

**MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING**

December 1, 2022

A Regular meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Meeting was held on December 1, 2022 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noted.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

City Manager Whitten called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Mike Mervis	Chairperson
Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Cynthia Johnson	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Jennifer Riggs	Board Member
Joy Rutherford	Board Member

PRESENT:

Mike Mervis	Chairperson
Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Cynthia Johnson	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Jennifer Riggs	Board Member
Joy Rutherford	Board Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Stockton Whitten, City Manager; Rip Dyal, Board Liaison; Lorraine Koss, Councilmember; and Monica Arsenault, Recording Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

1. AGENDA: Meeting of December 1, 2022

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Introductions**

Each Board member provided a brief introduction about themselves.

2. **Chairman Remarks**

Chairperson Mervis briefly discussed the importance of the Sustainability Advisory Board and setting goals. He also mentioned his background in affordable housing and elaborated further on funding and housing initiatives.

He spoke about stormwater and his passion for it. He spoke in furtherance about infrastructure and stormwater management and how it ties to sustainability.

He is excited about the tasks ahead and even though there may be challenges he is sure they will work together to find solutions.

3. **Update/Status Report of the Sustainability Action Plan**

City Manager Whitten provided a presentation¹. He mentioned that the plan outlines the first-year initiatives and objectives and spoke in furtherance about the STAR Goals which are:

- Built Environment
- Equity and Empowerment
- Health and Safety
- Natural Systems
- Climate and Energy

Board member Riggs explained the meaning of “STAR Goals”. City Manager Whitten added that these are “focus areas” of the Plan. Each STAR Goal has an objective, initiatives and action items.

City Manager Whitten talked about first year recommendations and provided the recommendations and status updates related to each STAR Goal.

A recommendation was made to look into holding a Citizen’s Academy for local students. Discussion was held on some of the hiring difficulties the City is facing and how offering educational and/or vocational opportunities to students could be beneficial.

City Manager Whitten shared an update on FEMA reimbursements from previous hurricanes and the damage they caused in the city.

He also shared an update regarding Brightline and mentioned that he has an upcoming meeting with them next week. He shared that they have promised

¹ Exhibit A: Sustainability Advisory Board Presentation (12/01/22)

Brevard a station and they have purchased land in Cocoa which is surrounded by land that the City owns so it would make sense for a station to be built here.

4. Discussion of Possible Priorities

5. Topics for Next Meeting

City Manager Whitten recommended that as an assignment, each Board member should go through the spreadsheet in the Plan and decide which goals they need further information on and which ones they would like to discuss further. He suggested having members of staff come to the next meeting to help determine what can be worked on.

Additionally, he suggested that it is good to have an overview of the City's budget and that may be a topic of discussion to think about.

Chairperson Mervis talked about priorities. He explained that once they go through the Plan and they are able to possibly knock off some of the items based on what they've seen, they can continue to move through the list and ask staff what can and can't be done. Once they are able to determine what can be done they can find out what the reasonable timeframe is for those items.

Vice Chairperson Lathem added that time and resources is always an issue to take into consideration. She explained that the Plan is a working document and feels that the Board is not necessarily beholden to it as there may be items that the Board feels are no longer relevant or no longer has an interest in pursuing.

Board member Riggs shared that she holds some objection to that statement because a lot of work and expertise went into creating the Plan and to some extent she feels that the Board should really pay attention to its contents and not disregard them.

Chairperson Mervis noted that respect should be given to those who put in the work to create the guideline before them and this Board has a responsibility based on the charts they have been given to look at this document and provide advice to staff, Council and the community on what things they think might get done, how quickly they can be done, find out what the impediments are and see if there is any way they can assist in eliminating some of those impediments.

Vice Chairperson Lathem added that she did not disagree with what was being said, her only concern was the budget the City has to work with.

Board member Johnson asked how often the departments referred to the Plan or if they were even aware that the Plan outlines some of their work.

City Manager Whitten explained that it is important to understand the budget constraints, how the grant process works and how the consumptive permit use applies.

Chairperson Mervis noted that if everyone is in agreement, at the next meeting he would like to discuss mid-term and long-term priorities and get a briefing on the budget. At the meeting after that they can take their list of priorities and go through it with staff to determine what can and can't be done.

Board member Johnson asked Chairperson Mervis if he would like each board member to come up with a few priorities to bring to the next meeting for discussion. In response, he agreed and asked each board member to come prepared with two or three items they think could be accomplished.

Discussion was held on when to hold the next meeting. It was noted that the first Thursday of every month may not necessarily work for all board members. City Manager Whitten stated that dates can be looked at in January that might work for everyone.

Vice Chairperson Lathem shared that she will not be able to attend the January or March meetings due to work.

Board member Johnson asked if a working document could be uploaded to a place where staff can edit what has already been done and where the Board members can also make edits as they work their way through the Plan. In response, City Manager Whitten explained that he would speak with the City Attorney just to ensure that would not create Sunshine Law violations.

