

AGENDA

Eau Claire County

- Sustainability Advisory Committee •

Date: May 10th

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Location: Eau Claire County Court House, Room 3312

721 Oxford Avenue Eau Claire, WI 54703

**Event link below can be used to connect to meeting and interact (by the chair) from computer or through the WebEx Meeting smartphone app.*

Join WebEx Meeting:

<https://eau Claire County.webex.com/eau Claire County/j.php?MTID=m2cdf4b2c2a117b5448ff3d718f47e8eb>

Meeting ID: 2595 094 1746, Password: RJpgsC3D8q2

**Meeting audio can be listened to using this Audio conference dial in information.*

Audio conference: 1-415-655-0001, Access Code: 2595 094 1746

For those wishing to make public comment, you must e-mail Regan Watts at Regan.watts@eau Claire County.gov at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. You will be called on during the public session to make your comments.

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Confirmation of Compliance with Open Meeting Law
4. Review/Approve Meeting Minutes from March 8th **pages 1-2**
5. Public Comment Period
6. Review of April Community Forums - Discussion **pages 3-13**
7. Review SOAR Analysis- Discussion **page 14**
8. Next Steps in plan development- Discussion
9. Members, Staff and Agency Updates-Discussion
 - a. April Events
 - b. Meeting with City of Eau Claire SAC
 - c. Additional staff updates
8. Items for the Next Agenda
9. Next Meeting
10. Adjourn



MINUTES
Eau Claire County
Sustainability Advisory Committee
Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Tami Schraufnagel, Jim Dunning, Amy Alpine, Nathan Anderson (Virtual), Kathy Campbell, Cathy Lea, Jeff White, Eleanor Wolf, Patrick Bethke, Tim Davis, Lily Strehlow,

Absent:

Others: Regan Watts – Committee Clerk

Call to Order and confirmation of meeting notice.

Chair Schraufnagel called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and confirmed that the meeting was noticed.

Roll Call

The roll was called by the clerk, and it is noted above under present. A quorum was confirmed.

Public Comment

Review/Approve meeting minutes from February 9th

Motion by Bethke. Second by White. Minutes approved.

SOAR Analysis

Committee completed a SOAR analysis regarding community sustainability to help inform the types of questions that would be asked at the April input forums. Summary of analysis is included in 5/10 meeting agenda.

April Community Input Forum

Members discussed the community input forum and provided input on questions to be asked of the public. These will be available in an online format and will be used during the listening sessions to guide community discussion.

Staff Updates

Regan Watts provided program updates for members.

- Earth Week Open house will be held April 20th at Brewing Projekt from 5PM-7PM. Committee members are welcome to attend.

Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed on the next meeting to be held in either May 10, 2023, at 5:00PM at the government center in room 3312.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regan Watts

Regan Watts – Clerk, Recycling & Sustainability Coordinator

CARP Community Forum 4/6/2023

Meeting Notes

Nancy's Notes:

- Focus on Energy – residential incentives, insulation, windows, doors
- Transit and Mobility
 - Barriers traveling within county
 - Elderly transport in rural areas isolated, not driving cabby van – vet. Van
 - City transit: used city bus, hard if...
 - Bike trail economic drivers
 - Poverty: getting to food pantry, where need to wait
 - Rural transit system: grants for business start-up
 - Rail system: bus system to get people to the rail (30 mi on each side of trail to a depo)
 - Badger bus line located at Towers
 - Electric bicycle rebates? Mobility
- Residential
 - EC Energy Cooperative: incentives through Dairyland
 - Xcel energy: drop dead date is December, so must pay 2 months usage
 - Electric vehicles and use of solar
 - Barriers: cost beyond what is reimbursed
 - WD for energy efficiency for limited income
 - Solar water heaters in mobile homes
 - Older homes are often not up to par
 - Planning and Development building code to incentivize solar and wiring for E-vehicles
 - Solar tax credits partner with electric comp. incentivize weatherization
 - Weatherize 1st & then think about solar
 - Climate change on community? That's why were here!
- Businesses
 - Hard to get energy where we want it, when we want it
 - What's available?
 - Xcel called our church and gave advice, LED light bulbs, thermostat update
 - Call business if using "a lot" of energy
 - Text, "you're using a lot of energy today!"
 - Have to spend money to save money
 - NEVY program: cant get in EC because have one at WalMart already (no closer than 50 miles to each other)
 - Ford must have e-v chargers at each Ford dealership that is a pull through, not back into

