



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
www.cityofmadison.com

## Meeting Minutes - Approved SUSTAINABLE MADISON COMMITTEE

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Monday, September 21, 2015

4:00 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Room 300 (Madison Municipal Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 PM

**Present:** 12 - David Ahrens; John M. Conowall; Rajan V. Shukla; Michael J. Vickerman; Lance E. Green; Sam J. Breidenbach; Richard J. Pearson; Jesse J. Shields; Anya M. Firszt; David P. Rhode; Richard A. Heinemann and Jason A. Vargo

**Excused:** 4 - Bradley Campbell; Jeannette E. LeZaks; Chelsea Chandler and Sophia S. Rogers

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**Richard Miller** – Provided his written comments which are attached to Legistar. Solar is good, and getting cheaper. Not all buildings are good for solar. And big trees are good. Emerald Ash Bore will create an opportunity to increase solar access. City is looking at \$15 million for tree removal. Lets use this investments that can also encourage solar by putting in trees that do not create shade.

**Annette Miller** – Project manager with the community conversations for MGE. Reminded the committee about previous community conversations. For this community conversations – we have had 30 conversations and there will be many more. Continue to listening to the public. Committed to the process.

**Mitch Brey** – Encourage people to use the Green Madison program and also the MGE community conversations and to encourage city to get the word out about these programs.

### DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

1. [40058](#) Accepting the Pollinator Protection Task Force Report as the guiding document for the City of Madison to address the issue of pollinator decline and directing the Madison Food Policy Council, with assistance of city staff, to implement the recommendations contained within the report.

**Attachments:** [Pollinator Protection Task Force Report Final.pdf](#)  
[SMC Registration.pdf](#)  
[statement to pollinator committees \(2\).pdf](#)  
[COE Registrants for Pollinator Report.pdf](#)  
[Pollinator Memo.pdf](#)

**Mark Woulf, Director of Food and Alcohol Policy for the City of Madison and he staffed the pollinator task force, presented the plan. Motion made by Conowall and seconded by Vickerman to return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the MADISON FOOD POLICY COUNCIL. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

**Public Comment:**

**Barb Glassel from Madison Chapter of the Wild Ones. In general I am supportive on the goals.**

**Carl Landsness on board of Stark Weather but is not speaking for them. I have a wonderful feeling about this. Thank you for what you are doing.**

**Sue Reindollar from Madison Chapter on the Wild Ones which promotes native plants in urban setting – also looking at bio-diversity that is good for the soil. This report is good. We need more education to the public about the purpose of planting native plants. Native plants are a very healthy for the environment.**

**Simon Widstrand thank you for the recommendations in this report. Diversity eco-system is very important more important than just honey bees. I used to work for City parks – now volunteer on trying to make lands more diverse. More should be done regarding engineering mowing. Only 200 acres of greenways are designated for reduced mowing for eco-system diversity, while 900 acres per year get mowed 1-2 times per year without consideration for invasive species or native plants and the timing of when mowing should be done to reduce invasives and increase native plants. It is this 900 acres that needs attention. There is no regard for what they are mowing or whether they are spreading invasive species and destroying native plants. According to the report there is approximately 1100 acres total that engineering mows almost all are storm water greenways. Only 200 acres are designated for reduced mowing, the rest, 900 acres, gets mowed regularly (1-2 times per year).**

**Green – So this issue is when the mowing is done? Is it at a time when it is not good for pollinators or controlling invasive species?**

**Widstrand – Both of these things are an issue. This mowing program was put together because of woody invasives entering the greenways and it has been very effective, however, now engineering should be focusing on what we should mow and not mow and when. You can mow at the wrong time and actually spread invasive species.**

**Vargo – What/How do you decide to mow?**

Widstrand – If you only have natives plants do you even need to mow?

Vargo – Is there a public safety issue?

Widstrand – Yes, in some areas, but there are other areas that you do not have a public safety issue.

Ahrens - Mentioned that mowing can be a big issue for neighborhoods.

Woulf – Director of Food and Alcohol for the City of Madison and he staffed the pollinator task force. Mayor asked the Food Policy Council to create a Pollinator Task Force. The President has asked this be done at the federal level as well. Federally the plans outline similar strategies and include assisting local units of government and developing partnerships. On the local level, Madison is looking at this issue because of food production and we are looking at what the City of Madison can do on lands that we control. There are lots of groups working locally, but this report looks at city practices throughout the city to look at strategies that the city could implement internally. How can we use City owned land for demonstrations. The report looks at four main areas. What are the policies that can be adopted, general education, partnerships - looking at partner with state on increasing habitat, and management of public lands i.e. use of pesticides. Mowing was a big issue as was pesticides. In the report we try to reduce the use and had looked at how and when it is getting used. Next we will get to work on the implementation and that is when pesticide use and mowing policies could be changed. Lastly, the resolution before you is to accept the report and for the food policy council to move forward with implementation. A report will also come to the council in December. COE is also reviewing this report. This is the first committee to review it.

