



**New Albany Sustainability Advisory Board  
September 13, 2023 Minutes**

The Sustainability Advisory Board met for the Board’s regularly scheduled session at the New Albany Village Hall, 99 W. Main St, and was called to order by Mr. Filiatraut at 6:33 PM.

Those answering roll call:

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Mr. Brian Filiatraut, Chair        | Present |
| Mr. Charles Schumacher, Vice-Chair | Present |
| Ms. Catherine Duffy, Secretary     | Absent  |
| Mr. Peter Barnes                   | Present |
| Ms. Laura Gallo                    | Present |
| Mr. Steven Conway                  | Present |
| Mr. Scott Harrold                  | Present |
| Ms. Lily McGraw (Student Member)   | Present |
| Mr. Kasey Kist (Council Liaison)   | Present |

Staff members present: Mike Barker, Director of Public Service; Marylou Hoessle, City Forester; and Anna van der Zwaag, Planner II.

Mr. Filiatraut asked if there were any corrections to the August 9, 2023 Sustainability Advisory Board meeting minutes.

No corrections were noted.

Mr. Schumacher moved to approve the August 9, 2023 Sustainability Advisory Board meeting minutes. Seconded by Ms. Gallo and the Sustainability Advisory Board voted with 6 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 0 abstention to approve the minutes.

Mr. Filiatraut asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda. None were noted.

Mr. Filiatraut asked if there were any visitors wishing to speak on items not on the agenda.

Mr. Howard Burack, 5131 Abbotsbury Ct, spoke on his interest and thanked the Board for their involvement and work towards sustainability in the community. He stated Taylor Farm Park is a great amenity. He stated that he is interested in sustainability and hopes there is more community involvement in the Board’s work. He stated he is interested in best practices research, integration with school work, wetland, stream corridors, invasive species identification and removal, Rapid 5 and more.

Councilmember Kist thanked Mr. Burack for attending and stated he appreciated his involvement. He encouraged Mr. Burack to return for more meetings in the future.

Mr. Conway stated that everyone on the Board are volunteers and encouraged Mr. Burack to volunteer as well.

Mr. Barnes stated he is a teacher and works to continue many of the programs Bill Resch started, and he would be willing to meet with Mr. Burack if he is interested in getting involved in some of those school programs.

Mr. Filiatraut thanked Mr. Burack for his attendance and welcomed him to stay for the meeting if he was interested.

Mr. Filiatraut asked if there were other members of the public who wanted to speak.

Sam Malik, 7591 Lambton Park Road, spoke on recycling and requested the Board consider creating a subcommittee specifically on recycling. Mr. Malik encouraged the city to carefully consider where recycling bins are placed and how they are signed. He thinks there is an opportunity to take a more intentional look that have a lot of traffic and volume, that would have high impact/high control. His recommendation is to form a subcommittee focused on optimizing recycling at city park facilities, potentially design a best practice rubric for recycling in public areas in New Albany.

Ms. McGraw stated how the Board had a senior seminar student come speak last year about recycling in parks and it showed similar areas of focus and concern.

Mr. Barnes stated last meeting there was discussion on compost for businesses and recycling seems to be just as important.

There was a discussion about the logistics of creating subcommittees for this purpose.

Ms. van der Zwaag confirmed that she had checked with the city attorney. It was confirmed that subcommittees could be created as long as there was no quorum present.

Ms. van der Zwaag mentioned that the structure of these subcommittees would need fine-tuning, and the Board would need to approve which subcommittees they wanted to establish. The question was raised about the possibility of involving residents from outside the board.

Councilmember Kist suggested that the IDEA committee might already have a structure that allows for this, but they were unsure if any specific changes were needed in the bylaws.

It was discussed that the IDEA committee did not have its own bylaws, as the Sustainability Advisory Board does. Ms. van der Zwaag suggested that it might be necessary to review the ordinance to confirm whether subcommittees could be created.

Councilmember Kist asked if residents in attendance were interested in participating in the subcommittee, and there was a positive response from attendees.

