

**City of Verona**  
**Minutes**  
**Sustainability Task Force**  
**February 15, 2021**

**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:** Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call:** Charlie Ryan, Kirstin Reeser, Geoff Guist, Heather Reekie, and Joe Zillmer were present. Also present: Mayor Luke Diaz, City Administrator Adam Sayre, and Community Development Specialist Katherine Holt. Katie Kohl absent and excused.
- 3. Approval of the minutes from January 27, 2021 Sustainability Task Force meeting.**  
Motion by Guist, seconded by Zillmer, to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2021 Sustainability Task Force meeting. Motion carried 5-0.
- 4. Discussion and Possible Action – Zoning and Sign Ordinance rewrite – Presentation to the Task Force regarding sustainability items that are included in the new Zoning Ordinance**

Holt gave a brief presentation of the items in the Task Force packet as the Zoning Ordinance is in the tail end of the review process. Holt began with overarching performance standards and discussed each item. There was a lengthy discussion regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

Zillmer asked what the standard practice is for EV parking and wanted confirmation that 1/50 stalls is pretty typical.

Holt responded with points of comparison within the City. Sayre responded that it varies across the board and we don't have requirements currently, which is an improvement either way.

Holt mentioned including multiple plugs per charging station as an option, which is not a requirement.

Zillmer would like it to be worded as 1 out of 50 stalls needs to be used for charging and can have multiple plugs.

Ryan mentioned that the cord length is a concern and would need to reach any vehicle charging. Another concern for multiple plugs on one charging station is the amount of load that is used to charge an EV as the load would be split and could take longer if it is charging more than one EV. Typically, these charging stations have a low load rate such as a Level 1, which means it takes longer to charge. Most people do not charge their EV in a parking lot when going shopping, but charge them overnight. Ratio is fine for

number of charging stations per parking stalls knowing people will do the bare minimum.

Guist is it possible to set a minimum threshold for types of charging levels.

Ryan discussed the various levels of charging and EV excepting certain charging rates, which is not universal. This could be a concern in the future.

Zillmer would prefer that the City require new subdivisions install the infrastructure. Madison is requiring new developments to install half of their parking with charging stations.

Sayre stated these requirements would only occur for new developments.

Reekie asked for clarification if these requirements are only for commercial or does it include residential.

Sayre responded that the City only has the proposal for surface lots and underground parking structures. This does not include single-family development.

Ryan recommends that the single-family would be required to have a 220 watt plug installed in the garage, which is how most people charge their EV due to security. It is better to install this when the house is being built rather than retrofit it.

Zillmer agrees that infrastructure should be added to this item for single-family homes.

Reekie suggests that we push the requirement for apartments should have 1/50 installed immediately.

Sayre recommends that there is a balance between installing the EV charging stations and maintaining the overall costs for development to keep the pass through costs low. The developer could pass on the cost to the home buyer versus a renter situation would spread the cost across all renters. Pulling the conduit would be cheaper in the long run than installing everything.

Reekie recommended that “three (3) parking spaces ready with conduit to be converted with ~~to~~ a station for charging electric”

Diaz asked if a single-family garage would be ready to use. Would this be burdensome to install in new subdivisions? Diaz would recommend wiring to be installed in the garages for a 220 outlet.

Ryan stated that a 220 outlet is required and would need to be installed.

Zillmer recommends multifamily homes need more charging stations that is recommended.

All were in agreement to install as many charging stations or infrastructure for charging station as possible now rather than retrofitting these in the future.

Holt explained that bicycle parking was discussed, which is formalizing what we already request.

Holt explained the proposed tree preservation section of the ordinance, which was not in the current ordinance. Landscaping requirements were discussed as to what types of plantings would count towards the landscaping requirements such as native grasses.

Reekie asked if there was a wetland area would that count towards landscaping instead of the Parks and Recreation Board making this determination.

Sayre replied that the wetland would be part of parkland dedication, which will be reviewed in the future.

Diaz asked if the groundcover would include native plants and ensure that it includes this.

Holt explained that the proposal is silent on the native portion of groundcover, but is salt tolerant.

Reekie recommended “**Groundcover:** Herbaceous plants, other than turf grass, or prostrate shrubs that are native to, or adapted to, the State of Wisconsin, normally reaching an average maximum height of eighteen (18) inches at maturity.”

Ryan suggested adding a table to the ordinance with recommended plantings.

Sayre stated that the City had a table, but it was not used by landscape architects.

Holt explained the land use section. Wind energy is not included in the proposed ordinance due to height and not typically a big urban topic as it is intrusive to neighbors.

Reekie recommended the following changes to Urban Garden.

