



City of Verona

Sustainability Task Force Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, January 27, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
www.ci.verona.wi.us

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Verona Sustainability Task Force will hold its meeting as a virtual meeting. The Task Force will not meet at City Hall, 111 Lincoln Street. Members of the Task Force and Staff will join the meeting by using Zoom Webinar, as described immediately below.

Members of the public can join the meeting using Zoom Webinar via a computer, tablet, or smartphone, or by calling into the meeting using phones, as described immediately below. Those requiring toll-free options are asked to contact City Hall for details prior to the meeting at adam.sayre@ci.verona.wi.us or 608-848-9941.

Join the meeting via computer, tablet, or smart phone:

<https://zoom.us/j/95199172460>

Webinar ID: 951 9917 2460

Join the meeting via phone by dialing:

312-626-6799

Webinar ID: 951 9917 2460

The online meeting agenda and all support materials can be found at <https://www.ci.verona.wi.us/>. In addition to the public, all Sustainability Task Force members and Staff will also be participating remotely. Anyone with questions prior to the meeting may contact the City at (608) 848-9941 or adam.sayre@ci.verona.wi.us.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the minutes from the December 16, 2020 Sustainability Task Force meeting
4. Discussion & Possible Action: A presentation by Alliant Energy regarding renewable energy tariffs, electrification offerings, and questions and answer
5. Discussion & Possible Action: Dane County Action Plan (CAP) supporter
6. Discussion & Possible Action: Creation of Sustain Verona website
7. Future meeting date
8. Adjournment

Posted: Verona City Hall,
Verona Public Library,
Miller's Market
All agendas are posted on the City's website at: www.ci.verona.wi.us

Notice: If need an interpreter, materials in alternative formats, or other accommodation to access the meeting, please contact the City Clerk at 845-6495 at least 48-hours preceding the meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate your request.

Notice is hereby given that a majority of the City Council may be present at the meeting of the Sustainability Task Force to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.

This constitutes a meeting of the City Council pursuant to the State ex rel. Badke v. Greendale Village Board, 173Wis. 2d 553, 494 N.W. 2d 408 (1993) and must be noticed as such, although the City Council will not take any formal action at this meeting.

City of Verona
Minutes
Sustainability Task Force
December 16, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Verona Sustainability Task Force held its meeting as a virtual meeting. The Task Force did not meet in person. Members of the Task Force and Staff joined the meeting by using Zoom Webinar. Members of the public were able to join the meeting using Zoom Webinar via a computer, tablet, or smartphone, or by calling into the meeting via phone.

- 1. Call to Order:** Sayre called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call:** Geoff Guist, Heather Reekie, Kirstin Reeser, Charlie Ryan and Joe Zillmer were present. Also present: Mayor Luke Diaz, City Administrator Adam Sayre, Community Development Specialist Katherine Holt and Director of Parks and Urban Forestry Dave Walker. Katie Kohl was absent and excused.
- 3. Approval of the minutes from November 11, 2020 Sustainability Task Force meeting.**

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Ryan, to approve the minutes from the November 11, 2020 Sustainability Task Force meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action – Election of a Chairperson

Ryan nominated himself to be elected as Chairperson. Guist and Zillmer stated they would be interested in being the Chair for future meetings after gaining more experience. Motion by Reekie, seconded by Zillmer, to elect Ryan as Chair of the Sustainability Task Force. Motion carried.

5. Discussion and Possible Action – Dave Walker, Director of Parks and Urban Forestry

Sayre introduced Walker. Walker explained that he has been with the City for thirty years and twenty-five years as the Parks Director. He gave a brief summary of sustainability within the City's Parks that included recycling at the larger shelters, fixtures were switched to handle LED bulbs that are used when an existing bulb burns out, there are less pesticides and fertilizers that are used in parks over the years, there are parks that have prairies with control burns, the City has a Master Gardener that is a volunteer who manually cuts some of the prairies, and the City has community gardens.

Walker explained that although there is a lot of mowing, the Parks Department has cut back mowing to once a month or every five to six weeks especially along waterways. There are also designated no mow areas. The machinery cannot handle tall grasses over eight to ten inches. Currently, the machinery is gas powered. While electric mowers are new, they will need to have a place to charge between usages. A normal gas mower is approximately \$6,000 and an electric mower is approximately \$25,000, which does not include the cost of the infrastructure needed for charging. Walker suggested that the smaller vehicles to pick up trash could be an electric vehicle in the future.

