

**URBAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 20, 2005**

Present

Betty Griffiths, Chair
Rob Gándara
George Grosch

Visitors

Patricia Daniels, Ward 2 City Councilor
Louise Marquering

Staff

Jon Nelson, City Manager
Steve Rogers, Public Works Director
Mary Steckel, Public Works Administration
Division Manager
Tony Krieg, Franchise Utility Specialist
Darcy Hitchcock, Zero Waste Alliance
Project Manager
Kim Hughes, Zero Waste Alliance Core
Team Expert
Emely Day, City Manager's Office

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
I. Sustainability Goal Report			Accept the Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessment of sustainability performance reports presented by Zero Waste Alliance
II. Other Business			

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. Sustainability Goal Report (Attachment)

Public Works Administration Division Manager Steckel reported that the City hired a consultant to assess the City's sustainability practices and to recommend future actions. She introduced consultant team representatives present today.

Darcy Hitchcock conducted a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment A) outlining activity to date and future plans related to the City's sustainability program. She emphasized that the consultant team had a limited amount of time to conduct its assessment and was unable to review all aspects of the City's operations and talk with all City employees. The assessment can be viewed as an outsider's "snapshot" perspective, but it should be assumed that more activity has occurred and that more opportunities exist.

The consultant team met with the City's sustainability steering committee twice to assess the organization and help its progression toward sustainability. The sustainability committee includes all Department Directors and a staff representative from each

department. The consultant team prefers to help clients focus on an appropriate sustainability model; various models were presented to the sustainability committee, which favored the "triple bottom line" model, focusing on social, environmental, and economic factors. The assessment indicated that, while many good efforts are being made by the City, some efforts may not be in the context of the most important efforts receiving primary attention. Impacts for the organization and each department were identified.

Ms. Hitchcock noted that almost all successful organizations pursuing sustainability have at least one person (full time or part time) responsible for progression toward sustainability.

The sustainability committee's assessment, using the SCORE process, resulted in ratings of less than three points out of a possible nine points.

Ms. Hitchcock explained that "radical efficiency" involves redesigning a product or process so it is radically different. She commented that people must become radically more efficient as the world's population increases.

Ms. Hitchcock noted that CH2M Hill developed a tool to assign sustainability scores to each action, with total scores compared to costs.

Ms. Steckel reported that nine citizens attended a public meeting December 14th to discuss the City's sustainability efforts. She distributed a summary of comments received during the meeting (Attachment B).

Louise Marquering urged that the City proceed with its sustainability efforts, particularly through radical efficiency efforts.

Councilor Daniels asked how the City, as an organization, can encourage citizens and their households to participate in sustainability as a community effort.

Councilor Grosch noted that the assessment report outlined internal activity opportunities for the City. He concurred with Councilor Daniels and asked when it would be appropriate to extend the sustainability program to the community.

Ms. Hitchcock responded that it is appropriate to have internal sustainability activities well underway before extending the sustainability program to the community. However, the City organization is still far from achieving total sustainability, so the community's involvement should not be postponed too long. She suggested using the 2006 Citizen Attitude Survey as a means of obtaining community input regarding sustainability. The longer community involvement is postponed, the more opportunities will be missed. Public Works staff has done a great deal of work in terms of energy and climate change. She suggested that the City publicly document actions that could be easily transferred from the City organization to the community and begin informing citizens about sustainability.

City Manager Nelson said the consultants' report is a good work plan for the City to proceed toward sustainability, including actions for each department to undertake independently with little budgetary impact. Other systems and investments will require the Council's support. Staff will present to the Council next month the types of budgetary investments necessary to advance the Council Goal of sustainability. If the Council approves the recommendation, staff will develop a budget enhancement package for the Fiscal Year 2006-2007 budget. Some suggested actions may involve large financial costs but may also offer quick returns on investments. The recommended sustainability coordinator position could evolve into a position that works with the community as the internal sustainability efforts are expanded to the community.

Ms. Hitchcock added that it is necessary to have tangible proof of sustainability efforts to present to the public, not to oversell the program, and to demonstrate the financial benefits to the community.

Councilor Grosch inquired about opportunities for city advisory bodies and citizens to better understand the sustainability concept. He believes people would support the program if they understood it. He noted that citizen groups often present recommendations to the Council.

Ms. Hitchcock responded that Whistler, British Columbia, Canada, prepared a "toolkit" to educate citizens and coordinated efforts with major employers. Some communities are using an environmental management or sustainability management system but involve community members in goal setting. She suggested coordinating efforts with major employers, adding that it is helpful to undertake tangible projects with like-minded organizations.

Councilor Daniels observed that the Council is responsible for beginning community conversations regarding City sustainability activities. The overall program and the need for communication will be continuing processes. Often, when government bodies become interested in a program, citizens become involved.

Ms. Hitchcock cautioned that people often equate sustainability with environment and higher costs. She emphasized the need to break the thought association and emphasize cost-saving projects that involve sustainability benefits. Sustainability results in "fixing" the environmental system, and savings may result in different budget line items. Maximizing social, environmental, and economic benefits can be more appealing to a larger proportion of the community.

Kim Hughes reviewed the concept of training "experts" in each department to share their knowledge with coworkers.

Councilor Grosch suggested that department "experts" could be key people to explain the sustainability program to the City's advisory bodies.

Ms. Hitchcock responded that each department has a sustainability contact, whose role could be expanded. It is critical that the contact person be supportive of the program.

Councilor Grosch inquired whether the citizen board referenced in the assessment report could serve as a City advisory board.

Ms. Hitchcock responded that the citizen board was suggested to be sure the City did not advance too far ahead of citizens. A citizen board could support the Council and recommend appropriate actions. She said the report includes many ideas that need not be adopted specifically as written.

Councilor Grosch inquired whether there are appropriate times to reassess the City's sustainability efforts.

Ms. Hitchcock responded that the assessment report includes check-in points for formal reviews, which is an important part of the sustainability management system. The management team and the Council should review the program at least annually to review progress, activities, and future projects. The consultant team provided some tools that could be beneficial without involving costs, such as conducting the SCORE assessment in a year or two to evaluate progress. She said organizations hire consultants when they hit a plateau of what they can undertake on their own and are not sure how to proceed. The City can probably devise a system for soliciting and evaluating ideas. She believes, in the City's case, consultants could be better utilized to provide technical expertise.

Councilor Grosch commended the consultant team and staff for their efforts.

Based upon a motion moved and seconded by Councilors Grosch and Griffiths, respectively, the Committee unanimously recommends that Council accept the Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessment of sustainability performance reports presented by Zero Waste Alliance.

II. Other Business

- A. The next regular Urban Services Committee meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2006, at 4:00 pm, in City Hall Meeting Room "D."

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Griffiths, Chair