

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**NEWARK COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**JUNE 20, 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBER
4:00 P.M.**

Committee Members Present:

Michelle Bennett
Mark Brainard
Paula Ennis
Tim Filasky
Jeremy Firestone
Helga Huntley
Bill Swiatek
Bahareh van Boekhold (Chair)

Committee Members Absent:

Mike Fortner
Susan Grasso
Sheila Smith

City Staff Present:

Mary Ellen Gray

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Mary Ellen Gray opened the meeting at 4:12 p.m. and introduced Bahareh van Boekhold, Chair of the Steering Committee, to the representatives of the consulting firms and members of the public present.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 22, 2018

Jeremy Firestone motioned to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2018 Newark Community Sustainability Plan Steering Committee meeting. Michelle Bennett seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved by the Steering Committee members present.

3. PRE-INTERVIEW DISCUSSION ON RFPs

Ms. van Boekhold summarized the steps leading up to this meeting, including the awarding of a grant from DNREC's Division of Energy and Climate to develop a community sustainability plan and the formation of a steering committee. She advised that the three consulting firms being interviewed would all be asked the same four framework questions:

- What makes you the ideal consultant for development of the Newark Community Sustainability Plan?

- How do you define sustainability and why do you think it's important for Newark to have a community sustainability plan?
- What is your approach to community engagement and what approaches do you use to facilitate and encourage public participation? How do you collect public input and convert it into a coherent and effective plan? What helps a plan get buy-in from policymakers and residents?
- What are the challenges of creating and implementing a community sustainability plan? How do you address these challenges?

Ms. van Boekhold stated that, per City procurement policies, follow-up questions from the steering committee members would be allowed if they related to responses from the original question asked of the applicant.

Mark Brainard advised that during the interview process, only representatives from the firm being interviewed would be allowed to remain in the Council Chamber; representatives of the other firms were required to wait outside in the building lobby.

4. INTERVIEWS

Skelly and Loy was the first firm to be interviewed. Ms. van Boekhold welcomed the firm's representatives, Jennifer Egan and John Gaadt. Ms. Egan and Mr. Gaadt introduced themselves to the committee. Ms. van Boekhold and members of the Steering Committee proceeded to ask the representatives of Skelly and Loy the framework and follow-up questions. When asked why they were the ideal consultant for development of this plan, Ms. Egan and Mr. Gaadt responded by focusing on their past collaborative efforts and work in the local area, including Newark and Chester County, Pennsylvania. Ms. Egan highlighted her 15 years of experience in water resources and long-term City of Newark residency. Mr. Gaadt stated he started working in sustainability in the 1990s and highlighted his exposure to the University of Delaware and previous work with the City. Both stated they teach college level courses in sustainability and indicated they had previous experience working on sustainability plans for the University of Maryland and the Delaware Estuary. Ms. Egan stated now is a good time for the City to work on a sustainability plan because of all the work that has already been invested in housing and stormwater planning, and a community sustainability plan would help put all the pieces together. Mr. Gaadt added that the state grant provided a tremendous opportunity to work on sustainability, especially considering issues such as climate change and dealing with solid waste, which are topics that are on the minds of residents. Regarding public engagement, Mr. Gaadt stated that it is a participatory, long-term planning process that could include facilitated focus group meetings, participatory workshops, and committee meetings. Ms. Egan added that this is a timebound exercise that would require structure to the meetings, starting broader and narrowing them down into more definite outcomes. Mr. Gaadt advised he has used engagement techniques such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews, surveys, random sampling and things like iClickers. Pertaining to challenges, Ms. Egan stated house rules would need to be established for running meetings and how the team would arrive at decisions. Mr. Gaadt stated that it would require leadership from the City to make things happen and that while he wouldn't

call that a challenge, it's where the City would need to step up. Ms. van Boekhold concluded the interview by thanking the consultants for their proposal and their time.