Green – Why can't we ban neonicotinoid?

Woulf – There is a state law that does not allow the city to ban them citywide, but we can on city-owned properties.

Green – The current terrace policy does not work. There is a NA group looking at this in SASYNA. Was that brought up?

Woulf – Two years ago the terrace policy was changed to allow plantings on the terrace. There is an opportunity to review this for pollinator health. There are issues with distance from curb and height of plants that is still an issue. There is an opportunity here.

John Conowall moved approval

Michael Vickerman seconded

Unanimously Approved

2. [40146](#) Presentation by Ben Paulos, author of "Empowered: A Tale of Three Cities Taking Charge of Their Energy Future".

Attachments: [paulos empowered talk.pdf](#)

Paulos - Gave presentation which is available on Legistar.

Shields – What about all of the infrastructure? How do we pay to keep up this infrastructure?

Paulos – You do not need to have fixed pricing for fixed costs.

Green – Are there any laws regarding fixed costs?

Paulos – This is not law this is a decision on the part of the utility.

Conowall – People who are more affluent can afford to put up solar and this takes away money from the utility. How can the utility maintain power to folks who still need it if revenues are going down?

Vickerman – The utility will recover their revenues, it just depends how. Outside the state of WI, the PSC commissions in other states have not bought the idea that the rate restructuring is about revenue recovery. Only in WI has fixed costs gone up more than anywhere else in the nation.

Paulos – The fixed charges are a very regressive tax. Elderly and low-income will be impacted more than others because of the regressive nature of the tax.

Conowall – There are communities that do not have fixed charges...utilities that will increase rates not fixed rates if they need to?

Paulos – Yes that correct.

Vickerman – Solar has not penetrated the market enough to make a difference for utilities.

Green – what are the issues with municipalization of the utility?

Paulos – You need to talk to your city attorney. In CO, the PSC they can't stop it, not sure what the laws are here. You need to check.

Heinemann – It would be very expensive.

Vargo – Does the carbon tax include transportation is there an equity issue?

Paulos – I think it is just on electric bills. The revenue is about \$2-3 million per year. Helping to pay for municipalization. Carbon tax was started in 2008.

Shukla – There is municipalization – there is also what Minneapolis did. In WI there is so much resources invested in coal plants and utilities see too much risk of leaving those assets. Is there examples nationally where a joint-venture is formed which draws down the use of the coal plants.

Paulos – Unfortunately MGE invested heavily in coal 10 years ago. They should have known that coal was going to get regulated, which it will by the EPA for carbon. Coal is getting devalued because of natural gas production, increased regulation with coal, etc. WI had a plan to power the future – and coal was/is that future. MGE and other utilities are going to find that investing in coal is an expensive investment. EPA regulation will go into affect at some point and MGE will need to get off coal. Newer plants will stay on-line longer. Older plants come off it sooner.

Conowall – Sounds like utilities will get moved out if they have large plants. Are there utilities that are moving toward renewable etc.

Paulos - Mid America is a big developer of wind. Currently 40% of Iowa's power comes from wind. There are lots of discussions about distributed generation or solar and that utilities are losing sales – there is a big debate. Regulated companies can't sell unregulated things. This might change.

Conowall – Can the utility rent the roof and put solar on it?

Paulos – Yes. There is also the idea of community solar for customers that have shade.

Shields – MGE is doing a pilot in 300kw system and 100 KW system as pilot projects.

Vickerman – Utilities can put solar on other people's properties. In Georgia, the utility is putting them on military bases. Tomorrow I am going to see a 900kw system in Eau Claire that a co-op is putting up. Community solar is great for landfills – Green Mountain Power is a company that is doing this work throughout the state.

Heinemann – Xcel is one of the largest utilities in the county and has more renewable energy than most it is interesting that Minneapolis and Boulder went even further.

Paulos – For utilities Xcel is seen as an utility that has done a lot for renewable energy.

Green – The carbon tax in Boulder is \$21 homeowner. There are also rates for commercial/industrial customers. Revenues are \$1.8 million per year. My understand is that is not allowed in WI.

3. [39625](#)

Presentation on Schematic Design for the Madison Municipal Building and the Sustainability Elements of the design.

Attachments: [SMC.pdf](#)  
[Encouraging Clean Energy Sources.pdf](#)

Jeanne gave presentation on MMB. Presentation attached to Legistar.

4. Brief updates on Georgetown, Benchmarking and Energy Plan Working Group update.

No Updates.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Ahrens, seconded by Conowall to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.