



SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, December 8, 2015

Attending: Peter Fleischer, Jillian Kasow (Chair), Scott Kellogg, Kate Lawrence, Randy Milano, Sandy Misiewicz, Lori Quillen (Co-Secretary), Pete Sheehan (Vice-Chair), Ewa Sobczynska (Co-Secretary), Bill Trudeau, and Jennifer Viggiani

Absent: Joe Coffey, Shadi Khadivi, Chris Spencer, and Kevin Luteran

1. Jillian Kasow called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. A motion was made to adopt the October 20, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion was made by Ewa Sobczynska and seconded by Sandy Misiewicz. The motion carried.
3. Public comment period: Leah Golby, Common Councilwoman of Ward 10, thanked the SAC for its work, acknowledged the Common Council needs to nominate another SAC member, mentioned that Mayor Kathy Sheehan signed onto the Compact of Mayors Coalition, and expressed that sustainability in the city was moving in the right direction.
4. No communications to the SAC
5. MOE&S activities update by Kate Lawrence
 - a. Urged SAC members to sign up for ReZone updates at <http://rezonealbany.com> and follow ReZone on [Facebook](#).
 - b. Collaborating with Bill Trudeau on [bicycle wayfinding](#) and parking in Albany's South End, will have more information available shortly.
 - c. Is part of an on-going project to upgrade energy-efficiency in nine of the City's buildings.
 - d. With City Energy Manager Kevin Luteran, is working on next steps for National Grid-owned streetlights.
6. Update on interim voting
 - a. Pete Sheehan provided an update on Mayor Kathy Sheehan joining the Compact of Mayors Coalition. Participants recognize the role that cities play in reducing carbon emissions, and that local actions can have a significant global impact (more [here](#)). The Mayor's Office issued a press release on December 7, 2015; it was picked up by [WAMC](#).
 - i. Pete motioned that the SAC support the Mayor for her sustainability leadership, Jill seconded, all were in favor.
 - ii. The Energy Subcommittee will be working with Kate to achieve some of the goals set forth in the Compact of Mayors Coalition.
 - b. Jill led a discussion on amending SAC bylaws to permit voting via email on time sensitive matters, in between scheduled SAC meetings.
 - i. Jill noted that the SAC is bound by open meeting laws that prohibit voting by email; members can exercise their rights as citizens to weigh-in on issues.
 - ii. Ewa inquired about the limitations of representing oneself publicly as part of the SAC. Counsel noted that one could express positions that have been voted



on or are accepted policy adopted by the SAC, but that when positions are personal opinions one cannot speak for the SAC. Similarly, subcommittees don't represent the SAC until recommendations or actions are voted on by the SAC as a body.

- iii. Counsel further clarified that open meeting law dictates that the SAC has to assemble in person to vote and that impromptu meetings need to be scheduled 72 hours in advance.
 - iv. Conversation ensued regarding ratifying SAC bylaws to allow the SAC Chair to make emergency decisions for the committee.
 - v. After spirited discussion, Jill motioned to vote to exercise that we will not be establishing ratification, Sandy seconded, all were in favor.
 - vi. For additional clarification, Peter motioned that we should not give emergency powers to the SAC Chair, Jill seconded, all were in favor.
7. Albany Bicycle Coalition update by Virginia Hammer, Lorenz Warden, and Jim Maximovich
- a. Discussed benefits of protected bike lanes on Madison Avenue, including traffic calming measures, alternatives presented by the City, and the Coalition's analysis. Three things being considered: shared roads, bike lanes, and no bike lanes. (See: Madison Avenue Road Diet) Presenters noted that bike lanes lead to economic development and revitalization.
 - b. Showed a brief video, The Rise of Protected Bike Lanes.
 - c. Presented a PowerPoint
 - i. Bike lanes separate cyclists from traffic. In Albany this would be primarily via parked cars. Proposed benefits of bike lane adoption include:
 1. Making biking accessible to wider audiences
 2. Encouraging biking for short trips (+ for businesses/shops)
 3. Attracting Millennials, 70% of whom want to live in cities
 4. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 5. Protected bike lanes see ~75% increase in riders in first year
 - ii. The case for Madison/Albany
 1. 1 in 4 Albany households has no car, bikes are a means of transportation, current infrastructure is neglected.
 2. Madison is a networked street – commerce, state buildings, bus routes – and very suitable for bike lanes.
 3. Protected bike lanes would result in some parking loss, to accommodate turning lanes, but surveying indicates there is ample vacancy.
 4. Protected bike lanes align with CDTC New Visions Plan, the Albany 2030 Plan, Rezone Albany, Capital Region Sustainability Plan, and the Compact of Mayors.
 5. Could set an important precedent by adopting protected bike lanes as part of the Madison Avenue Road Diet.



iii. Q&A Session

1. Ewa discussed the transformation she witnessed in Washington, DC when protected bike lanes were adopted. Without them, it takes courage to bike in the street. Advocated designing cities around people, not cars, and investing in infrastructure that promotes bikes as a choice.
2. Jennifer Viggiani inquired if the Coalition has surveyed business owners and/or provided incentives for bike racks. Virginia noted a number of businesses were on-board (Café Madison, Pour House, Juniors) and that grant money was available from CDTA for bike racks. Also noted there was a bike fit-it station at the Washington Avenue Branch of the Albany Public Library.

