



Green Practices Commission

6801 Delmar Boulevard, University City, Missouri 63130, Phone: (314) 862-6767, Fax: (314) 863-9146

MEETING MINUTES (APPROVED)

GREEN PRACTICES COMMISSION

Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Heman Park Community Center

1. **Call to Order:** 5:36 pm

2. **Roll Call:**

Attendees Present: John Solodar (Chairman), Connie Mueller, Mathew Emden, Adam Staudt, Mary Kennedy (Staff Liaison)

Attendees Absent: Tim Schmalz, Jonathan Stitleman, Stacy Clay (Council Liaison)

3. **Opening Round:** None

4. **Approval of Minutes:** March 9, 2023

Commissioner Mueller moved to approve the March 9, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Emden, and unanimously approved.

5. **Special Presentation:**

Shelby Oldroyd of planning NEXT gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Plan Update to the Green Practices Commission. In addition to the presentation, below are the critical questions that were asked of the GPC and the summary of the discussion:

- a. The comprehensive plan could recommend that new green space is introduced within the Flood Mitigation Area in lieu of encouraging new development that would be vulnerable to flooding. This green space could serve as a community amenity and have environmental benefits such as to help with stormwater management and restore natural ecosystems and habitat. ***If green space is developed within the flood plain, how can it best support the City's sustainability goals?***
 - Commissioners suggested the following uses for flood prone areas: community gardens, paved or unpaved trails, and more temporary activities such as soccer/sports fields.
 - Chair Solodar referenced the Hodiament Apartments in St. Louis City as a great example to support immigrants.
 - Commissioners emphasized that buyouts should be pursued to avoid repeat flooding damage in neighborhoods.
 - There was a question about the plan for City-owned properties that are in the flood plain, such as the property at Olive and Midland, and that it would be helpful to understand what the City has proposed for these properties, to better understand what they might consider as acceptable uses. Currently the site has a pile of dirt on it that has created some stormwater runoff issues to surrounding properties.
 - Developing a research center on one of the City-owned sites was suggested, but there was also concern about new buildings in flood prone areas. However, stricter building standards, such as elevating the



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building higher than is required in flood zones, was suggested as an idea.

- Alternative transportation, such as bike routes where bicyclists and pedestrians feel genuinely safe, possibly on lower-traffic streets, was emphasized as an important consideration. It is important to be strategic in connecting these to Great Rivers Greenway's routes.
 - Mary Kennedy mentioned that a road diet for Olive was suggested in the City's Economic Development Plan, as a strategy to create more space for pedestrians and bicyclists. Commissioners Emden and Mueller agreed this could be helpful and mentioned having a row of parked cars between bicyclists and the road improves the feeling of safety.
- b. The Draft Conceptual Framework Map includes areas that are recommended for Focused Growth and Redevelopment, where higher intensity development may be pursued. This presents opportunities for encouraging green buildings. The comprehensive plan could recommend the use of rating systems such as LEED or Energy Star, and could also recommend more specific green building standards. ***What kinds of standards or guidelines could best encourage green buildings in these areas, supporting sustainability while not being too onerous so as to discourage the kind of development that is desired?***
 - Commissioner Emden stated that Energy Star is his preferred performance standard because it is not expensive to participate in, over LEED, which is more expensive.
 - Commissioner Staudt shared some of the challenges with green building standards, mostly that it's financially infeasible for many developments because the cost savings come years later (5-10 years), often after a developer has sold the building. He also shared that the City updating its building codes to the most recent ICC standards would go a long way for energy efficiency. The City is currently on the 2018 version.
 - Commissioner Emden emphasized that the biggest impact will be on how to improve efficiency in existing buildings, so finding ways to incentivize this will be important. There are existing resources and programs to help fund these improvements for homeowners such as Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC), Ameren, DOE, Missouri DNR, Missouri PAYS Program. The City should find ways to connect residents to these existing programs.
 - Mary shared that the Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force is beginning a planning process to establish a home repair/improvement program, and that perhaps weatherization improvements could be incorporated into the program.

6. **Citizen Participation:** None

7. **New Business:**

- a. Staff Liaison Mary Kennedy shared with the GPC that there is a federal formula grant opportunity (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant), for which the City has been allocated \$76,120, pending approval of an eligible project. The City Manager has suggested these funds be used for an electric vehicle charging station project on City-owned parking lots/garages.



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8. Old Business:

- a. Electronics recycling event: Mary Kennedy gave an update to the GPC that the required resolution for the St. Louis County Waste Diversion Grant program will be presented to the City Council later in April, and then will submit the grant application to the County.
- b. Sustainability action items: The Commission decided to postpone discussion of this item to the next meeting.

9. Council Liaison Update: None

10. Closing Round

Mary Kennedy asked whether the Commission would like to reschedule the May meeting for another time in May or cancel and reconvene in June, due to a personal conflict. The Commission agreed to cancel the May meeting and reconvene in June.

Chair Solodar reminded the GPC that his and Commissioner Staudt's terms expire in 2023, but they are allowed to remain on the Commission until replacements have been appointed. He said that he would email the document including the term information.

11. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.