- Pace financing: state sponsored, ag focused (need to scale up program), apply through bank
- Few incentives for home or work
- 90% of charging will happen at home electric system
- Could Pablo Foundation have a fund to assist with E-charges?
- Solid Waste & Recycle
 - Towns: some have waste pick-up, not all, recycle is free
 - If no vehicle, elderly may leave on side of road and neighbor may pick up
 - Codes in city & county differ on how garbage is picked up
 - Recycling revenue is down, so only recycle what hauler can get rid of
 - Hard to change waste when producer doesn't: talk to grocers
- Ag & Natural Resource
 - Ag farmer influence: no till drill saves \$ and soil
 - Need more education (Farm bureau)
 - Cost of farmland
 - NR151: increased incentives for farmer
 - Banks: community reinvestment act, banks assist with

Madeline's Notes:

- Broad suggestion:
 - Webpage header identifying recycling and sustainability program needs to be more obvious from the county webpage
 - Potential availability is vague
- Rural Residential
 - Big problem is heating: usually wood or gas in rural areas, must transition into heat pumps or solar options with a backup electric option
 - General resident doesn't understand options available: coop has a rebate along with focus on energy, federal taxes
 - ECEC Xcel and focus on energy can all have collaborative incentives
 - Some are contractor based, some are not
 - Simplistic comparison and guides to fill out incentives, or helping people fill out the forms will be a good assistance to the general public
 - Approximate 10-year payback for solar panels
 - Heat pumps payback is really fast
 - Has Dairyland decided to do more solar?
 - Big problem in the city are the trees, limits cooling and carbon in the air: ability to use solar on city rooftops could be a solution
 - Aware of energy programs but difficult to capture information, or program funding changing

- New Homes funding runs out in the last couple of months in the year, but it's no big deal
- Getting word out to the public is the biggest problem
- New construction should require heat pumps and solar: EV plug ins must be more accessible
- WI dwelling code is outdated: could be a campaign issue, need affordable housing but installing solar or other extras raises cost initially, low income people need long-term, cost effective energy savings i.e. heat pumps and solar
- How many people enter into changing their energy system?
- When replacements need to be made, people should know about renewables before other options
- EDUCATION: comfortable living situations can be answered by renewable energy sources – requires immediate funds, upfront costs
- Testimonials and examples from customers within Eau Claire
- What to do about snow and solar...
- Getting everything together on one site from all companies
- Fly-by-the-night installation teams need to be warned about
- Solid Waste & Recycle
 - Recycler is helpful for waste management
 - EC County to have a real plastic recycling facility (accepting black plastic, all plastic numbers, thermoforms)
 - Charging for plastic when shopping (bags, food containers): must influence groceries and other places of business, limited by the state
 - Medical waste: need people to take on the extra responsibility
 - Switching to cardboard and paper products within stores for packaging instead of plastic
 - Must drive the cost of plastics up
 - Green Teams have been effective: reminding the public about being disciplined in your own behavior to limit waste and recycle correctly
 - Plastic prevention and mitigation
 - Letting businesses know we aren't interested in plastic
 - Reminding people to take the extra step, and that the extra step makes a difference
 - Commercials/marketing campaign for waste free living or how to recycle
 - Outlaw blister packaging: effects impulse sales
 - Garbage from other haulers is getting really loose, lack of a clean and safe service
 - Is a single contractor an option? Based off neighborhood decisions
 - Waste management was offering to pay as you throw, but discovered it was too dangerous for staff considering glass and sharps and other hazardous materials
 - Only a small amount of plastics are recyclable through curbside
 - Chain effect must start from the people to influence local businesses, to impact corporate choices