Councilmember Kist emphasized that this was a worthwhile discussion and that the logistics needed to be worked out. They also mentioned that this could be planned for the coming year.

Mr. Filiatraut suggested that the topic could be further discussed at the next meeting.

## **Business**

### ***Student Leaders in Sustainability Pilot Grant***

Ms. van der Zwaag began the items of business by discussing the Student Leaders in Sustainability Pilot Grant, which is now live. She mentioned that, so far, no applications had been received, but it was expected due to the recent launch.

During the discussion, it was mentioned that some students, including those in the environmental club, might be working on applications.

Ms. McGraw mentioned the "Eco Summit" event at the zoo in November, which might provide an opportunity to for students to apply for the grant. The logistics were still being worked out.

Mr. Schumacher commended the efforts made to promote the grant opportunity, especially on social media platforms, to cast a broader net and engage parents and students. Mr. Barnes added that it was posted by individuals on Facebook and shared on the new version of the school's newsletter as well.

The board discussed the budget for the grant, which was approximately \$20,000. It was noted that the allocation of funds would depend on the number of applications received, and the board could consider carrying funds over to the next year's budget if necessary.

Mr. Filiatraut suggested pushing back the grant application deadline to align it better with the Eco Summit event in early November, allowing applicants to refine their project ideas. Ms. McGraw stated students come to the zoo with their project idea and work on it at the zoo but she thinks the deadline is fine as is.

Board members asked if certain schools and organizations, like Marburn Academy and the Jewish Day School, would be eligible for the grant, and the criteria for eligibility were clarified.

Ms. van der Zwaag confirmed that efforts were being made to reach out to various contacts and organizations to spread awareness of the grant opportunity.

There was clarification that this program is for New Albany residents. If a student attends a school located in New Albany but is not a resident, they cannot apply as an individual. If a student lives in New Albany but attends a school outside of the city, they are eligible for the program. If there is a group of students applying, the majority of students in the group should be New Albany residents.

Ms. van der Zwaag highlighted the need for a quorum during the Q&A session scheduled for the October meeting, emphasizing the importance of attendance.

### ***Invasive Species Trade-In Program***

Ms. van der Zwaag introduced discussion on the Invasive Plant Trade-In Program. She mentioned that they had a framework for the program inspired by a similar initiative implemented by Wild Ones in West Cook, near Chicago, Illinois.

The program's concept involved the city providing a list of invasive species common in the area for residents to target, along with tips and apps for identifying these invasive species in their yards. Residents will be encouraged to remove the invasive plants, take pictures, and submit them through an online form. The submitted forms would be reviewed by the city, and eligible participants would receive vouchers for native plants.

The program has a budget set aside for 200 native plants, each valued at \$40. The idea was to provide vouchers that residents could use during the fall planting season or even in the spring or the following fall in 2024.

Discussion points included:

- The need to include clear guidelines on preventing regrowth or use of herbicides for specific invasive species.
- Limiting the number of vouchers per resident or property to ensure wider participation.
- Clarifying that the program is intended for property owners and not landscape companies to submit applications.
- The importance of providing educational resources to help residents identify invasive species and understand their impact.

- The discussion also touched on the possibility of collaborating with Franklin County Soil and Water for plant sale vouchers.

Ms. van der Zwaag stated the target launch date is either late September or early October. Additionally, the idea of having specific application periods for the program versus making it available year-round was discussed, with the consensus leaning toward setting specific periods for deadlines.

Ms. van der Zwaag suggested that the program's effectiveness could be measured over the year to determine if it should be continued in the future.

Mr. Schumacher inquired about the specific invasive species to be targeted, suggesting that focusing on four to six commonly found invasive species would be more manageable for participants. The Board members agreed that having a concise list of invasive species would be beneficial.

The Board members expressed their support for the program and its potential benefits for the community.

### ***Upcoming Recycling Events***

Ms. van der Zwaag started the conversation on upcoming events focused on diverting waste from the landfill.

