



Committee Members

Mary Knittle, Chair
Evelyn Herwitz, Vice Chair
Patricia Austin
Ted Conna
Nathan Fournier
Mary Leovich
Deirdra Murphy

Contacting the Committee

Department of Sustainability and Resilience
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Email: GreenWorcester@worcesterma.gov
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www.WorcesterMA.gov/GreenWorcester

Department of Sustainability and Resilience

Our Mission:

To implement the ambitious and urgent goals of the Green Worcester Sustainability and Resilience Strategic Plan (GWP), a roadmap for making Worcester the greenest mid-size city in the country.

Our Staff:

John Odell, *Chief*
Jacquelyn Burmeister, *Lakes & Ponds Program Coordinator*
Jessica Davis, *Project Manager*
Robert DeFosse, *Energy Services Manager*
Sarah Mount, *Energy Analyst*
Nick Pagan, *Senior Environmental Analyst*
Luba Zhaurova, *Director of Projects*

Accessibility:

The GWAC is committed to ensuring that its public meetings are accessible to all. Should you require interpretation, auxiliary aids, services, translations, written materials in other formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, please contact the DSR a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Translations:

Hay disponibles servicios de interpretación y otras adaptaciones con solicitud previa.
Avisanos por
greenworcester@worcesterma.gov

CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Green Worcester Advisory Committee

Monday, June 26, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Meeting Room A, Officer Manny Familia Way

Attendance

Present

Mary Knittle, Chair
Evelyn Herwitz, Vice Chair
Ted Conna (Online)
Nate Fournier
Mary Leovich (Online)
Deirdra Murphy (Online)

Absent

Patricia Austin

Staff

John Odell
Sarah Mount

Chair Knittle called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm.

1. **Welcome**

2. **Approval of Minutes – May 15, 2023**

i. The committee unanimously approved the minutes with Vice Chair Herwitz's correction of Ms. Jacquelyn Burmeister's name and Chair Knittle's correction that the energy summit held on 5/12 was held by the Worcester Business Journal, not the Chamber of Commerce.

3. **New Business**

a. *Presentation by Grace Sliwoski, Regional Environmental Council (REC) Director of Programs (30 minutes) (Attachment A)*

- i. Vice Chair Herwitz thanked Ms. Sliwoski for her work and commended her choice to focus on food systems.
- ii. Ms. Sliwoski commented that she sees a large tie between sustainability and food systems, especially through the planting of fruit and nut trees.
- iii. Chair Knittle thanked Ms. Sliwoski and the REC for their impactful work.
- iv. Member Murphy commented that the REC is beneficial on so many levels. They provide good nutritious food and help residents understand plants and learn how to grow gardens. This work is key to understanding how important the Earth and its resources are.

- v. Member Fournier commended the REC on their regional work and how well they've been able to create a fruitful collaboration between municipal, private, and non-profit sectors.
- vi. Ms. Sliwoski noted that it is all about networks and working together.

4. DSR Updates (15 minutes)

i. Grants:

i. *Submitted the Urban and Community Forestry Program Grant Proposal with Other Departments and Community Stakeholders (6/2/2023)*

1. Mr. Odell stated that DSR successfully submitted the Urban Forestry Grant. The grant was for \$23 million and involved a variety of different measures including: planting trees on publicly and privately owned property; maintaining the existing tree canopy in the city's federally defined environmental justice areas; establishing a tree nursery; and creating an arborist training and outreach program with our schools and community partners. The department expects to hear back about the grant at the end of the summer.
2. Vice Chair Herwitz commended DSR on their herculean effort and stated, "that everyone at DSR deserves our thanks."
3. Mr. Odell noted that it was a team effort supported by Luba Zhaurova, Jessie Davis, and Sarah Mount as well as a significant number of community partners.
4. Member Conna asked if there is an update on the status on the Urban Forest Master Plan. Mr. Odell stated that he did not have an update.