- How come Cottonelle can still advertise flushable wipes?
- Generational teaching of waste management and recycling has been pushed away
- Incorporate pack in pack out mentality to our parks
- Free recycling of electronics was a huge win: possibly create a travelling team to townships
- Tires, concrete waste can be reused
- People not taking responsibility to recycle correctly or learn how to
- There needs to be a market for people to recycle
- Scraping metal is about volume, per pound rate
- Outagamie county's process with a transfer station is really slick and effective: recent conversations with 7 Mile Creek have gone well, they seem receptive, will extend the landfill life and increases the return money-wise through recyclable materials
- Within Hudson, Eau Claire, Menominee, and other counties, can we bring in a plastic recycling plant?
- Why are manufacturers switching to liquid soap
- Statistics on county recycling: participation is at 80-90%
- Bottle bills
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
 - Land ethics: over 100 farmers, steady progressive movement, ROI
 - Trust busting must happen
 - Middle men are the problem
 - Farmers are getting strangled, want to produce more
 - Meat farming cannot be done sustainably
 - Big agriculture must be broken up, get back to small farms
 - Must educate public about diet management and control
 - Farming subsidies to incentivize farmers to grow more sustainably
 - Amish are subsistence farmers
 - Appetite for ordinances?
 - Can't be more restrictive than the state
 - Heavy rains are washing away all the top soil (climate change)
 - Farmers are an independent lot: family units and farms
 - Need to make an economic argument
 - Farmer's union is a good resource
 - Citizen's science: getting disparate groups together and involved to do good things for the land
 - Remove sediment from sensitive areas in the waterways.

Community Forum Notes 4/19

- Residential
 - Aware of energy – make you work with coop – does energy audit
 - No, not aware – not concerned – burn wood
 - Conscious of it, have had an energy audit – but not current
 - Have had focus on energy – thinking of heat pump
 - Town of Seymour has made use of most projects
 - Looking at upgrades
 - Very frugal – wants to save a bunch so familiar with availability
 - Home builders – are working hard to incorporate energy efficiency – when costs are going up then energy efficiency gets cut back

What barriers are there for energy efficiency

- Started looking at energy change, called 4 contractors, but only 1 called back with a bid
- 1980 – built an earth berm house – then had to actually get rid of heat
- Contractors are too busy – cost
- Inability of contractor – if they are they are out-of-state, not
 - Olson Solar Energy and Water Source
- Technology can be ahead of contractor's knowledge
 - Contractor may not have the time or energy to learn/know
- Why isn't it a requirement for energy contractors to have to meet code but not go beyond
 - Should happen at state level – needs to be upgraded
 - Changes are being worked on – energy code is
- Older houses have more barriers to energy efficiency
- Having to pay for project upfront, before rebate
 - Or using home equity loan
- Aging population – age 80 – payback period

If costs were not a barrier what sustainable practice would you do

- Interested in composting – would move to improve landfill – make prairie
- Not concerned about costs – would do it anyway
- Solar panels now cost less – disincentivize if use too much
- Would do groundwater heat pump
- Older home – insulate, new windows
- Better insulation
- Kilowatt need – replace cars with electric cars
- Older home would have difficulty wiring for EVs
- There are
- Went to electric to gas – are now needing to go back to electric
- Would do geothermal

- Change to air source heat pump

What resource would assist in sustainable practices?

- Want reduction act – written in plain simple language
- Easy button
- Website – rewording communication
- Guy with wood burning – air conditioning
- Easy access to find and learn about what opportunities are there
- Focus on energy has a lot of this

What are your concerns about climate change on community and personal life

- Concern about river flooding
- Does not believe in climate change
- Bugs and pollinators – flora and fauna
- Young people that will bear the brunt of the climate change
- We would become recipients of climate refugees
- Water table – changes, water in basements
- Increased precipitation – wttter winters – hotter days in the summers
 - o Need to become more resilient
- Water impacts – water resources will not not adapt
- Concerned about urgency – scientists are playing games oven
 - o Need more wind turbines
- There will be innovations that will improve the climate
- Will we survive the economical burden of making all the changes that we need to make
 - o County should start talking about climate crisis we are beyond climate change
- Transit

What barriers to getting around the county

- Difficult
- Experiences in transportation in county?
- Used to ride the bus in college
- Few bike trails in the area
- Get a train
- More electric mass transit vehicles
- Making home more EV friendly
- Maybe “gas stations” become energy stations
- Should be bus transportation to rural towns
- Continued adoption of EVs
 - o Barriers in bike trails in EC County
- County plans to improve shoulder on roads
- Solid Waste

What is finding accurate agreement

- Will post the Beaver Creek folder – get family agreement
- Seymour – our attendance is helpful
- Garbage hauler could post better labels
 - o The type of stuff changes

Barriers – confusion and dynamic

- EarthBound is offering composting
- County should provide more education – how to become a better consumer
- Incentivizing – are there any funds for more sustainable plastic/other practices?
- Businesses – all want impact – the home owner pays a price
- Should be pursuing large ???
- Need education mandates – make sustainability on EC Co webstire