~~(1) Urban gardens shall not exceed twenty (20) percent of the lot's area.~~

(2) Urban gardens located in front or corner yards shall:

- a. Not utilize hoop houses, cold frames, or other structures.
- b. Not have any plant material which exceeds four (4) feet in height within sight lines.
- c. Not have any dead plant materials present with the exception of dead plant materials utilized for ground cover, mulch, or compost.
- d. Not include any plant material that could interfere with a public sidewalk.
- e. Be setback a minimum of three (3) feet from all applicable property lines.

(3) Urban gardens located in side or rear yards may utilize hoop houses, cold frames, or other structures if they are setback a minimum of three (3) feet from all property lines.

Diaz asked if 2b means no sunflowers in the front yard.

Sayre stated that this could be modified to not within sight lines.

Reeser stated that this ordinance is easier to use and read than other ordinances she has reviewed.

**5. Discussion and Possible Action – Resolution establishing a City designee to comment on dockets before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin**

Sayre explained the intent of the resolution to allow the Mayor to respond to the comments and keep them from going to the Common Council for each item. This would take a recommendation vote this evening and go before the Common Council next Monday.

Reekie requested that the language should be changed from “can” file public comments on behalf the sustainability project to “will” the Mayor. City Staff or the Mayor shall respond if it is stated as “shall”.

Sayre would prefer that it remains as the Mayor unless the Mayor requests a response created on the Mayor’s behalf.

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Reeser, to recommend resolution establishing a City designee to comment on dockets before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Motion carried 5-0.

**6. Discussion and Possible Action – Citywide Composting Program**

Zillmer gave a brief summary that he received an email from Epic and the EPA Director had discussion with Zillmer. Transportation, pollution, and new rules and regulations would be difficult as Epic could fall into a landfill category to do this type of land use. Landfill status is defined as so many pounds of waste. Dane County or City of Madison just received a grant to create this, but they have not seen the results of this grant. Epic is interested and willing to work with the City. This can only be done if it can make money for the service or the compost.

The next task would be to determine if there is a good location for this type of land use and we would need to survey residents to determine if they would be customers/users of the compost. There are private companies that currently do this and a Citywide program could take away their customers. Private companies could be hired similar to trash collection to collect compost and could be useful except that if they acquire too much compost it could become classified as a landfill, which triggers different EPA requirements.

Reekie asked if composting could be incentive for apartment complexes.

Guist asked how we encourage composting and get people to participate.

Sayre suggested that a composting bin program similar to the rain barrel program could be established. The composting would be produced on site and used on site.

Ryan recommended direct people to the website and encourage people to create this own their own property.

Reeser suggested education for composting and producing less food waste.

Reekie asked if it is better to put waste in the trash can or in the garbage disposal in you don’t have a compost bin. .

Zillmer will bundle his notes for references, information for composting, and information to post on the website.

Sayre explained that Theran Jacobson would be the next guest speaker and could address some of the drop off, recycling, composting, and garbage disposal questions.

**7. Discussion and Possible Action – Ordinance amendment requiring composting soil for development**

Sayre explained the programs that were found online, but it was limited information. Staff's concern is that enforcement is difficult for inspection. Developers strip topsoil off the site and either reuse it on the site or transport it off the site. The concern is that bringing additional soil to the site could bring in invasive species to the site. If there is a requirement, we don't know how Staff would enforce this.

Ryan summarized that there could be unintended consequences such as carbon input for transporting soil places and introducing invasive species.

Zillmer stated that this program only works if there is a composting facility in the community. He still wants this to be done and it could be a compost tea mix in a liquid form.

Reekie had composted soil brought to her property when it was a new build before seed was put down.

Ryan asked if there was a composting program there could not be a mandate purchase from the City. It could be discounted or free program.

There was an agreement to gain more information on this topic and defer this.

**8. Updates and comments from City Staff**

**a. No Mow Roadsides**

Sayre read the memo and noted that it would take three years to see the established results of the planting in the trial area on Verona Avenue.

**b. Dane County Action Plan supporter**

Sayre stated this was approved by the Common Council last Monday.

Diaz stated that there was an article in Verona Press as well as Dane County tweeting the information that Verona is a new member of the Dane County Action plan supporter.

**9. Update & Discussion: Future budget items for the City to consider**

Sayre stated that this is a place holder for each meeting to discuss anything of interest or questions to include in the budget.

Ryan suggested transition fleet vehicles to electric vehicles is on the list and solar on City buildings.

Reekie suggested recycle pick-up every week with trash pick-up every other week, which was seconded by Zillmer.

**10. Next Meeting:**

Sayre stated that a doodle poll will be sent. March 22 is the week of spring break for Verona.

Theran Jacobson will be a guest speaker for the next meeting to discuss recycling, composting, composting bins, drop off of materials, recycle pick-up more often, and garbage disposal materials.

**11. Adjournment:**

Motion by Reekie, seconded by Zillmer, to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.