- i. Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event:
  - Date: October 21st from 8:00 AM to noon.
  - Volunteers needed: Approximately five volunteers, with a couple from the Board.
  - Discussion on volunteer availability.
  - Ms. McGraw asked if students from the Environmental Club can come to receive hours for volunteering and Ms. van der Zwaag answered in the affirmative.
- ii. Pumpkin Collection:
  - Scheduled to start on November 1<sup>st</sup> and running through December 8<sup>th</sup>, an extension of one week compared to last year.
  - Located at public service again.
- iii. Political Yard Sign Recycling:
  - Planned for the week after the election.
  - More details to be provided closer to the date.
  - Discussion on improving the sorting system to handle the influx of signage.
  - Suggestion to evaluate the need for additional locations or more frequent service to accommodate the volume.
- iv. Holiday Lights Recycling:
  - Ms. van der Zwaag to reach out to the fire department to confirm their participation.
  - Discussion on the increasing trend of switching to LED lights and the recycling of old lights.

### ***2024 Priorities Discussion (Continued)***

Ms. van der Zwaag began the conversation on the priorities for the next calendar year, which is an ongoing conversation from the last meeting.

Ms. van der Zwaag summarized the Board's core activities which include the Earth Day to Arbor Day week, the recycling and compost events, and the continuation of the drop-off compost program. She explained the ongoing programs will include the implementation and follow through for the Student Leaders in Sustainability Pilot Grant, the invasive tree/shrub trade-in program, ongoing review of the city's Sustainable2050 certification level and presence at the farmers market.

In terms of new programs, Ms. van der Zwaag stated the Board's priorities were determined to be a native landscaping pilot project with a key community education piece, as well as exploring a potential expansion of the city's compost program. Other things mentioned for new programs include setting goals related to alternative fuel and electric vehicles as well as the creation of a sustainability webpage.

Mr. Filiatraut asked and Ms. van der Zwaag answered about the budgeted cost of the household hazardous waste event. The vendor for that event provided a rough estimate of \$54 per vehicle with an expectation that about five to ten percent of households will come to the event.

The Board discussed potentially requiring proof of residency for the household hazardous waste event, either in the form of an ID or utility bill. There was some resistance to this due to concerns of people throwing away their materials in the trash instead of recycling if they are turned away.

The Board reviewed the draft budget for 2024. Councilmember Kist noted that there might be opportunities to seek funding from external sources such as the Albany Community Foundation for specific projects.

On the topic of subcommittees: Attendees considered the possibility of forming subcommittees to address specific areas of interest. Subcommittees could potentially collaborate with other local organizations, such as Go ZERO, for information and resources. The idea of creating subcommittees was well-received. The formation of subcommittees would allow for more focused and efficient work on various sustainability initiatives.

The question of existing budgets for specific projects, such as trash cans at parks, was raised, and it was clarified that such expenses were typically covered within operating budgets.

The Board recommended categorizing the compost portion of the budget and work plan to more broadly include waste diversion programs as a whole.

There was some discussion on keeping the native tree/shrub trade-in program budget for 2024 so it can be repeated if it is done well.

### **Other Business**

Ms. van der Zwaag stated that the Community Programs Administrator, Abbey Brooks, has suggested working with the "1000 Hours Outside" program as a theme for next year's Earth Day to Arbor Day celebration. No decision was made at this time; however, the Board appeared to be in support. More discussion will take place closer to the event.

Ms. van der Zwaag also shared two educational opportunities for the Board, including a discounted rate to the statewide planning conference for planning professionals in Ohio, as well as the MORPC Summit on Sustainability.

### **Poll Members for Comment**

Mr. Filiatraut asked if there were any other comments from the Board.

Ms. Gallo stated the compost program so far has been very successful at the Intermediate School. As of the previous day, the school has collected over 3,325 pounds of compost and the school receives the best score possible from GoZERO for contamination. Education for students included instructional videos, morning announcements, and working with a committee of students. There are student monitors during lunch, as well.

Mr. Schumacher stated it could be a good argument when it comes to commercial composting to determine how much money they are saving from their normal trash pickup fee.

Ms. Gallo stated students are also helping with end-of-day recycling.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Filiatraut motioned to adjourn the meeting with a second from Mr. Schumacher. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.