Madeline's notes:

Transit and mobility

- What barriers have you faced with transportation?
- Expand transit service from city to county
- High traffic
 - o Hard for kids to bike to school
 - o Need better bike lanes and crossings from highways
 - o Hazardous E-bikes
- SOL without a driver's license
- Limited bus services
- Ridership and transit, buses are never full
 - o Get properly sized vehicles
 - o A central location
 - o New transit center looks like it'll be unhelpful to townspeople
- What experiences have you had with transportation?
- Van services to HWY 12
 - o Had to plan in advance
 - o Courteous, on time
- Pro-road, AA. Not rebuilt every year
 - o Bike lanes on either side should be implemented more, extended shoulders
 - o Plan bike trails off highways that are accessible
- What changes would you like to see?
- Working on grants for bus services
- Rail transportation plan
 - o 30+ mi extensions on either side
- Need better crossings
 - o More bike trails

- Finding a route is difficult
- Snow removal
- Availability of charging stations
 - Grant money is being supplied
 - Identifying installation spots
 - Residential/garage charging
 - Need to install them in towns

Residential

- What programs are you aware of?
- Need to get more information out
 - Have to work hard in order to find information
- Send information out to schools
- Getting schools into renewables
- Getting solar education through schools
 - What are your concerns with climate change?
- When my children said they did not want kids, I was relieved
- No more pussyfooting around
- Tired of public will being weak
- Capability of responsible actions
- Worried about forest fires, river systems (flooding)
- Not recognizing the daily threat
- High winds and ranges of temperatures
- Tick season
- Armadillos have been found in southern Wisconsin
- Denial is starting to go away
 - Everyone is recognizing the impact of climate change
 - Natural disaster coverage on the news
- What resources are you aware of?
- Waitlist through ECEC for solar community energy
 - Panels in a central location preferred
 - Battery storage
- Get rid of the privatization of trash haulers
- Organics composting
 - Earthbound is the only option
 - Many trucks are on the same roads
 - What is the path to privatization?
- What is happening in other countries?
 - No communication with other communities/cities/counties/countries
- Switch over to solid waste topic
- Managers at GFL do not think there is an interest
 - Organize as a neighborhood to get the same garbage services

- GFL wants municipal contract
- 40% of landfill is compostable paper and organics
- Landfill cannot produce electric energy currently
 - Engineers are in the works to design an efficient system
- City waste is coming in
- Field trips in high school and middle school to the landfill
 - What would you do if cost weren't a limit?
- Cost affects everything
- Preference for sustainable practices in home
- Do it or you don't
- Incentives sometimes help
- Amazing how little people understand solar/geothermal
 - Environmental/economic investment
 - Young generation should invest
 - Increased neighborly understanding
- What about the people in middle/lower socio-economic classes
 - Start with making efficient, insulated homes

Businesses

- What reservations do you have?
- Want to build a net zero building
 - Affordability
 - Inefficient warehouses
 - Most businesses lease, do not own
 - Talk to property owners
- Is the county getting the word out to businesses?
 - Cost efficiency information spreading must increase
- Difficult to get EVs for businesses vs. residential
 - Hiccups for chips and batteries
 - Test riding EV snow plows
- What information are you aware of?
- Focus on energy emails and newsletters are very general
- Solar for good
 - National connections through the church
- Had to work through focus on energy
 - Website is not helpful to actually do something
 - Must have determination to find good programs
- Simplify the sifting for the public
- How energy efficient are new buildings?
 - Work around the state law building code
 - Built according to developer's renewability
- Zoning plans?

- Must be updated according to current climate crisis, not 20-25 years ago

Waste

- Communication between trash haulers and customers is poor
- Current system is difficult to get correct information
 - Responsibility should lie with trash haulers
- Trash haulers are running the show
- Recycler showing services provided by each specific hauler on the website (make a matrix)
- Manufacturers have so much influence
- Governmental agencies talking more about environmental issues without the people between each other
- Must refuse waste into our homes
 - It is so difficult to avoid waste in our day-to-day life
 - We have chosen convenience
- Regionalizing waste management through the county
- Cost of recycling at the cost of purchase
 - Have people pay for it upfront
- Central resource recycling center
 - Outagamie's system
- Too scattered with different events (mattress, clean sweep, bulk item pickup)
 - Consistent site an place
 - Constant
 - Collaborative efforts with landfill owners and haulers
- Clean sweep not accepting hazardous pesticides