University of Delaware's (UD) CEE, CEEP, CEI team was the second firm to be interviewed. Ms. van Boekhold welcomed the group's representatives, Michael Chajes, John Byrne, Joseph Nyangon, and Job Taminiau, who introduced themselves to the committee. Ms. van Boekhold and members of the Steering Committee proceeded to ask the representatives of the UD team the framework and follow-up questions. When asked why he believes his team is the ideal consultant to develop this plan, Mr. Chajes responded by stating UD's CEE, CEEP, CEI team was different than the other consultants being interviewed in that they were a group from academia who have devoted a large part of their lives to sustainability and have a deep technical knowledge of the field in many different areas. He also quantified that three of the five individuals on their team reside in Newark and, individually, they have experience with state level and university level sustainability plans, as well as the City of Wilmington sustainability plan. Mr. Chajes then indicated they had in-depth knowledge of the Star Communities methodology and rating system, with Mr. Nyangon having been at Columbia University when the process was developed. Mr. Nyangon stated the strength of the Star Communities system lies in its flexibility and the number of communities who are using it, thereby providing a lot of data to benchmark against. Mr. Byrne stated that it is important for the City to find sustainability in an economic sense, an environmental sense, and a social equity sense. Mr. Chajes added it is important for the City to have a sustainability plan because it helps educate the public, helps in allocation of resources by the City, and without a plan, you'll never achieve the desired results. Mr. Byrne followed up by saying the City is currently under a development posture, partly driven by UD growth, so doing a plan now and getting it right is going to be very important. Regarding public engagement, Mr. Chajes indicated they've run charrette-type activities in the past, involving and engaging the public, but before that occurs, there need to be promotions to make people aware, such as a presence at Community Day, as well as using the web, NextDoor or other avenues to get the word out. Mr. Chajes stated they would be drawing on UD Institute for Public Administration (IPA), using their experience in developing surveys and engaging the public. As it relates to challenges, Mr. Chajes stated the first one is engagement. He indicated there needs to be a concerted effort to ensure engagement across all sectors and there needs to be close cooperation between the City and the consultant chosen to verify that the data is good. He also indicated a challenge is creating a plan that will live on – that lays out what needs to be done, how it's going to be executed, and how it's going to continue. Lastly, Mr. Chajes stated the two big entities in the City – the City itself and the University of Delaware – need to be onboard for sustainability, and he believes their team's close ties to the University will help align the two entities' sustainability plans, making it easier for the City to achieve their goals. Ms. van Boekhold questioned how the team would play the role of partner (UD) and consultant. Mr. Chajes stated if their team is chosen, they would not be representing the City; they would be acting in their role as consultants. Ms. van Boekhold concluded the interview by thanking the consultants for their proposal and their time.

AECOM was the third firm to be interviewed. Ms. van Boekhold welcomed the firm's representatives, Dave Athey, Jennifer Keller, Scott Anderson, and Chris Rogers, who introduced

themselves to the committee. A fifth member of the team, Jason Weiss, was unable to attend the interview. Ms. van Boekhold and members of the Steering Committee proceeded to ask the representatives of AECOM the framework and follow-up questions. Mr. Athey stated he believes AECOM is the ideal consultant for the project because of the variety and depth of their team, their real-world approach to the project, and their understanding of Newark circumstances. They are a multi-national company with experts in every category mentioned in the RFP and are very responsive to their clients. He continued that the team works almost exclusively for government entities and, in the case of two team members, smaller, local governments, so they understand the challenges local governments face. Mr. Athey stated two of the four team members present are Newark residents and they understand the fiscal constraints the City is operating in. When asked to define sustainability and why Newark should create a plan now, Mr. Anderson stated that sustainability can be defined many ways but is relevant to the group or person seeking a sustainable outcome, and that it must be socially fair, economically strong, and environmentally healthy. The success of the plan depends on how it is put together, which is why you need a plan. Mr. Athey concurred, stating there could be thousands of individual visions about how to achieve sustainability and that you need a plan to coalesce all the visions together. Ms. van Boekhold asked what communities, if any, the team had worked with on a sustainability plan. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Athey elaborated on work they had done creating a sustainability plan for the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma and a vulnerability assessment and adaptation plan for the City of New Castle, Delaware. As it relates to public engagement, Ms. Kellar stated it's important to build a foundation of solid messaging from the start, working with subject matter experts and the Steering Committee to determine what kind of messages you want to put out to facilitate the process. She stated AECOM has a dedicated team of public relations professionals and a four-step process for outreach – research, planning, implementation, and evaluation – to identify stakeholders, develop a road map for communications, and then implement and evaluate to see what's working and what's not. Ms. Kellar stated they would utilize the City's online presence (website, Facebook, and Twitter), but also ensure there is face time at meetings and events like Community Day. Ms. Kellar stated AECOM has significant experience as far as collecting input and converting it into useful data. She elaborated on work done in Louisiana where AECOM collected data from groups of people who were unable to communicate online or in writing, so they set up meetings with one-on-one interviews and comment stations, using court reporters to capture responses. Ms. van Boekhold questioned whether the City would be able to pull from these vast resources and the members of the team assigned to the City's sustainability plan. Ms. Kellar and Mr. Athey responded that they were excited about the opportunity to work on a local plan for the City, and that they, personally, would be available to attend meetings and commit to the project. Mr. Anderson responded that AECOM has the monthly webinar meetings among subject matter experts to keep up-to-date, and they have the opportunity to bring those international ideas to the City of Newark. Pertaining to challenges, Mr. Rodgers stated that the City has already implemented various sustainable practices such as yard waste pick-up, road dieting, and mixed-use development, and that it would be their team's job to help with the more challenging, progressive, and aggressive programs. He also stated a challenge will be eliminating the silo effect and ensuring a strong inter-agency participation program. Lastly, Mr. Rodgers indicated that energy conservation is a big part of any sustainability plan and they will need to address the issue that the City of Newark obtains significant revenue from selling electric service