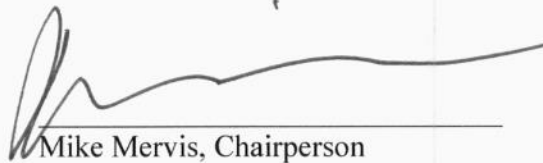
Chairperson Mervis opened the discussion to the public. There being no additional questions or comments the public portion of the meeting was closed.

IV. NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next scheduled meeting for the Sustainability Advisory Board will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 6pm in Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone St, Cocoa, FL 32922.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

* **The Sustainability Advisory Board meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.**



Mike Mervis, Chairperson

ATTEST:



Monica Arsenault, Assistant City Clerk



COCOA
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SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD



OVERVIEW

DUTIES, FUNCTIONS, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



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ESTABLISHMENT OF BOARD

- **Resolution No. 2017-137 – Establishing the Sustainability Committee**
- **An advisory committee for purposes of identifying, making recommendations concerning, and facilitating the use and development of sustainable activities and practices in the City of Cocoa in accordance with the resolution.**



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MEETINGS

- **Need to be duly noticed and open to the public**
- **Coordinated and scheduled through the City Manager as not to conflict with other City meetings or overburden limited city resources**
- **A portion of the meeting will be reserved to taking public input relevant to issues being considered during the meeting or regarding sustainability and resiliency practices generally**
- **Agendas, minutes, and record kept and filed with the City Clerk**



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RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Sustainability generally means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**
- **Resiliency means the capacity of a system to absorb disturbances such as storms and all kinds of damaging events and to reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure and identity**
- **Advising and assisting the City in establishing as a written Sustainability and Resiliency Plan (Primary focus and task)**



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RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

- **After the initial plan is established and approved by the City Council, the committee shall continue to advise and assist the City regarding implementing, monitoring and assessing the performance of each action, initiative, strategy, policy, and program set forth in the plan.**
- **Continue to make recommendations regarding any updates or modifications to the Plan, on an as needed basis.**
- **At the specific written request of the City Manager, the committee may also evaluate and provide recommendations on the topic of sustainability and resiliency consistent with the resolution.**
- **City Council Rules of Procedures: The Council may appoint such council member liaisons to the various city boards and committees as it deems appropriate. The purpose of the council member liaisons is to make a report on their activities at the next regular council meeting.**



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SUNSHINE LAW OVERVIEW



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SELECTIONS OF POSITIONS

CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR



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SELECTIONS

- The first order of business shall be to elect a chairperson and deputy chairperson.
- Chairperson responsibilities: Running the meetings
- Deputy Chairperson responsibilities: In absence of Chair, deputy shall run the meetings
- Utilize Roberts Rules to run meetings
- A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum,
- Committee shall act in consensus to the extent possible but if not, then by majority vote.



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MEETING SCHEDULE

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QUESTIONS/CONTACT

Stockton Whitten

City Manager

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SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD

12/1/2022



Sustainability Plan

STAR GOALS

1. Built Environment
2. Equity and Empowerment
3. Health and Safety
4. Natural Systems
5. Climate and Energy



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Built Environment

- Six Objectives
- Twenty Initiatives
- Four Five Action Items



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Equity and Empowerment

- **Two Objectives**
- **Ten Initiatives**
- **Twelve Action Items**



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Health and Safety

- **Three Objectives**
- **Twelve Initiatives**
- **Nineteen Action Items**



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Natural Systems

- **One Objective**
- **Four Initiatives**
- **Seventeen Action Items**



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Climate and Energy

- **Four Objectives**
- **Thirty-Seven Initiatives**
- **Eighty Action Items**



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STAR Goals Summary

- Sixteen Objectives
- Eighty-Three Initiatives
- One Hundred and Thirty-Two Action Items



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First Year Recommendations

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Built Environment STAR Goal

Recommendations	Status
Demonstrate commitment to local government transparency and public access to water monitoring data.	• Required to produce an Annual Water Quality Report each year with water monitoring data. • This report is printed and electronically placed on the City's website. • We have copies at City Hall and the public library and promote the report in all city communications including social media and newsletters.
Promote and educate residences on water conservation methods.	• A requirement of our Consumptive Use Permit, we have a PR/Conservation Officer that is dedicated to promoting water conservation methods. • There is information on our website about water conservation. • Articles in every newsletter and city communication promoting water conservation.



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Built Environment STAR Goal (cont.)

Recommendations	Status
Collaborate to identify city-level solutions to the affordable housing crisis.	• Council recently approved a zoning change for Orchid Lakes, an affordable housing complex. • Mayor Blake is working with local organizations to help find solutions to homelessness including the affordable housing crisis.
Develop a better understanding of the economic value of public green space and its relationship with property value, culture, community involvement, perceptions health and well-being, and neighborhood satisfaction.	• Recently had a parks master plan done for the City which details needs in the community for green space and how best to utilize it for the neighborhood.
Increase safety of our parks by enhancing programming and increasing use.	• This has been an ongoing priority for the Cocoa Police Department. • Council also prioritized parks upgrades that would bring higher use in the parks and safety upgrades.



