

## MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Trustees

From: Anne Readel

Date: June 23, 2017

Subject: Proposed Sustainability Initiative

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### **I. Summary**

The environmental sustainability movement strives to create better places for living. Sustainability initiatives are becoming commonplace throughout Wisconsin and the United States. Indeed, numerous municipalities that neighbor Shorewood Hills have already enacted such initiatives.

Like many of these other municipalities, Shorewood Hills is a community that welcomes and embraces environmental sustainability. Over the years, Shorewood Hills has supported a number of environmental sustainability projects, such as installing rain gardens to reduce storm water runoff, participating in MGE's renewable energy program, reducing salt use on roads, offering community gardens, and demonstrating our commitment to biological diversity by becoming a Tree City and Bird City community. I propose that we take these efforts one step farther and formally enact a sustainability initiative (the "Shorewood Hills Sustainability Initiative") to improve the Village's overall environment, economic, and social health now and for future generations. I envision that the Shorewood Hills Sustainability Initiative will involve the following four actions, as further described below:

1. Creation of a Sustainability Committee;
2. Consider joining the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter and research other community sustainability initiatives conducted outside of the Charter;
3. Adoption of a Sustainability Resolution; and
4. Development of a Sustainability Plan.

Many of the above actions will require and benefit from community input and involvement. Some resources may also be available from the Legacy Communities Program to assist Shorewood Hills as it develops this initiative, if the Village desires to become involved in this program.

### **II. Overview of Sustainability Initiatives in Monona, Middleton, and Bayfield**

Many neighborhoods around Shorewood Hills have enacted formal sustainability initiatives to help guide their growth and development. Three such communities are Middleton, Monona, and Fitchburg. I have provided an overview of the actions taken by Middleton and Monona below. While these communities are much larger than Shorewood Hills, other smaller communities, such as Bayfield, have also instituted such sustainability measures. These communities all joined the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter for assistance in developing their sustainability initiatives. Additional research should be conducted by the Committee on the cost/benefits of this Charter and what other communities have done to advance sustainability outside of the Charter.

## **A. Monona**

In 2012, Monona adopted a Sustainability Resolution which established sustainability principles as the norm in city planning, policies, and procedures. Later that same year, Monona became a member of the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter (Sustainability Component). In 2014, Monona then developed a Monona Sustainability Plan based on the principles of the resolution. The Monona Sustainability Plan identifies a vision, measurable objectives, and targeted plans of action to help Monona implement sustainability in its operations. The Plan contains the following major sections:

- General Sustainability
- Land Use
- Water
- Energy
- Transportation
- Solid Waste.

The first section addresses general sustainability. The following five sections correspond to areas of focus identified in the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter.

More information can be found at <http://greentiercommunities.org/monona/>.

Monona's Sustainability Plan can be found at <http://www.mymonona.com/724/Monona-Sustainability-Plan>.

## **B. Middleton**

Middleton is also a member of the Legacy Community Green Tier Charter. Middleton has a Sustainability Committee that is responsible for making policy recommendations to the Middleton Common Council on issues related to environmental sustainability and offers various sustainability educational seminars and community events.

In 2009, Middleton became a member of MG&E's Green Power Tomorrow Program by purchasing 100% of Middleton's energy for all city buildings and facilities from Wisconsin and Iowa wind and solar power and passed a resolution that it would procure 25% of Middleton's electricity and 25% of Middleton's transportation fuels from renewable resources by 2025. See <http://www.ci.middleton.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/47>.

In 2010, Middleton also adopted a Sustainability Plan. This Plan addresses the following seven areas:

- Energy
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Water
- Waste
- Economy/Food/Fair Trade
- Public Outreach and Education.

For each of these seven areas, Middleton created a vision statement, identified performance indicators for measuring performance, identified desired performance trends, and prioritized a list of actions to accomplish its objectives.

More information can be found at <http://greentiercommunities.org/middleton/>.

Middleton's Sustainability Plan can be found at <http://www.ci.middleton.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/48>.

### **C. Bayfield**

In 2006, Bayfield passed a resolution committing themselves to environmental sustainability. And in 2012, it developed a sustainability plan that focused on the following seven areas:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Cultural and Natural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use Element

The Plan identifies various sustainability goals and objectives for each area. It further identifies concrete actions that can be taken to help measure success of the Plan.

More information can be found at <http://greentiercommunities.org/bayfield/>.

Bayfield's Sustainability Plan can be found at [http://www.cityofbayfield.com/uploads/1/1/1/5/11158030/2012-july\\_sustainability\\_plan\\_final\\_version.pdf](http://www.cityofbayfield.com/uploads/1/1/1/5/11158030/2012-july_sustainability_plan_final_version.pdf).

### **D. Legacy Communities Program**

While Monona, Middleton, and Bayfield adopted different models for their sustainability initiatives, they all have one thing in common — they became members of the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter.