Walker touched on solar panels for park shelters and mentioned that Cathedral Point park shelter was determined to cost approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000 about five years ago for solar panels. The concern is that the solar panels would generate more power than what would be used by the shelter, which was not allowed at that time by Alliant. Walker suggested that Community Park and Fireman's Park could be candidates for solar panels.

Walker explained that the Parks Department planted 165 trees last year, which is about average in the last couple of years (125 – 175 trees). The City is planting about eighty percent native species and does approximately eighty to ninety percent of the tree planting and trimming. The City avoids invasive species for new plantings such as Norway maple, Callery pear, Buckthorn, and Honeysuckle to name a few. He explained the treatment the City does for Ash trees, explained the process for removal of trees, and what happens to tree debris.

Diaz asked if the park shelters could structurally hold solar panels, which was answered with a yes.

Zillmer asked what does Walker wish he could tackle in regards to sustainability with a follow up question regarding how to implement those ideas with funding.

Walker replied that the City does not offer recycling Citywide and suggested that the general public does not know what could be recycled, which can be problematic. He thought solar panels would work for visibility and to create interest, but is not ready to have them in all of the parks. He would like nurseries to have more diverse species especially for street trees. The best way to implement these ideas would be to update the five year Capital Plan and add items to that plan, which will trigger discussions with the Council.

Sayre suggested that the capital budget would work for five to ten years. Vehicles are programmed out for replacement as part of the capital budget and these vehicles would sit until it is time to purchase where the debate occurs as to electric or gas due to cost.

Ryan asked if there is a use for volunteers or if there are concerns with liability in the parks. If people want to participate, whom would they contact and what skills are needed.

Walker replied that they should contact him. The City has an Adopt a Park program, which is typically used for clean-up and landscaping with a sign to recognize the group. The City tailors park projects to the volunteer's skill set such as pruning, trimming, and picking up trash.

Diaz asked if the Task Force could create a list for the Finance Committee on what should be implemented with priorities.

Sayre said yes that this group could create a list with dollar number, purpose, and items that could be submitted in mid-May. The list could also include priorities with larger items called out for implementation in five years for the capital budget. The City can accept donations to support these items, but cannot have strings attached.

Guist asked how does Alliant hinder the City with the solar panels.

Sayre stated that Alliant is prepared to talk to the Task Force at the next meeting regarding future partnerships with the City.

6. Discussion and Possible Action – Example of Other Communities submitted from Committee members.

Ryan explained that Staff compiled all of the research sent by the Task Force into one document for the members to review. He read each header and the Task Force member who submitted the topic presented the information. Topics included solar/energy, composting, trees/plantings, water/rain barrels, and policies.

For the solar and energy discussion, there was an idea to place solar panels on the new high school with installation training of students. The Task Force determined this discussion should be brought to the Verona Area School District for their discussions. Diaz volunteered to discuss this idea with the new Superintendent. There was an agreement that all solar discussion should be discussed with Alliant next month as well as if Focus on Energy requests need to have an Alliant billing number.

For the composting discussion, Reekie suggested that the City partner with another entity such as Epic to purchase a digester. There were questions as to whether food straps could be donated to the existing City garden, but an answer was not voiced. Zillmer volunteered to contact Christi Turner in Denver Colorado to find out more information on their composting program as well as volunteering to talk to someone at Epic about a composting digester. It was agreed that the City's Public Works Director will speak to the Task Force at a future date regarding City's brush and yard waste collect and how it is recycled.

The discussion transitioned into a discussion regarding how compost can amend the existing clay soil in newly built residential areas. There was direction from the Task Force for Staff to write a draft ordinance regarding compost to amend the soil. Discussions included potentially having the ordinance in the landscaping section, subdivision regulations, building inspection, or in a section regarding site restoration. It was determined that it was not a good idea to include this in a developer's agreement as it would not pertain to all development.