ii. Policy:

i. *Update on the Specialized Stretch Code timeline*

1. Mr. Odell explained that DSR plans to bring a specialized stretch code memo to the city council next month. Mr. Odell described the Specialized Stretch Code as an "essentially net-zero building code" that cities in MA are allowed to opt-in to. It is different from the regular stretch code which is already in effect in Worcester for residential builders and will take effect for commercial builders on 7/1/2023. The specialized stretch code is roughly a 20% bump up from the current code. It provides a significant incentive to create buildings that are ready for electrification while not eliminating other fuel hookups. He noted that there are many incentives currently available to help with the additional costs of electrifying buildings and that research has shown that the upfront cost of electrifying buildings is only marginally higher in smaller buildings and electrifying is actually cheaper in multi-family buildings. There are also significant savings in emissions. Mr. Odell stated that DSR will create a memo for the city council's July 18th meeting recommending that the council adopt the specialized stretch code. He noted that there may be debate on whether to implement the code on January 1, 2024, or July 1, 2024.
2. Chair Knittle asked if the new code only pertains to new buildings or if it also pertains to renovations and rehabs. Mr. Odell responded that it would apply to new buildings and to significant additions. The specifics are described by DOER. In general, a renovation of less than 50% of a home will not trigger the specialized stretch code.

iii. Community Engagement:

i. *Energy Advocates Position Posting (Attachment B)*

1. Mr. Odell stated that DSR is looking to hire two part-time temporary Energy Advocate positions. The Energy Advocates walk residents through the Mass Save program and will help people who do not traditionally take advantage of the Mass Save program. He furthered that the advocates may determine that a resident may not be eligible for Mass Save but may be able to direct low-income residents to the WCAC's programs. Priority

review is set to close in mid-July, but the posting will be open until filled. The positions are expected to be 15-19 hours a week and will be funded for eighteen (18) months.

2. Chair Knittle added that this field currently has a lot of demand, and this work experience is extremely valuable. She also stated that programs like Mass Save are for everyone – homeowners and tenants in every situation.

ii. *Flood Watch promotion: seeking volunteers*

1. Mr. Odell stated that DSR is looking for volunteers for their flood watch program. Volunteers will go out during and right after rainstorms and look for areas of the city that are flooded. As the climate changes, rain events have gotten more severe and they will continue to get more severe over time. These events can have serious flooding impacts especially in low-lying areas. The program goal is to track where these flood events occur so that the city can plan for grey and green infrastructure improvements in those areas. He finished by saying that if you are interested in this volunteer program, you should go to DSR's website (www.worcesterma.gov/sustainability-resilience) to sign up.

iii. *Update on the Green Worcester Annual Report*

1. Mr. Odell relayed that DSR hopes to have a preliminary draft by the next meeting and a final report for the early fall.

iv. Lakes & Ponds Program

i. *Indian Lake Alum Dosing Station Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (6/16/2023) (Attachment C)*

1. Mr. Odell praised the recent ribbon cutting ceremony for the alum dosing station. He thanked Councilor Mero-Carlson for attending, speaking, and ceremoniously starting the dosing station. He also thanked Jacquelyn Burmeister, Nick Pagan, and Emily Maynard for their work.

5. Standing Items

i. Community Outreach

- i. Mr. Mount asked the committee to think of speakers they would like to hear from in the future. Member Conna mentioned that he would like to hear from other departments that work on sustainability, like the Department of Transportation and Mobility.
- ii. Vice Chair Herwitz relayed she will highlight the Green Worcester Plan and Dashboard at her upcoming meeting with the Briarwood Community
- iii. Chair Knittle agreed that the Dashboard has a great wealth of information in it.

ii. Community Feedback

- i. Mr. Odell highlighted a Telegram & Gazette article about the Forestry grant on 6/7 and another article talking about Green Streets on 5/16.
- ii. Chair Knittle mentioned an effort to bring more cooling centers to the city. Mr. Odell noted that Health and Human Services is playing point on creating cooling centers in the near term, but DSR's work of planting trees and installing energy efficient heat pumps in community centers will eventually help the effort.