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Equity and Empowerment STAR Goal

Recommendations	Status
Improve communication by increasing use of the City of Cocoa website and FB page.	• Two years ago went through an entire website redesign to make the web site more user-friendly and updated. • Currently, the City of Cocoa Facebook page has over 14,000 followers and a reach of over 75,000. We post an average of 3 times per day on the page and field comments and messages. • The City of Cocoa also utilizes Twitter, NextDoor and YouTube.
Promote participation in district town hall meetings and Neighborhood Watch meetings.	• We promote all City meetings utilizing social pages and the City's newsletters, Florida Today Monthly feature, and text message alerts through the City website. • Chief's Walks are promoted through all City communication channels but more specially targeted through NextDoor.



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Equity and Empowerment STAR Goal (cont.)

Recommendations	Status
Promote participation in the Mayor's Challenge.	• Actively promote participation in this annual event. • This upcoming year it is expanding to include businesses as well and it won't be the Mayor's Fitness Challenge anymore. • We have a resident volunteer who will spearhead #TeamCocoa and we will help push activities and registrations.
Develop events to promote increased voter turnout rate in the City of Cocoa and provide access to civic groups to promote voter turnout.	• Noticed the upcoming general election in the July and October issues of the community newsletter mailed to all residents of Cocoa.



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Equity and Empowerment STAR Goal (cont.)

Recommendations	Status
Provide civics education programs directed towards teens, young adults and adult residents of the city.	• Currently have a successful Citizens Academy program that engages residents with their local government. • Recently held a government engagement session with local students during the Economic Development event. • Host regular student tours at City Hall.
Conduct a comprehensive environmental justice assessment.	



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Health and Safety STAR Goal

Recommendations	Status
Improve bicycle and pedestrian amenities in projects in high-density, mixed-use areas or near transit stations.	• As new development comes through, the City requires these amenities. Typically, most of these areas are within State Roadways and as those roadways are repaired, the State implements various pedestrian/bicyclist amenities. • In February Council unanimously approved a resolution for the realignment of the US Bicycle Route System along US1 on to Indian River Drive and through Cocoa Village to allow for a more scenic route for bicyclists. This will also allocate funds to properly stripe and add signage along this revised route and continue the City of Cocoa's support for multimodal transportation in our community.
Partner with community groups to sponsor programs that encourage active (healthy) living for adults and kids.	• Participate in the annual Spring Into Fitness Challenge and partner with local groups such as Cocoa PAL to participate on the Cocoa team.



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Health and Safety STAR Goal (cont.)

Recommendations	Status
Analyze the data available from the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment(CHNA) Report and the Brevard County Community Health Improvement plan to identify gaps.	
Develop a community health improvement plan to strengthen the delivery of health services and improve community health.	
Publish information about Emergency Management Response. Encourage residents, businesses and other organizations to develop emergency kits, evacuation plan, emergency procedures and shelter-in-place plans.	• We have built a very comprehensive disaster preparedness page on our website, www.CocoaFL.gov/hurricane. • Host an annual Build Your Hurricane Kit Preparedness event each year. • Participate in the county-wide Public Information Network to develop and share preparedness messaging. • Include preparedness messaging in the April, July and October newsletters. • Push messaging on social about preparedness and response.

Natural Systems STAR Goal

Recommendations	Status
Waterway Restoration	• Cocoa has limited jurisdictional control over waterways. • However, the City continues to perform nutrient reduction projects to help protect and restore the IRL.
Increase quantity and effectiveness of green infrastructure	• The City has implemented multiple floating wetlands and continues to install these as related to nutrient removal.



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Climate and Energy STAR Goal

Recommendations	Status
Reduce stormwater-related pollution	• Primary goal of the Stormwater Division. • Various projects in place to help with this including streetsweeping, education about stormwater drains, etc.
Reduce and minimize exposure to flood.	• The City has received a grant to elevate the Dixon/IRD area which should help with some localized flooding here. • The City also maintains an extensive ditch network to ensure water flows properly.
Increase shade canopy.	• The City just received an Urban and Community Forestry grant and is conducting a tree inventory and development of a tree management plan.
Educate residents on solar energy costs and payback.	• Have included information in newsletters and other communication on the solar energy co-op.



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Climate and Energy STAR Goal (cont.)

Recommendations	Status
Increase solar energy use in municipal buildings.	The City is enrolled in the Solar Together program. Once that program kicks off for commercial properties, a percentage of the City's power will come from solar.
Recommend solar energy use in affordable housing.	
Adopt "Ready for 100" Resolution.	Adopted in October 2020.
Investigate and establish vocational cross training in PV/electrical/roofing. Create a new career path of solar technician to support increased conversions in FL, and maintenance thereafter. Market more broadly: Cocoa's new local business skill.	
Create a connected multi-modal city.	- Currently have quadrimodal access and heavily advocating for a stop in Cocoa for the Brightline train adding additional transportation options for the community. - City Manager is part of TPO Regional Intermodal Connections Committee.



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Climate and Energy STAR Goal (cont.)

Recommendations	Status
Research and promote home composting. Encourage the participation in the reduction of consumer good packaging and waste material at civic events, especially single use plastics.	• This was not approved at a recent Council meeting due to increased costs to event organizers and vendors.



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QUESTIONS/CONTACT

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