and how that impacts potential energy conservation goals. Ms. van Boekhold concluded the interview by thanking the consultants for their proposal and their time.

5. START POST-INTERVIEW DISCUSSION AND SELECTION

Ms. van Boekhold opened the post-interview discussion by suggesting the Steering Committee members discuss what they liked or did not like about the three consulting firms and choose their top two candidates. Ms. Gray agreed that was a good approach and stated they needed to watch the time as there was another meeting in Council Chamber at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Firestone stated that if they were running short on time, the Steering Committee should take public comment before they had to adjourn. Ms. Gray suggested having a brief discussion and then setting up another meeting for a more thorough discussion. Ms. van Boekhold then opened the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Lena Thayer stated that, based on the interviews, she believed the UD team and AECOM were the frontrunners, and she was especially impressed with AECOM's knowledge of City stats and number, as well as having an international team behind them. She was also impressed with their communication strategy and their methods for communicating with people who don't interact online. No other members of the public spoke at that time.

Ms. van Boekhold went around the table and asked everyone what their top two candidates were. Bill Swiatek indicated he liked AECOM and UD's proposals, and stated they had issues at WILMAPCO in the past when working with John Gaadt, in terms of follow-through. Ms. van Boekhold agreed that her top two candidates were UD and AECOM, and stated she believed Skelly and Loy would be a good consultant for water issues. Mr. Firestone stated he was not going to participate in the decision because he knows Mr. Chajes and Mr. Byrne quite well. Helga Huntley indicated her top two, also, were UD and AECOM, and concurred with Ms. Thayer's comment about the advantage of having a large network of colleagues that can support the work done by the core team, and that UD and AECOM both bring that to the table. Ms. Bennett stated her top two candidates were UD and AECOM; there were things she liked about Skelly and Loy but felt they didn't do a lot of research prior to the interview. Ms. Bennett also stated a concern with the perceived optics of the UD team, that it's very university-centric, especially for members of the community who don't engage frequently with UD. Paula Ennis, Mr. Brainard, and Ms. Gray all stated that their top two candidates were UD and AECOM.

Ms. van Boekhold asked the Steering Committee members to elaborate on what they believe were the pros and cons of the top two candidates. Mr. Swiatek concurred with Ms. Bennett about the UD team being university-centric, and felt their approach to outreach wasn't very clear, stating only that they were going to rely on IPA. He then stated he liked their discussions of using the Star approach, and that the Steering Committee could look into that regardless of whether the UD team was chosen as the consultant. Mr. Swiatek stated he liked AECOM but was concerned that some of their responses were cluttered and long-winded, which would not work well if they were presenting to the public. He stated, based on the engagement responses, AECOM is in the lead for him. Ms. van Boekhold agreed with everything stated by Mr. Swiatek.

