting completed by the third quarter of 2025 with a target construction starting around the same time. The battery system will enable peak shaving, demand response, and backup power to the wastewater plant.

Project costs have been influenced by stabilized panel pricing following the volatility experienced during the pandemic. The federal Investment Tax Credit remains at 30% under the Inflation Reduction Act, with potential adders available for domestic content. There is also an opportunity to monetize the tax credit through the IRS's transfer provisions. An application for local utility incentives is planned for submission in the third quarter of 2025.

Mr. Merville then explained market conditions and risks, stating, while panel pricing has stabilized, lead times for inverters and transformers remain lengthy—ranging from 6 to 12 months. Although supply chain risks are improving, they continue to be a factor in schedule planning and tariff considerations. Labor costs are steadily increasing in Williamson County, and battery costs remain elevated due to high global demand, though a decline is projected by mid-2025. Tariffs continue to pose challenges in this area.

The project is expected to reduce approximately 1,200 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually. A pollinator garden is also planned for the site, supporting biodiversity and enhancing sustainability. These efforts align with the City's Climate Action Plan and renewable energy goals.

Next steps include finalizing the project design and securing the necessary permits, obtaining an interconnection agreement, and completing the financing model. A community engagement campaign will also be launched, as needed, in preparation for the project kickoff.

Commissioner Stone inquired about the potential implications if project costs were to significantly increase or if issues arose related to IRA regulations or tariffs.

Mr. Orr explained that if conditions or terms were to change, the contract would need to be revised accordingly, with agreement from both parties. He stated there is an urgency to complete the project in three years, but it expires after that time if not completed.

Commissioner Mahurin asked how much this project would reduce the utility bill.

Mr. Merville responded that it would reduce by 25,000-30,000 per month. He commented that TVA is going through leadership changes and any changes to the electricity bill would come directly from them.

Alderman Burger said it might be a good change and an opportunity for new people to have those leadership positions.

Mr. Merville stated batteries in combination with the solar plant are currently the best option and combination. He wants to make the best process for Energy Source Partners and the City.

Alderman Burger asked how long the battery could act as a backup for the wastewater treatment plant.

Mr. Merville responded around 12 hours through the night, or be cut in half to be used for 24 hours on essential services.

Mr. Orr stated that additional batteries could always be added in the future.

#### 4. **Downtown Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Update**

##### **Sponsors:**

Mr. Aguilera. At the previous meeting, there was discussion regarding the improvement and renewal of the contract for electric vehicle charging stations. However, implementing faster charging stations is not currently feasible due to the high costs and significant power and space requirements associated with the upgraded option. The Law Department is currently reviewing the contract and working toward finalizing it.

Commissioner Stone asked whether the inability to implement faster chargers is due to the service being offered for free.

Mr. Aguilera responded that the financial investment required for faster chargers is significantly higher and also demands more electrical capacity.

Commissioner Stone noted that he believes there is a demand for faster charging and that people would be willing to pay for the convenience. He understands the idea behind offering charging for free as a service to residents. However, there is a way to make a profit with the faster chargers.

Mr. Orr said there would need to be significant upgrades to supply that amount of power, regardless of cost. Upgrades are not covered by Blink.

Alderman Burger asked how much power would be needed.

Commissioner Stone added that while sufficient power may exist elsewhere, it could be costly to route it to the appropriate charging location.

Mr. Aguilera noted that space is also a factor, as faster charging stations can require anywhere from one to eight parking spaces.

Chair Christiansen commented that it may be worthwhile to absorb the cost of infrastructure upgrades if the long-term investment proves beneficial.

Alderman Burger said the best place for advertising a faster charger would be outside the 4th Avenue garage.

Mr. Aguilera said with the chargers being near the alleyways, there would need to be a recommendation from the commission on where to place them.

Commissioner Stone asked if the three chargers would still be free.

Mr. Orr said chargers are not free.

Mr. Conner noted that charging at home is generally more cost-effective than using Blink chargers. He questioned how the costs of necessary infrastructure upgrades could be justified, given the minimal revenue generated from the chargers.

Commissioner Stone commented that the Inflation Reduction Act included EV charging.

Mr. Orr stated he has had an electric vehicle for over ten years, but has only used a fast charger once.

## 5. Presentation on Robert's Rules of Order

### Sponsors:

Item has been deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

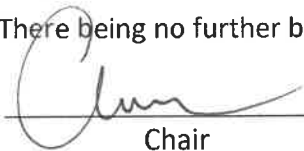
## OTHER BUSINESS

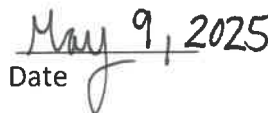
Chair Christiansen asked if there was any further business. There was none.

## ADJOURN

A motion was made by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Alderman Burger, to Adjourn. The motion carried 6-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.

  
Chair

  
Date