iii. Media

a. *Telegram & Gazette Article, 5/16/23 "Worcester to get first 'green' street. Here's what it means" (Attachment D)*

- i. Member Conna asked what the likelihood is of approaching this level of greenness with every other street project. Mr. Odell responded that the city's long-term goal is that every street that gets a significant upgrade – like with Endicott and Bigelow- would become a "Green Street" to the best of our ability. The Endicott-Bigelow Project is a collaboration between three different

departments, DSR, the Department of Transportations and Mobility (DTM) and the Department of Economic Development. DTM is using this a learning experience and showcase, but the goal is to have this be a showcase that gets copied for other streets in the city.

- iv. *Other*
 - i. Member Leovich commended the committee and employees at DSR for being so energized about the environment.
- v. *Upcoming Events (not DSR organized)*
 - i. Mr. Odell detailed a heat pump webinar on June 27th 2023, that helped people get and compare quotes for different heat pump systems. The webinar was recorded and will be available at abodeem.com.
 - ii. Member Murphy noted that MIT's Climate interactive is having a virtual in-roads workshop on June 29.
 - iii. Member Conna mentioned the annual SolarFest in Vermont. You can find out more at Solarfest.org.
 - iv. Member Conna mentioned the annual Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Conference online on July 24 during the week and hybrid during the weekend at Worcester State University. Member Fournier also recommended the NOFA conference. He stated that there should be many great speakers and it should highlight a lot of great work happening in the region. More information is available at Nofamass.org.

The committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:34pm.

Attachments

Attachment A: REC Slides

Attachment B: Energy Advocate Job description

Attachment C: Indian Lake Alum Dosing Station Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Spectrum1 Article

Attachment D: Telegram & Gazette Article, 5/16/23 "Worcester to get first 'green' street. Here's what it means"

2023 Upcoming Meetings

Green Worcester Advisory Committee meetings begin on Mondays at 5:30pm:

<i>July 31</i>	<i>Levi Lincoln</i>
<i>September 18</i>	<i>Meeting Room A*</i>
<i>October 16</i>	<i>Esther Howland</i>
<i>November 27</i>	<i>Esther Howland</i>

**Meeting Room A is located at 50 Manny Familia Way*



Regional Environmental Council

Creating a just food system, *together.*



Our Mission

*To bring people together to **create a just food system** and to build healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities in Worcester, MA and beyond.*



Our Programs

UGROW: We build and support Community and School Gardens across Worcester. We provide in school and after school garden programming as well as community gardening workshops.

YouthGROW: We provide economic opportunity and personal / professional development to Worcester youth through urban agriculture

Community Farmers Markets: We bring fresh, local produce to those who need it most through our Standing and Mobile Farmers Markets





UGROW

Urban Garden Resources of Worcester

The **UGROW Community & School Gardens Network** increases access to and use of gardens throughout Worcester through direct resources, community building, and education.



UGROW Workshops



School Gardens Programming



Farm to Early Childhood





YouthGROW

Youth Growing Organics in Worcester

YouthGROW is an urban agriculture-focused youth development and employment program for Worcester teens.





Growing Together



Woo Sox Gardens





Ray



Richlove



Cyndi



Kimora



Fidele & Tom



Naria



Erica



Lulu



Jalyna



Community Farmers Markets

Standing and Mobile Farmers Markets



The goals of the **Community Farmers Markets Program** is to increase food security in our cities by creating access to locally grown and culturally relevant food, while lifting up local farms and creating inclusion of more diverse farms and farmers.



Mobile and Community Farmers Markets





Healthy Incentives Programs



Get Involved



- Drop in volunteer hours
- Gardening Workshop
- School Garden Summer volunteers
- Internships
- Learn more at www.recworchester.org



Contact Information



Grace Sliwoski
Director of Programs
grace@recworchester.org



Job Details

The City of Worcester is an EEO/AA Employer. Preference is given to Worcester residents.

