



SHAKER HEIGHTS

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**City Hall Conference Room B
March 14, 2019**

Members present: Council member Chair Julianna Johnston Senturia
Council member Sean P. Malone

Others present: Mayor David E. Weiss
Chief Administrative Officer Jeri E. Chaikin
Sustainability Coordinator Michael Peters
Torrey McMillan, Hathaway Brown

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The meeting was called to order at 7:34 a.m. by Council member Chair Julianna Johnston Senturia. She welcomed Sustainability Coordinator Michael Peters and looks forward to the addition of additional Committee members soon.

Quorum was confirmed and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved as submitted.

Chief Administrative Officer Jeri E. Chaikin presented a recommendation to submit a grant request to the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) Energized Community Grant Program. For 2019, \$55,958 is available, based on 7,994 accounts (measured for April 2018 – September 2018) at \$7/each, a decline from the 8,635 accounts for the period April 2017 – September 2017. This program provides funds to help member communities implement energy savings or energy infrastructure measures.

The decline in NOPEC accounts, according to NOPEC, is a natural decline over the three-year program period as residents move into and out of the city, some opt-out, and some shop suppliers. NOPEC reported that it is working with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to reduce the three-year program period to two years. The next program mailings will be sent this fall (with input from the Communications and Marketing Department) and the city will soon start promoting a 100% green option available to residents. Once a resident opts in that program it will carry over into the next two-year cycle upon re-enrollment.

In 2018 the City received \$60,445 in grant funds that were applied to the \$95,000 replacement of the original boiler in the Police/Court Building at 3355 Lee Road. The current proposal is to use the \$55,958 to go toward the \$150,000 generator replacement and electrical service upgrade project at City Hall, 3400 Lee Road. City Hall currently has two electrical services and two generators. This project will allow the City to replace the two old generators with one new three phase generator – thereby reducing fuel usage and maintenance costs.

When received the \$55,958 in grant funds will be deposited in Fund 401, the General Capital Fund, to offset the City funds allocated to this project, which then frees up this amount for other uses. A quick reference was made to a correction by the *Sun Press* to clarify that the previous NOPEC grant was not used for the Sustainability Coordinator position directly but was similarly applied to the energy efficiency project that allowed a similar amount of funds to be used for this purpose.

The Sustainability Committee approved the request to recommend to Council the approval of a grant application to NOPEC in the amount of \$55,958 for the generator replacement and electrical service upgrade project at City Hall.

Sustainability Coordinator Michael Peters presented a recommendation to submit a grant application to the U.S. Green Building Council for the LEED for Cities and Communities Grant Program. LEED for Cities is a new program of the USGBC, resulting from last year's acquisition of the STAR Communities Program, previously a separate non-profit that certified cities for best practices in sustainability. On April 1, 2019, the USGBC will announce the new LEED for Cities rating system, incorporating the prior STAR system, and this grant is meant to accelerate the adoption of this new program.

This program will award 14 U.S. cities funding and resources to achieve LEED for Cities certification. This is not a cash award but provides for:

- A one-year Silver membership in the USGBC (\$1,500 annually),
- the certification fee (\$5,000 one-time),
- a two-day orientation program in Washington, DC for two members of the city team (including travel),
- one registration for the annual USGBC Greenbuild conference (taking place in Atlanta, travel not included)
- technical resources and monthly calls among the cohort of 14 selected cities.

Estimated total value is approximately \$25,000.

Last year six cities were given a similar grant and this year the program has expanded to 14 awards. The selection committee is targeting cities with: an emerging sustainability program that would benefit from USGBC technical support, diverse factors (population, geography, economic conditions, land area), and "a vision for using certification to advance solutions and prioritize investments in community-wide sustainability." For these reasons, despite the prior winners all being large cities, the recent commitment of Shaker Heights to the Sustainability Coordinator position, its size, and diverse population should position us well in the competition. It is believed that Shaker Heights would be the first city in Ohio, certainly of its size, to pursue certification.

The Committee members and guests discussed the merits of certification. This included its ability to be an attraction and retention strategy, the value received from adopting a framework and working in a cohort model, and certification's ability to help prioritize goals and set aspirational targets in the future. Discussion also included the prospect of creating an interschool team from the four area high schools and how the

Committee could smooth the pathway for these students to get access to the required data. Mention was also made of the Climate Change Task Force and how it had reviewed applying to the STAR Communities program several years ago but felt the staff resources were not available at that time.

The process for application was discussed and in brief is: submit the grant application by Friday, March 22nd, including the application, a letter from the mayor, and optionally letters of support (these were received post-meeting from Equity Engineering, Hathaway Brown, NEORSD, Shaker Heights Development Corporation, the Nature Center, and Doan Brook Watershed Partnership). Should the award be granted, the two proposed members from the city team need to be identified (one staff person responsible for the project and one elected/appointed official).

The motion to proceed was approved and the matter was referred to Finance Committee

Michael Peters then updated the Committee on the process for appointing citizen members. Ten residents expressed interest in serving on the Committee. Based on a review, those that appeared to have broad-based experience in sustainability and related topics were selected for in-person or phone interviews. At the time of the Committee meeting four of these six had been interviewed and recommendations were expected to be made to the mayor by early the following week. Three of the six will be appointed to the Committee while the hope is that all of the others will serve on subcommittees or some other role with the Committee.

The Committee and guests briefly discussed several topics including how the Committee can work in partnership with various stakeholders and cross-generationally with the schools. Torrey McMillan explained her role at the Center for Sustainability at Hathaway Brown and the diploma designation track for students that results in a sustainability fellow distinction. Members also discussed solar including topics such as educational outreach to residents, a city demonstration project, and the resident guide on the city's website.

It was agreed that at the next meeting the Committee would carve out time to discuss goals and create a shared understanding of direction. This could include the energy efficiency study to inform short-term wins and return on investment, solar given its interest by residents, and establishing a green team to energize and engage city staff.

The Committee set the next meeting day and time of April 11, 2019 at 7:30a.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:18a.m.