

Athens City Environment and Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Athens City Building
Tuesday August 1, 2017 5:30 PM

1. Call to order—Chairman Richard Linscott called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM. Members present include Kristin Rice, Richard Linscott, Ed Newman, Elaine Goetz, Meredith Price-Mullins, and Cliff Hamilton. Stefan Gleissberg reported his absence in advance. Quorum was established. Guests include Sarah Conley, Mat Roberts, and Aimee Delach. Paul Logue recorded minutes.

2. Disposition of Minutes

Ms. Rice made a motion to accept the June 2017 minutes with no corrections or additions noted. Ms. Goetz seconded the motion. All commission members voted in favor of the motion. The motion was approved.

3. Next Meeting Date

September 5, 2017 at City Hall.

5. New Business

A. Sol Smart Program (Sarah Conley and Mat Roberts)—Ms. Conley introduced herself to the commission. She is a SolSmart advisory working in Athens, Athens County, Amesville, and Somerset. They are looking at soft cost barriers to solar development in the region. Soft costs may include things like zoning, permitting, fees, review processes etc. They have access to technical assistance from national experts. SolSmart is active in 300 communities. Athens is the smallest and most rural community participating. The goal is to increase solar deployment. SolSmart includes a designation process based on a scoring system—bronze, silver, gold. Athens goal is to get silver status. SolSmart is funded through the Solar Foundation with DoE funding. Aimee Delach asked about federal funding and scope of solar facilities. Sarah reported that this funding is secure and barriers are addressing residential/commercial “rooftop” projects. Mr. Hamilton asked about conflict with solar deployment “by right” and shade tree requirements and conflicts with neighbors. Cliff reported that AEP is only allowing residential arrays that cover average monthly usage. Mr. Newman asked about any identified weaknesses in code—Sarah noted a variance needed for Devils Kettle Brewery for theirs and Kleinpenny Rentals rooftop solar jeopardized their grandfather status. Ed asked about solution for solar in areas that are wooded without cutting trees. Sarah mentioned equity issues with residents who cannot afford rooftop solar. The ASAP has targets for solar deployment and this program may help achieve implementation. The commission members thanked Sarah for her information and expressed interest in helping with the project.

4. Old Business

A. Zero Waste Audit update—Mr. Logue reported that Caitlin Garrity and Andrea Reany from Rural Action have completed the building audits and have done three of the four dumpster audits. Ms. Garrity reported in an email to Paul that she was impressed by the amount of waste that was being recycled in the buildings. Final report and recommendations will be coming in about a month.

B. Sustainability Plan implementation protocol/updates—a draft that Elaine created was distributed to the commissioners prior to the meeting. Elaine stressed the importance of implementation and tracking. The commissioners will review the document and discuss in more detail at the next regular meeting. Cliff asked about Council appointment to the commission—Paul will check with Council.

C. Plastic Bag tracking—Mr. Linscott discussed responsibility for this project and would like to keep this on the agenda and work on getting data and developing an action to move this forward. Ed agreed that this is important to address. Ms. Price-Mullins asked about for a copy of the resolution that City Council passed on this matter and to see what was requested. Elaine suggested teaming up with the Athens HS environmental club to assist with data collection.

6. Announcements and Updates

There were no announcements and updates.

7. Adjournment

With all agenda items satisfied and no additional business to address, Cliff made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Richard seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Logue