ENERGY ADVOCATE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE CITY OF WORCESTER

The City of Worcester seeks applicants for two (2) part-time, temporary **Energy Advocate** (Staff Assistant I) for the Sustainability and Resilience Department. The positions will lead the City of Worcester's outreach to residents and small businesses with a goal of increasing participation in Mass Save® energy efficiency programs, especially among renters, landlords, moderate income households, language-isolated households, and small businesses. Energy Advocates will play a critical role in Worcester's Smart Energy Advice initiative managed through the Department of Sustainability and Resilience. This position is part of a cohort of Energy Advocates and community leaders statewide who are leading similar outreach efforts in their communities as part of the Mass Save® Community First Partnership program. This is an exciting opportunity for organized, people-oriented individuals who are connected to their community and are passionate about helping people reduce their energy costs while promoting sustainability, and specific program training will be provided.

Bilingual and multilingual applicants are encouraged to apply.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Work well with diverse audiences and stakeholders (including gender, race, sexual orientation, class, age, and education level) and can recognize multiple perspectives and needs
- Commitment to energy efficiency, community organizing, and equity issues
- Primarily remote with the benefit of flexible work hours with an expectation of working some nights and weekends at community events
- Creative outreach, engagement, and marketing approaches, including leveraging in-person and phone outreach, social media, local media, and partnerships to engage priority populations
- Excellent time management skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, as well as public speaking.
- Detail oriented, organized, enthusiastic and flexible
- Ability to input data in designated and approved computer software programs
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively as part of a team
- Ability to provide a minimum two-year commitment

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Familiar with the topics of energy, energy efficiency, and building and vehicle electrification
- Experience leading public engagement and community outreach work
- Experience communicating and working with populations diverse in language, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity and/or cultural backgrounds
- Strong computer skills, including use of Microsoft Office Suite

- Reliable method of transportation to travel to work, including nights and weekends for events, presentations, and community meetings
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Competent with the topics of energy, energy efficiency, and building and vehicle electrification.
- Three (3) years of experience leading public engagement and community outreach work.
- Three (3) years of experience communicating and working with populations diverse in language, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity and/or cultural backgrounds.
- Have existing relationships with local non-governmental organizations.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office suite and other computer software including Google Suites and Salesforce.
- Worcester resident

SALARY: \$25.08 hourly, part-time.

To apply, please visit: www.worcesterma.gov/employment or send resume and cover letter on or before **FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2023**, to: City of Worcester, 455 Main Street, Room 109, Worcester, MA 01608. Preference is given to Worcester residents. **The City of Worcester is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. Women, minorities, people with disabilities and protected veterans are encouraged to apply.** Direct inquiries to: City Hall, Human Resources, Room 109, 508-799-1030, HR@worcesterma.gov.

Worcester celebrates 'major step' in cyanobacteria treatment at Indian Lake

WORCESTER, Mass. - If you've ever visited Indian Lake in for swimming, boating or fishing only to learn out it's been closed for the day due to cyanobacteria, a new treatment system unveiled Friday could make those disappointing outings a thing of the past.

What You Need To Know

- **The City of Worcester unveiled Friday its new cyanobacteria treatment station**
 - **The Alum Dosing Station is expected to result in fewer closures at Indian Lake due to cyanobacteria**
 - **Water treatments will be delivered directly at Ararat Brook, the source of most contamination**
 - **The station is just the second of its kind in Massachusetts**
-

The newly-constructed Alum Dosing Station at Indian Lake is being touted as a major step in the management of stormwater pollution, with two 6,000 gallon tanks that will make cyanobacteria treatment more efficient and much less disruptive.

Jacquelyn Burmeister, coordinator of Worcester's Lakes and Ponds Program, said years of studies showed most of the contaminants were flowing in from Ararat Brook where the new dosing station is located.

