



**Sustainability Committee Minutes  
Thursday, December 9, 2021  
8:00 A.M.**

**Via Zoom Conference Pursuant to Ordinance No. 21-76  
And Resolution No. 21-77, Enacted August 23, 2021**

Members Present: Anne Williams, Committee Chair, Council Member  
Sean P. Malone, Council Member  
Nancy Moore, Council Member  
Shanna Keown, Citizen Member  
Carmen Franks, Citizen Member

Others Present: David Weiss, Mayor  
Jeri Chaikin, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mike Foley, Cuyahoga County Director, Department of Sustainability  
Michael Peters, Sustainability Coordinator  
Barbara Bradley, League of Women Voters

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Anne Williams at 8:00 A.M.

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**Approval of the November 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

It was moved by Sean Malone and seconded by Nancy Moore that the minutes of the November 11, 2021 meeting be approved as recorded; unanimously passed.

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**Cuyahoga County Sustainability Initiatives Update**

The Director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Sustainability, Mike Foley, presented an overview of his department's initiatives going into 2022. These include:

- Residential Solar Co-op: For the past several years the County has hired Solar United Neighbors, a national non-profit, to administer a residential solar co-operative program. This effort increases awareness of the benefits of residential rooftop solar for County residents and invites households to express interest (without commitment or obligation). Solar United Neighbors works with the resulting group to solicit bids from solar installation companies and negotiates the contract and pricing. The Renewable Energy Subcommittee has worked with the co-op to increase awareness among Shaker Heights residents.
- County Solar Projects: The County has installed rooftop solar on three of its buildings with plans to add it to the Service Garage in 2022. This is in addition to the Brooklyn former landfill site that contains over 30,000 solar panels. This has been done through a Power Purchase Agreement model that results in no initial costs to the County and lowers overall costs as the

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3400 Lee Road Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120 P 216.491.1400 F 216.491.1465 Ohio Relay Service 711  
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developer can take advantage of the federal tax credits for solar that the County can't. These systems are meeting between 8 and 30 to 35 percent of each building's electricity needs. Battery backup is also being considered for resiliency.

- Tree Canopy Projects: The County has tree canopy coverage of about 34 percent county-wide as of 2017, which was down about six percent from 2011. The goal is 40 percent coverage and the County has committed \$1 million per year for increasing tree canopy.
- Microgrids/County Utility: In September the County created its own utility, providing it the authority to develop transmission and distribution capabilities. The legal and engineering consultants are in the process of being hired with plans to issue an RFP to developers for five to six initial projects. The County sees this as an economic development tool, and it may be the first in the nation to have its own utility.
- Climate Change Action Plan: Originally released several years ago, the plan is currently being refreshed. The County has a net zero goal by 2050, with a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gasses by 2030.
- Micromobility: The City of Cleveland and four suburban communities (Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland, South Euclid, and University Heights) allow for the operation of micromobility devices – primarily electric scooters and bikes.
- Electric Vehicle Charging: The County is coordinating efforts with NOACA, which is in the process of installing chargers at numerous sites throughout the region.
- The department is small, only three staffers. The former Sustainability Coordinator departed recently and a Shaker Heights resident (and member of the Renewable Energy Subcommittee) was recently hired for that role. She starts in January.
- Questions and Follow-Up:
  - Nancy Moore commented that the tree canopy work is much appreciated; thank you for the leadership and fiscal support. The City is having issues with FirstEnergy and connecting one of our EV chargers – could the County be helpful? Director Foley responded that the County utility may be able to play a future role in EV charging and potentially other areas such as streetlights.
  - Sean Malone asked where the County utility will be operating and how will it be selling power? Director Foley indicated the initial sites would likely be the Aerozone (adjacent to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport), Brecksville (to support the new Sherwin Williams research facility), Nestle in Solon, the former American Greetings site in Brooklyn, and in Euclid along the industrial corridor where power reliability has been an issue. They are all sites where highly resilient electricity is needed, there is interest from off-takers to buy the power, there is the potential for renewable generation, and there is a substation nearby. The utility will only be serving commercial off-takers for now.
  - Sean Malone responded in part by mentioning the City's electric aggregation program and how these initiatives may be supportive. Director Foley indicated that he would like to see more renewable power, and that residents want it. There is a general sense that we must address climate change and this is a potential way to do that.
  - Mayor Weiss asked about the economics of the County's solar projects. Director Foley said that most projects are paying less per kilowatt hour and that there was no out-of-pocket costs to the County, but that the actual savings have not yet been calculated. The Service Garage will also be getting a new roof as part of the process and as a large user the rate will be not as beneficial, but he expects the savings to average out. They are also considering adding batteries at some point, which could shave demand charges

and increase the savings. The Mayor followed up with a question about investor interest, and Director Foley indicated that the rooftop projects were sold to AEP Renewables, while IGS owns the Brooklyn project.

- Anne Williams inquired about the landfill solar project and prospects for additional similar projects. Director Foley responded that the Brooklyn project, which is about 4 megawatts plus transmission lines installed by Cleveland Public Power, has worked well. The performance has met expectations – solar works in Ohio.
- Anne Williams also asked about how the scooter programs were faring. Director Foley said the results are mixed, with Cleveland doing fine but Euclid pulled out due to rebalancing issues. South Euclid is seeing strong use, Cleveland Heights seems fine, University Heights just passed the legislation for a spring launch. Each community receives \$0.15 per ride that originates in the city. CAO Chaikin indicated the City had received two complaints about scooters being left on tree lawns but they were picked up by the companies without incident. Director Foley said four companies are currently licensed to provide the services.

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### **Subcommittee Updates**

Renewable Energy (Norman Robbins)

- No report this month (Mr. Robbins was absent)

Shaker Youth LEEDs / High School Advisory Group (Shanna Keown)

- The group is working on an infographic about the Horseshoe Lake dam and will present to the Committee next month.
- On April 30<sup>th</sup> the group will volunteer for the planting at the Grow Not Mow site at Courland and South Park Boulevards.

Stormwater & Greenspace (Carmen Franks)

- The Grow Not Mow site planting day is April 30<sup>th</sup> and all are invited.
- Looking at funding sources for planting at additional sites.
- Discussing a pilot for a residential site with native plants and methods that can be showcased.
- Discussing a potential garden walk in 2022 to highlight alternative practices to traditional yard maintenance.
- Nancy Moore mentioned that design help is required for the Grow Not Mow sites and potentially Holden Forests and Gardens or Kent State could be a collaborator.
- A question was also asked about the updates to the stormwater code – CAO Chaikin will provide a future update.

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### **Update on Electric Vehicle Charging**

- NOACA has asked the City to review an agreement to install DC Fast Charging on Tuttle Road; currently in review.
- Tesla has indicated interest in a Supercharger site; in review among various City departments.

- FirstEnergy is scheduling the connection of the charger at Larchmere Boulevard and Kendall Road.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2022 at 7:45am.



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Michael Peters  
Sustainability Coordinator