For the trees and planting discussion, Ryan asked if the City could give vouchers for new residents to pick out one native tree or shrub for free and asked what company the City uses to purchase the trees. Sayre stated he would ask Walker and get back to the Task Force with an answer. Guist suggested the City have a "playbook" that contains a centralized location for City sustainability options that could include plantings, which he volunteered to prepare for Staff's review. There was an agreement that planting wildflowers in medians is a good idea, which could be done with volunteers. Sayre and Staff will coordinate some options of where these plantings could occur and report back to the Task Force.

For the water and rain barrel discussion, there was an agreement that this information such as the rain barrel rebate program should be included in the “playbook” created by Guist.

For the policy and budget discussion, Zillmer recommended a Director of Sustainability be included in the five year capital plan. Diaz stated he has reservations with this idea as there is a significant cost to create and maintain this type of position with sporadic workload. Sayre suggested that the amount of money saved by not having this position would be better served to implement ideas from the Task Force. The Dane County Climate Action Committee (DCCAC) does not have a representative from Verona. Guist suggested that a representative from DCCAC could give a presentation to the Task Force. Diaz agreed to find out more information regarding the DCCAC and what it entails to be a member. Regarding the budget, Sayre suggested that the Task Force create a list of items that should be presented to the Finance Committee no later than May. He recommends this list include prioritization, costs, and potential implementation dates similar to the previously discussed capital budget with Walker. Sayre suggested that this be a line item on the agenda for each month.

7. Next Meeting:

A doodle poll will be sent to all of the members to fill out to determine the next meeting date and time for January 2021. For the next meeting, agenda items will include a guest speaker from Alliant, future budget items for the City to consider, Compost Ordinance amendment, and nominate and recommend to the Common Council a Dane County Action Plan (CAP) supporter from the Task Force. This meeting may be approximately two hours.

8. Adjournment:

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Zillmer, to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Memorandum

To: Sustainability Task Force
From: Katherine Holt, Community Development Specialist
Date: January 27, 2021
Re: **Alliant Energy Presentation**

At the December 2020 meeting, there were several questions regarding solar panels and electric vehicles as part of the Parks Department presentation. Alliant Energy will be making a presentation at the January 27th Sustainability Task meeting. The presentation by Alliant Energy will discuss renewable energy and electrification offerings.

The following people may participate in the presentation or answer questions from Alliant Energy:

- Rob Crain – Director Customer Community and Economic Development
- Zach Hill – Senior Resource Development Manager
- Heidi Parker – Renewable Portfolio Manager
- Rob Wozny – Electrification Senior Product Manger
- Jennifer Knudtson – Customer Program Market Analyst
- Jeff McCartney – Key Account Manager

**CITY OF VERONA
RESOLUTION NO. R-21-**

DANE COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP) SUPPORTER

WHEREAS, the City of Verona recognizes that climate change is at a critical stage that is increasingly impacting human health and well-being, ecosystems, and our economy and that the City is responsible to lead the way to carbon neutrality for our residents and businesses; and,

WHEREAS, the City's energy use could be served by existing renewable energy technologies at reasonable cost, and the economic opportunities from a clean energy transition greatly exceed any economic opportunities from fossil fuels; and,

WHEREAS, achieving these energy goals will require concerted action from individuals and the community, in urban and rural areas county-wide, from local and state governments, and from businesses and utilities; and,

WHEREAS, the City will continue to support and add to the to-do list in the 2019 Sustainability Resolution to make our community more resilient and combat climate change; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City become a supporter of the Dane County Climate Action Plan (CAP) in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a region.

CITY OF VERONA

SEAL

Luke Diaz, Mayor

Kayla Martin, Deputy Clerk

Memorandum

To: Sustainability Task Force
From: Katherine Holt, Community Development Specialist
Date: January 27, 2021
Re: **Sustain Verona website**

At the December 2020 meeting, there was an agreement from Task Force members to create a 'playbook' or a place where residents could find information regarding sustainability for the City. Geoff Guist volunteered to help create the initial playbook list and have Staff use the initial information to create a sustainability website.

The Sustainable Verona website can be found on the City's website at <http://www.ci.verona.wi.us/737/Sustainable-Verona>.

The website is an ongoing process for updates as information is found. The basic structure of the website contains topics for water, energy, recycling and composting, transportation and what you can do. Under those topics, there is additional information related to the individual topic. As this is a work in progress, Staff is open to suggestions for improvement as well as additions to the website such as solar information added to the energy topic. Please contact Staff if you have any questions regarding the website.