

Marine GreenStep Cities Meeting

Minutes – 26 October 2019

Present: Anne Reich, Leslie MacKenzie, Liz Kelly, Kevin Hein, Gwen Roden, Peter Foster, Cecily Harris, Wendy Ward

Agenda: Review GreenStep Best practices for applicability to Marine and interest of committee

The full Excel spreadsheet of best practices was sent out several months ago. A shortened list was sent out last month and feedback received led to a further shortening of the list. The Best Practices with the highest ratings (on a scale of 0 to 2, those above 1) were then handed out for review.

The list of best practices is very long so we only had time to talk about a few of the areas. Rather than choose specific goals, the group identified the type of activity/tactics that would be the best fit for this Best Practice. It was noted that similar subtopics could be found in several best practice areas – it's inter-related work. Furthermore, many of the Best Practices are the creation of ordinances.

In this meeting we discussed the topics below:

Best Practice 1: Efficient Public Buildings

We are researching 1.1 – Benchmarking database for energy and water usage in city buildings. We are at GreenStep #3. In order to reach #4, we need to begin benchmarking and measuring. Kevin H. met with Lissa at CERT to talk about how other communities of our size have implemented 1.1 benchmarking. Kevin will continue to pursue this.

Best Practice 18: Parks and Trails

The first two practices require ordinances and management practices.

18.8 – develop a program to involve community members in hands-on land restoration and stewardship projects. This looks like the most promising area to pursue. The tree planting project is intended to be an ongoing project, and would qualify. Restoration work at the Mill Park would also qualify. We may just need to gather these projects together under the rubric of a “Program.”

Best Practices 4: Efficient Outdoor Lighting and Signals

Gwen was able to explain the work that had previously been done with the replacement of lights with LED lights. Some of the energy efficiency improvements have already been made. The question at hand is whether our lights are Dark Sky-compliant, and whether we needed as much lighting as we have – both on municipal buildings and private homes. Possible next steps:

- Lighting inventory
- Community education on Dark Sky compliance and why it matters

Best Practice 22: Solid Waste Reduction

Anne told the group about the WasteWise project led by Dorothy Dietz and Gwen talked about the positive impact of garbage can fencing in keeping people from dumping garbage into recycling bins. The area of further potential in solid waste reduction is food waste organics, which cannot be brought to our yard waste organic site. Composting bins are one answer, but not for meat/dairy/oil products. The county is building an environmental center in Hugo, but evidently it is not completed. Possible next steps:

- Community education about what to do with food waste
- Barriers around Brookside garbage cans?

Best Practice 23: Local Air Quality

This BP had many high-rated actions. Conversation focused on two items: burning and EV charging. The committee did not feel a burning ordinance would receive much support at this time. Possible next steps:

- Educational campaign about replacing fireplaces and woodburning stoves with high-efficiency models that release almost no particulate matter (pollution)
- Educational campaign regarding air quality and recreational burning
- Work to install EV chargers on Judd St and by the Folk School. A subcommittee should work on identifying the best locations, and the committee should look for funding sources.

Best Practices 24: Community Engagement

This focuses on reporting outcomes of measurements and sustainability indicators. We have not been gathering sustainability indicators. We would need to start doing that. Possible next steps:

- Identify relevant sustainability indicators and establish baselines
- Review outcome measures from city plans and reports in order to report progress
- Conduct/support broad sustainability education (in conjunction with folk school?)
- Conduct a community visioning workshop using Strong Towns or Transition model
- Invite Chuck Marohn from Strong Towns as a speaker
- Create a communications plan. A small group is meeting next week to draft a plan for review at the next meeting.

Anne correctly observed that some of the activities on the spreadsheet had previously been recorded as done. They were left on the spreadsheet because questions had been raised about whether they had been fully completed. It is also possible that we have completed more activities than we have been credited for. Gwen and Leslie will meet next week to review the complete spreadsheet to confirm what has and has not been done.