8. Transportation Subcommittee update on City initiatives

- a. Sandy was unable to participate in the SAC last year. A planner with CDTC, she wanted to give the SAC an update on ongoing initiatives in the City. On review of transportation priorities in the SAC Annual Report, many were either in motion or will be completed in the next year.
- b. CDTC has a taskforce looking to implement bikeshare in the Capital Region (Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga Springs). In 2016, this initiative is poised to take concrete steps forward; a pilot and analysis have already been done in the City. Some partners are ahead of the City of Albany in their preparedness. (See: City of Albany Bike Share Feasibility Study)
 - i. Jill asked what was meant by prepared. Sandy noted that Schenectady has gotten in front of the City of Albany at the municipal level in their commitment to bike share. Also, Schenectady has entities like GE with deep pockets that want to establish bikeshare for their campus.
 - ii. Ewa noted that in most cities bikeshare is public/private partnership, where the city provides the legislation to make possible. She asked if the Capital Region was looking at a different model. Sandy responded that it was a work in progress. Kate sits on a committee that is issuing an RFP for a bikeshare operator. Kate explained the committee is made up of representatives from each city and interested parties (such as SUNY Albany, SEFCU, Albany Medical College, GE, etc.). There is a complicated structure with multiple people paying into it.
 - iii. Kate and Sandy will keep the SAC abreast of bikeshare efforts in the region. Sandy commented that it was an important feature in designing a more sustainable transportation system.
 - iv. Sandy recommends SAC members weigh in on the importance of bike parking as part of zoning in Albany Rezone.
- c. Capital Carshare is another ongoing initiative; Kate also sits on this committee. They have an outpost in the City of Albany with new cars at the Playdium Bowling Center and the Delaware Library. A big issue is that Capital CarShare can't park their cars



on the street (no dedicated spot). This isn't something that can be solved without state legislation.

- i. Jill asked why a dedicated spot required state legislation. Kate explained that public parking spots were supposed to be open to everyone, not just private businesses, and that there is a difference with 'public transit.' If Capital CarShare were considered 'public transit' street parking could be possible. Bill noted that this opens up maintenance issues such as unattended vehicles, snow removal, etc.
 - ii. Sandy will look into how Ithaca resolved dedicating parking issues. Peter commented that Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, and others would have similar interest.
 - d. Regarding Complete Streets, the city is developing a guidebook that is starting at targeted locations. Bill and Randy are on the committee, and working to bring the legislation (put forward by Leah Golby) into reality. Also ongoing is bridging the gap in the off street bike system near Corning Preserve.
 - e. CDTA has plans for 40 miles of Bus Rapid Transit with a 2017 timeframe that would provide enhanced transit along the Washington-Western Corridor and the River Corridor. Bill is building the signaling system for Western Avenue.
 - f. CDCT is a lead on the I-787/Hudson Waterfront Corridor Study, a transportation and revitalization effort that seeks to improve access to the Hudson River. A set of strategies will be presented to public for review in the spring; there is an effort toward reducing 787's footprint, making the waterfront more public-accessible, and relocating the N-S corridor.
9. New business: Identifying subcommittee priorities
- a. Sandy/Transportation Subcommittee
 - i. Developing basic criteria for identifying streets that warrant higher level treatment for bicycle infrastructure (independent of what happens on Madison Ave.).
 - ii. Subcommittee convening in January to identify additional priorities and next steps.
 - b. Pete/Energy Subcommittee
 - i. Top priority is LED street lighting; we are a resource for the City on behalf of residents who want to move this forward. Working to invite a lighting expert from RPI and get up to speed on a bill the Governor signed that will permit cities and municipalities to petition the commission to make this happen.
 - ii. Microgrid/solar installations, including energy efficiency and net zero building. We are looking for a building that is fair game for solar.
 - iii. Sandy noted that NYSERDA recently issued a grant to install LEDs in the Town/Village of Colonie, focused on area where pedestrian fatalities have occurred (near New Karner Rd). Can fill Pete in on what they are learning.
 - c. Scott Kellogg/Urban Agriculture Subcommittee



- i. Working on chickens; question regarding the zoning process and proposed use categories.
 - ii. Some discussion of the Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance Public Draft ensued, Kate noted the project is going on for a year and there will be other opportunities to weigh in.
 - d. Joe Coffey/Water Subcommittee
 - i. Preserve the Alcove reservoir as the primary long-term water supply source for the City of Albany.
 - ii. Regarding water supply, determine critical numbers and key performance indicators.
 - iii. Develop a water conservation program
 - iv. Review and Update City Code Chapter 371; "Water and Waterways", and other relevant City Codes to implement Best Practices as identified in the Draft Action and Management Plan and in relation to the latest climatological and sea level rise forecasts.
 - v. Review NYS Watershed Rules and Regulations.
 - e. Lori Quillen/Outreach Subcommittee
 - i. Connect with neighborhood associations to learn about grassroots sustainability initiatives, assess concerns/needs, and educate residents about the SAC.
 - ii. Foster an online, Albany-focused sustainability community.
 - iii. Bolster sustainability resources on the MOE&S website, including NYSERDA energy assessments, options for solar energy, and options for composting.
 - iv. Explore collaborative opportunities with likeminded partners (such as Madison Theater).
 - f. Subcommittee general reminders
 - i. When subcommittees meet, invitations should go out to the SAC as a body
 - ii. Subcommittee meeting minutes should be posted on our Dropbox account
10. PowerPoint presentations for SAC outreach
 - a. Ewa noted that a draft PowerPoint was created for outreach purposes, the Outreach Subcommittee will be attending Neighborhood Association meetings to introduce the SAC and solicit feedback on sustainability concerns/needs
 - b. Subcommittee chairs were asked to contribute a slide outlining their priorities; the draft file is in the Dropbox Outreach Subcommittee folder.
11. Discussion of next meeting on February 25, 2016
12. Adjournment

Lori Quillen
February 22, 2016