

**CITY OF NEWARK  
DELAWARE**

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

**AUGUST 22, 2018  
COUNCIL CHAMBER  
4:00 P.M.**

**Committee Members Present:**

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

**Committee Members Absent:**

Susan Grasso

**1. INTRODUCTIONS**

Mike Fortner opened the meeting at 4:12 p.m. and members of the Steering Committee and AECOM went around the room and introduced themselves. Present from AECOM were Dave Athey, overall project manager, Scott Anderson, sustainability planning consultant, and Jenn Kellar, public outreach.

**2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 20, 2018**

The minutes of the June 20, 2018 meeting were not available to the Steering Committee for review prior to the August 22, 2018 meeting. Mr. Fortner indicated he would email the June 20, 2018 minutes to members of the Steering Committee for their review, for approval at the next scheduled meeting.

**3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON PLANNING PROCESS AND PATH FORWARD**

Mr. Athey opened by thanking the members of the Steering Committee who were on the selection panel and stated AECOM was very excited to be working on this project. He stated AECOM met with a subset of the Committee earlier in August to frame the discussion for today's meeting, but that they were starting with a blank slate and he was hoping for an interactive meeting.

Mr. Athey began by going over the process of developing and implementing a sustainability plan. [During the discussion, members of AECOM referred to a presentation being displayed for the members of the Steering Committee and the public.] He indicated a fair amount of work had already been done, using the City's Comprehensive Plan as a starting point, and noted that additional refinement would be needed. Mr. Athey indicated the initial phase would include laying the groundwork on things such as a vision statement, goals, research on approaches used by other cities, and public outreach. Helga Huntley stated it was important that the citizens of Newark feel that the plan reflects their goals because if it is not their vision, it may be more difficult to implement and less sustainable. Bahareh van Boekhold added that it is the responsibility of the Committee to represent the citizens of Newark.

From a public engagement perspective, Jeremy Firestone stated the importance of Community Day, as well as the idea of getting wider feedback by doing things such as attending local community-based or civic association meetings. The Committee members discussed the timing of the first public workshop in relationship to Community Day and agreed that having it approximately one month after the event would keep the momentum going and allow for the workshop to be held prior to the holiday season, when people become busier and less likely or able to attend. Scott Anderson of AECOM suggested another way to engage the broader community and solicit feedback may be to do pop-up tables at supermarkets for an hour or so.

Ideas were discussed regarding the first public workshop, including bringing a draft vision to the workshop to get the conversation started and get feedback from the public. Sheila Smith suggested having informational display boards with Committee members standing next to them for immediate engagement and feedback from the public. Mr. Fortner stated it would be important to promote the public workshop, with Ms. Kellar adding that promoting it as open house format is a good idea because it allows people to drop in at their convenience.

Mr. Athey stated that once there was a good draft of the plan, the second public workshop would be the opportunity to walk through it with the public and look for further validation, after which it would be scheduled for review by the Planning Commission and City Council. A suggestion was made by Ms. van Boekhold to engage the Planning Commission and City Council earlier in the process. Ms. Huntley agreed and stated she believed Council should be invited to the public workshops. The consensus of the group was that Council should be invited to the public workshops, after which the Committee would make a presentation not-for-action to Council sometime in January and go back to Council in April for action on the final plan. Mr. Athey agreed that was a manageable timeframe. Ms. van Boekhold stated April would be a good time to roll out the plan as they could have it coincide with Earth Day.

Laying groundwork for the development of the plan, Mr. Athey turned the attention of the group to the City's Comprehensive Plan and sustainability plans of other cities/regions that had been distributed to the group prior to the meeting. Mr. Athey spoke about the strengths of the plans of the cities of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland and the region of Long Island, New York. One of the things, Mr. Athey liked about the Philadelphia plan was that they use the

same four measures of benefit – equity, health, environment, and economic – for each category in the plan. Group discussion followed regarding the possibility of having goals that were broad versus focused and long-term versus short-term, the different frameworks that were available, and how to track progress moving forward. There was also discussion regarding the resources needed to support the plan on an ongoing basis, including funding and dedicated staff. Michelle Bennett stated it would be a good idea to have short- and medium-term goals as well as some blue-sky aspirational goals, and that prioritization would be an important part of the implementation plan. Mr. Athey agreed and asked the group to review the various options prior to the next meeting so that they could further the discussion at that time.

Mr. Anderson presented some of the various rating systems or framework options available for the City’s sustainability plan, providing a summary and example cities for the STAR Community Rating System, LEED for Cities, CDP (formerly Climate Disclosure Project), and Sustainable Cities. He also provided information on green benchmarking systems EnergyStar, LEED, Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Rating System, and Greenroads, and green rating systems Living Building Challenge, Green Globes, BOMA 360 Performance Program, and Passivhaus.

#### **4. DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY DAY OUTREACH EVENT OF SEPTEMBER 16**

Discussion moved to the Community Day outreach event of September 16. Mr. Athey started off the conversation by reiterating the results of the 2017 Community Day dot poll and asking the group if they wanted to create a display board/poll with the same categories for 2018 to compare results. His initial thoughts were to narrow the focus to help the Committee identify prospective goals.

Follow-up discussion among the group ranged from suggestions to add additional categories, limit and dig deeper into the top 2-3 categories, provide post-it notes and/or a white board for people to write down their idea of sustainability and how they would support it, and provide a list of 8-9 categories and ask people to rank their top three. The group deliberated whether it was best to narrow the focus or broaden it. Ms. Bennett stated that in any kind of engagement, it was a depth and breadth argument, to which Mr. Anderson suggested using something like a dot poll with a very defined set of questions and sub-questions, as well as a different color dot/post-it note that allowed people to provide write-in ideas. Ms. Kellar suggested adding graphics to the display boards to help people visualize what these goals look like in action for the City and their own lives, as well as to draw people into the tent. Mr. Fortner stated the City would create the boards, incorporating graphics designed by AECOM. Ms. Kellar proposed a follow-up conference call in 2-3 weeks to finalize the plan.

Also related to Community Day, Bill Swiatek suggested collecting email addresses and/or telephone numbers from the people participating in the poll to build a contact list for future efforts and Ms. Smith suggested providing literature such as a handout or card promoting the sustainability effort.

#### **5. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Mr. Athey recommended that the next meeting occur quickly after Community Day. Mr. Fortner stated he would send a Doodle Poll to the members of the Steering Committee and AECOM to determine the next meeting date.

The meeting was then opened to public comment. Lena Thayer of District 5 stated she was happy to see the CAC, Planning Commission, and Traffic Committee represented on the Committee as she feels many of the City's public meetings are very segmented. Ms. Thayer agreed that the first public workshop should be scheduled quickly after Community Day and that there be outreach to groups of people with a different socio-economic status than those represented on the Committee. Mr. Firestone indicated that is why he made the recommendation to reach out to community-based groups and Ms. Smith stated that Newark Housing Authority is on the list of stakeholders. Ms. van Boekhold stated that it is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure the plan has that equity perspective. Ms. Thayer suggested the Committee look at sustainability efforts of the cities of Boulder, Colorado and Cambridge, Massachusetts because of their balance between university and residency. She also stated she believed green initiatives should include green efforts and was therefore against the idea of using post-it notes to collect information at Community Day. The Committee thanked Ms. Thayer for attending and her contributions to the discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

/mv