The Legacy Communities Program's mission is "to help communities across the state of Wisconsin move continuously toward a sustainable future through initiatives that promote environmental stewardship, economic growth, public health, and social equity." In 2010, the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter was formed and subsequently signed by the DNR, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Municipal Environmental Group – Wastewater, Center on Wisconsin Strategy, and Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corp in order to align their efforts in support of sustainable community development.

Under the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter, municipalities "take actions and share information to achieve superior environmental performance with regard to one or both of the following areas: (1) water quality and water resources management; and/or (2) sustainability practices." Municipalities that participate in the charter "will have direct access to a Wisconsin DNR resource team that will provide technical assistance to communities and act as a single point of contact for all interactions between the community and the department." Further, technical assistance will be provided by other nongovernmental partners.

Members of the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter include:

- Cities: Appleton, Ashland, Bayfield, Eau Claire, Fitchburg, La Crosse, Monona, Middleton, New Richmond, Oshkosh, Port Washington, Sheboygan, Wisconsin Rapids and Wauwatosa;
- Villages: Weston and Bayside;
- Counties: Eau Claire, Bayfield, and La Crosse.

I spoke with Will Erikson who runs the program for the DNR to obtain a better idea of what involvement in the program entails. Mr. Erikson explained that the charter is meant to help expand information sharing among participating communities, with the DNR acting as a facilitator. To help facilitate information sharing on sustainability programs, the DNR offers the following services:

1. It hosts a quarterly member meeting at different member communities. Communities share experiences at that meeting. Communities can send staff, residents, committee volunteers, or even city planners depending on their own objectives and experiences. Remote access to the meeting is also offered via Skype.
2. Provide a webinar series that addresses various issues that communities may face.
3. Provide templates and benchmarking materials for communities to use to identify sustainability goals and measure progress.
4. Hosts task forces based on consensus from member communities. Currently, there are two task forces: Healthy Communities and Energy. For example, the Energy task force is creating energy benchmarking materials that communities can use to track their energy use and determine whether they are meeting their energy-related goals.
5. Provides information about grant opportunities. Communities that participate in the charter are given additional point considerations for certain grants issued through the DNR. This can be a big draw for communities.

Communities that desire to participate in the charter must do the following steps. First, the community must adopt a resolution expressly stating its intent to be part of the charter. A template is available from the Legacy Communities program.

Second, the community must fill out a sustainability score sheet, which lists best sustainability practices. This score sheet helps establish baseline metrics for the community, helps the community to identify areas that need particular focus, and can be used to help track growth. After the score sheet is submitted to the DNR, the DNR sends an acceptance letter.

Participation in the charter is free. However, there are a few obligations placed on communities for participation. First, participating communities must submit an annual report. A template is available that follows the information contained in the score sheet. The annual report is meant to help communities track what they have done in the past year and identify what goals they are setting for the upcoming year. Communities are also expected to participate in the quarterly meetings (in person or via Skype).

The Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/GreenTier/Participants/Charters/LegacyCharter.pdf>.

Various strategy options proposed by the Program can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/greentier/participants/charters/legacyattachment3.pdf>.

### **III. Proposed Shorewood Hills Sustainability Initiative**

I propose that Shorewood Hills adopt a formal Sustainability Initiative. This initiative would start with the formation of a Sustainability Committee, which will consider whether the Village should join the Legacy Committees Green Tier Charter, draft a Sustainability Resolution, and eventually develop a Sustainability Plan.

#### **A. Sustainability Committee**

As a first step to advance the Sustainability Initiative, I propose that the Board approve an Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee. The Sustainability Committee would be charged with making policy recommendations pertaining to environmental sustainability. The Committee will also offer sustainability education to residents through public seminars and community events.

A potential mission statement for the Committee could be as follows:

*The Sustainability Committee is responsible for researching, recommending, and developing sustainable policies and procedures for Village staff, residents, and businesses to reduce the environmental footprint of the Village while also providing public education and outreach on sustainability issues.*

The Committee could be comprised of one or two Trustees and numerous Village residents with an interest in sustainability. Input from the Village Administrator, the Department of Public Works Chief, the Village Forester, other interested Committees, and residents will be essential for this Committee.

#### **B. Consider Membership in the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter**

As a second step, I propose that Shorewood Hills Sustainability Committee consider joining the Legacy Committees Green Tier Charter. Mr. Erikson indicated that he would be willing to meet with the Sustainability Committee to provide an overview of the Charter. He would also be able to arrange for a representative from a neighboring community, such as Middleton, to attend and provide their perspective on the Charter. As part of the consideration on whether Shorewood Hills should join the Green Tier Charter, the Committee should also research how other municipalities have advanced sustainability initiatives outside of the Green Tier Charter.

#### **C. Sustainability Resolution**

As a third step, the Sustainability Committee would be responsible for proposing a sustainability resolution to the Board. This resolution will establish sustainability principles as the norm for city planning, policies, and procedures. An example of the sustainability resolution adopted by Monona is attached hereto as Exhibit A. If the Sustainability Committee desired to become part of the Legacy Communities program, this resolution would contain an expression of that commitment.