She stated she loved the UD team's passion and the Star approach but had concerns about them using IPA for engagement and their academic approach. Ms. van Boekhold also stated AECOM's responses to the first two questions were shaky but they drove it home with responses to the third and fourth questions, and AECOM is in the lead for her. Mr. Firestone stated he had concerns that both teams have members that are residents of Newark, because they will bring pre-conceived notions, biases and desires to the table, which they'll need to set aside. He also stated the UD team is strong technically, but that engagement is important, and he shares some of the concerns about using IPA. Mr. Firestone stated he believe we wouldn't be hurt going with either team, they just have different approaches and strengths. Ms. Huntley stated she has things she likes and things she is concerned about with both teams, but has not chosen a favorite between the two. She stated public outreach seemed to be a strength for AECOM and a weakness for the UD team, however she was disappointed in AECOM's responses on the first two questions. Ms. Bennett agreed with everyone's statements. She stated the UD team was good at identifying what the City needed but weren't saying how those things would be tackled. Ms. Bennett also expressed concerned that a lot of the work on the plan would be done by graduate students, not the team members present at the interview. Ms. Bennett stated she really liked AECOM's outreach strategy, and that neither of the other teams had that. Ms. Ennis also agreed with everyone's statements, adding that she was impressed with AECOM's community engagement. Ms. Ennis believes there are pros to both teams. Mr. Brainard stated that he believed the UD team won the first two questions, and AECOM won the last two questions. He is leaning toward the third and fourth questions being more important. Ms. Gray agreed with the comments thus far and concurred with Mr. Firestone that both teams would do a fine job. She stated she is concerned with UD's academic approach and that AECOM's deep bench is a strength. Ms. Gray stated she believes the community engagement piece is very important. Ms. Huntley added that she is concerned about AECOM being stretched all over the nation, and she is not as concerned about the UD team's availability. Mr. Brainard then added his concern that IPA is doing numerous projects throughout the state and is probably stretched pretty thin. Ms. Bennett stated she knows Mr. Chajes and Mr. Byrne of the UD team and believes they would appropriately resource time for the project, however she was impressed that AECOM's presentation indicated that about half of their revenue was from smaller projects. Mr. Swiatek stated that they may not realistically get AECOM to attend all the meetings, but the benefit is the expertise and advice that they can provide.

Ms. van Boekhold recognized Mr. Chris Hamilton, who was in the audience. Mr. Hamilton thanked everyone for their comments and their efforts. He stated he was impressed with UD and AECOM, and stated that when you work with an international company with an international approach, you get fresh ideas. He also stated he believes we will get ideas from UD and IPA through other ventures, and that the wider approach is the better one. Ms. van Boekhold stated it is up to the Steering Committee and the City to hold the chosen consultant accountable. Ms. Ennis stated that no matter which group they choose, the University will be an entity that is involved in the development of the sustainability plan.

Mr. Firestone asked whether the Steering Committee was ready to decide or if they needed another meeting. The members of the Steering Committee then discussed what constituted a

quorum based on the 11-member committee. It was determined that six members constituted a majority; therefore, with seven members present and one abstaining, they could vote. Mr. Swiatek proceeded to make a motion to select AECOM as the consultant for the Newark Community Sustainability Plan. Ms. van Boekhold seconded the motion, which was approved (6-0) by Ms. Bennett, Mr. Brainard, Ms. Ennis, Ms. Huntley, Mr. Swiatek, and Ms. van Boekhold. Mr. Firestone abstained, and Tim Filasky, Mike Fortner, Susan Grasso and Sheila Smith were absent.

6. IDENTIFY NEXT MEETING DATE

The Steering Committee did not identify the next meeting date prior to adjournment.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment took place under Agenda Item 5, Post-Interview Discussion and Selection.

Mr. Firestone motioned to adjourn at 6:39 p.m. Ms. Ennis seconded the motion, which was approved (7-0) by Ms. Bennett, Mr. Brainard, Ms. Ennis, Mr. Firestone, Ms. Huntley, Mr. Swiatek, and Ms. van Boekhold. Mr. Filasky, Mr. Fortner, Ms. Grasso and Ms. Smith were absent. The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

/mv