"By using the Alum Dosing Station, the hope is that there's less phosphorous going into the lake, there's less cyanobacteria blooms," she said. "That's going to result in fewer public health closures at the beaches, at the boat ramps as well as increased water quality."

Indian Lake was closed for almost an entire summer in 2014 due to cyanobacteria blooms. It proved to be a turning point for lake monitoring and treatment, but as Burmeister explained, it wasn't exactly a foolproof system for keeping the blue-green algae in check.

"We would put alum, aluminum sulfate, or polyaluminum chloride directly on the surface of the lake, and during that time, we found that it was really effective, but when it rained again, more pollutants would come in through Ararat Brook, so we were fighting a losing battle," Burmeister said.

The Alum Dosing Station will replace that process, and it's just the second of its kind in Massachusetts.

Burmeister said the stations are so rare because not many cities have a dedicated Lakes and Ponds Program like Worcester to push for one, and she's grateful everyone stepped up to make it happen.

"It's really this wonderful example of how community partnerships, good data and innovative thinking can come together to drive a really novel project that has really high hopes for the city," Burmeister said.

The construction of the Alum Dosing Station was a collaborative effort between the City of Worcester and the Indian Lake Watershed Association. They were also supported by the Bancroft School and the Universalist Church, both of which donated the land where the dosing station was built.

Worcester to get first 'green' street. Here's what it means

A \$2 million redesign of a stretch of Endicott Street could be a template for future environmental hubs.



WORCESTER — It's billed as possibly the "first complete green street" in Worcester, setting the stage for more in the years to come.

Stephen Rolle, Worcester's commissioner of transportation and mobility, made the "green street" comment during a recent community meeting at the Green Island Neighborhood Center to announce the redesign of the intersection at Endicott and Bigelow streets.

Think bike lanes, wider sidewalks with trees and other greenery, and narrower streets that reduce vehicle speeding to boost safety for motorists and pedestrians. It's all supposed to happen at a major access point to Crompton Park, located in the Green Island neighborhood.



The \$2 million project will be paid with federal Community Development Block Grant money and could start next spring or summer, according to city officials. Details need to be finalized before the project is put out to bid.

'Green back into Green Island'

“We’re putting the green back into Green Island,” said John Odell, the city’s chief sustainability officer, during the same community meeting. An apropos comment on many fronts.



The green means cold, hard cash. It also means the money will be invested into an area that is classified as an Environmental Justice Community. That's a designation made by the state and such communities generally have a preponderance of low-income residents of color with varying levels of English-speaking proficiency.

Green Island didn't receive the level of financial investment that it should have over the years, said Odell during the meeting. He also pointed out that Green Island suffers from the "heat island effect," meaning it's one of the hottest parts of the city because it has fewer street trees and other green infrastructure to cool things off.



To lower the temperature and beautify the area, the redesign includes planting 42 new trees including 17 along Bigelow Street. Seven trees will be taken down because they're in poor shape.

Some objections

While some attending the meeting expressed support for the plan, others said it didn't address previously communicated neighborhood concerns about the need for more affordable housing.

Another objection was a loss of 19 parking spots on the Crompton Park side of Endicott Street, as parallel parking will replace perpendicular parking. Some residents bemoaned the loss, saying residents need those spots. The plan adds 24 spaces on nearby Harding Street.



“Bump-outs” are also part of the redesign. They’re extensions of sidewalks at intersections, creating space for tree planting that will also narrow streets to improve safety for motorists and pedestrians. Since 2016, 24 crashes occurred along Endicott Street, said Rolle, four times the state average for a stretch of roadway of similar size.

New bike lanes on the Crompton Park side of Endicott are another feature as the city is in the early stages of a city-wide bike network, said Rolle.



More than 200 responses to a citywide survey showed 62% gave the redesign the highest level of support, said city officials. A more focused survey of Green Island residents generated far less participation – 28 responses including 10 that gave the plan the highest mark.

Contact Henry Schwan at henry.schwan@telegram.com. Follow him on Twitter @henrytelegram