Agriculture

- What barriers have you faced?
- Organic farmer here
- Paid for cover crops
- Drastic changes must happen
 - Established generational processes hard to break
- Farmers are wanting to try something other than corn and beans, but cannot afford to
 - Must include incentives
- Must have enough organics to turn under
- Not much help from organizations
 - Lots of big agriculture
 - Pushing producing ethanol (40%)
- Change in crops from droughts in Kansas?
 - Still beans and corn
 - Not a lot of change in WI
 - Ogallala aquifer is disappearing

- High outdoor wells
- Big irrigation
- Waste management from manure to capitalize on
- No till?
 - Rye crop
 - Roll down and plant through it
 - They go out with chemicals to spray and kill instead
 - Using grass crop?
- Saying ethanol is renewable when it is not
 - Definitions of renewable are not accurate
 - Biofuels are bad
- Moratorium on CAFOs in EC county
- Resistance

Water

- Waste water
 - PFAs and biosolid fertilizers
 - Sludge
 - Wastewater (cosmetics)
 - Testing requirements on sludge is unknown
 - PFAs is relatively new
- Concerning of septic and well installation
- Fertilizer spray through drift
 - No regulation on wind dispersion
- Paper mill can dump residue on farm fields and landfills
 - Soil amendment
 - Creates absorptive matrix
 - Dyes makes it toxic
 - Not sure where it is dumped
 - Clay content is beneficial
- Leachate has soluble components
 - EC can't accept because know it contains PFAs
- Larger warmer summers are bad for birds
- No mow may to encourage pollinating flowers
 - Steer away from turf grass
- Zoning, plans
 - Clearing wood and fields and turning into turf grass
 - EIS on residential level
- Cities not designed for storm water management, design properties for that to have better filtering

STRENGTHS

- Education Institutions
- Water quality
- Forests
- Energy Providers (collaboration) ECEC heavily involved in FOE (2nd or 3rd in state)
- Partners and community organizations
- City of Eau Claire and Altoona climate commitments
- Strong community partnerships
- Leadership at county level
- Dedicated resources
- Operational plan created
- Existing data (surveys, GHG inventory, etc.)
- Recycling and sustainability dedicated staff (county level)
- Honest conversations and different perspectives
- Business infrastructure and existing services
- Focus on Energy and other conservation resources.

OPPORTUNITIES

- New grants, incentives, and other funding opportunities.
- Investigate and support ag sector with carbon sink technology.
- Landfill RNG could become operational again
- Community more aware and willing to learn/take action.
- Use community partnerships and resources to encourage community action.
- Study public health impacts through Mayo/UWEC program
- Lake Eau Claire and Altoona independent data collection
- Workforce development
- USDA Composting grant awarded (2023-2025)
- Earthbound Environmental - organics diversion
- New methods of transportation (rail, buses/micro-transit).

ASPIRATIONS

- Strengthen relationship with towns/villages
- Align ordinances/systems/resources to ensure goals can be met.
- improve access to information and programs.
- Resources (funding) needed for towns to move toward goals.
- Build/plan to be ready for technology advancements.
- Planning for community resilience (health, infrastructure, economic, etc.) to projected impacts of climate change.
- Equitable distribution of resources, programs, and technologies. Fill in gaps from existing resources and increase participation.
- Cost effective and beneficial programs for residents and businesses.
- Increase education and outreach.
- Additional staffing at county level to implement programs.
- planning to sustain load generation resources.
- Low to no cost incentives
- Updated building codes (UDC) at state level

RESULTS

- Continue identifying new funding sources.
- Exhaust current grant and funding opportunities
- Reduce community wide energy usage.
- Increase waste diversion.
- Increase participation in existing programs (LCD, FOE, Health Department (well testing), recycling, etc.)
- Reduce risk for people to invest in technologies and programs (how to vet contractors)
- Implementation of Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
- Implementation of utility and community solar project.
- Energy Independent Storm Shelters
- Micro-transit/commuting plan
- Identifying carbon sink projects
- Centralized waste diversion location
- Transparent and public facing data tracking and information on plan implementation.
- Grant writing/administration and other support for towns and villages.
- Encourage all towns to enter county zoning