#### **D. Sustainability Plan**

As a second step, the Sustainability Committee would develop a Sustainability Plan based on the principles in the Sustainability Resolution. While the scope of the Sustainability Plan will be determined by the Sustainability Committee and the Board, the following potential objectives and focus areas could be considered (note that completion of the Legacy Communities score sheet will likely help identify potential focus areas, if we choose to participate in the program):

- Objective:
  - Assess what sustainability measures have already been taken in the Village (i.e., recycling programs, community gardens, etc.);
  - Identify additional actions that could be taken to enhance environmental sustainability in the Village;
  - Prioritize potential actions; and
  - Identify mechanisms to collect data and quantitatively track progress.
  
- Focus areas could include:
  - Energy:
    - How can the Village utilize more renewable energy in Village-owned buildings? In particular, the Village currently purchases approximately 20% of its electricity from MGE's "Green Power Tomorrow" optional wind power renewable energy program. The Village reached a high of 30%, and then a few years ago for budgetary reasons, reduced its renewable energy purchase to 20% (the renewable energy costs are higher than traditional sourced energy). However, part of the Committee's directive could be to submit a plan to ramp that percentage up over time, through the Green Power Tomorrow program or other means, along with budgetary impact.
    - How can residents reduce energy consumption in their homes?
    - How can we encourage private businesses to reduce their energy consumption?
    - How can the Village otherwise encourage renewable energy sources and energy consumption reduction within its borders?
  - Transportation
    - How can we encourage more use of alternative transportation?
    - How can we make biking and walking safer in the Village?
  - Trash and Recycling
    - Would residents be interested in a compost program?
    - How can we encourage recycling and educate residents about what can be recycled?
    - Can we provide residents with information on how to stop junk mail and other types of paper mail that residents no longer wish to receive (i.e., Catalog Choice).
  - Land Use
    - How can we continue to encourage mixed development to encourage local shopping and services?
    - What other mechanisms are available to the Village to protect open spaces (i.e., conservation easements).
  - Water
    - How can homeowners reduce their home's stormwater runoff?
    - How can homeowners reduce or eliminate chemicals for lawn care?
    - How can homeowners increase indoor and outdoor water efficiency?

- Economy/Food/Fair Trade
  - How do we integrate additional green technologies into existing and new buildings?
- Public Outreach and Education
  - What types of sustainability presentations are residents in the Village and perhaps Shorewood Elementary School interested in?
  - Can we offer environmental service-learning projects for residents and students?

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The adoption of a formal sustainability initiative in Shorewood Hills would be consistent with Village practices and culture, and place the Village in line with the direction taken by other neighboring communities. I ask the Board to support such an initiative.

**Exhibit A**  
**Monona Sustainability Resolution**

**Resolution No. 12-03-1843**  
**Monona Common Council**

**A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CITY OF MONONA**

**WHEREAS**, the environment, society, and economy must all be stable and healthy to support and sustain a community; and,

**WHEREAS**, a commitment to local and regional cooperation is essential for stewardship of the natural systems that sustain us; and,

**WHEREAS**, the decisions made today in the City of Monona have far-reaching and long-lasting consequences and should be made with great consideration of their impacts on our natural systems, the economy, and people living now and in the generations to come; and,

**WHEREAS**, practicing sustainability means working to meet the needs of today's residents and visitors without compromising the needs of future residents and visitors; and,

**WHEREAS**, adopting principles of sustainability as a principle of decision-making will serve as both a framework for city decision-making and a model for our citizens, encouraging a strong local economy while protecting the natural systems in which residents live, work, and play; and,

**WHEREAS**, moving toward a more sustainable future is critical for attracting new residents and businesses; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City of Monona adopts endorses the following four Sustainability Guidelines as a basis for the development and implementation of the city's plans, policies and procedures.

1. Reduce dependence on fossil fuels and extracted underground metals and minerals;
2. Reduce dependence on chemicals and other manufactured substances that can accumulate in Nature;
3. Reduce dependence on activities that harm life sustaining ecosystems; and
4. Reduce barriers to achieving present and future human needs fairly and efficiently.

**WHEREAS**, these guidelines have been has proven to be effective by the experience of many cities in Wisconsin and in the United States and over 75 cities worldwide; and

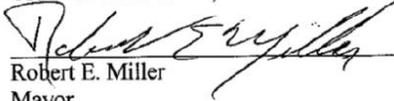
**WHEREAS**, it has been demonstrated that the application of these principles can reduce expenses and save taxpayer dollars; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City of Monona Sustainability Committee has recommended that these principles be adopted by the City of Monona as its guiding sustainability framework.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Monona Common Council accepts the recommendation of the Sustainability Committee to adopt the Sustainability Guidelines described herein, and agrees to apply these principles in its planning, policy-making and procedures.

Adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2012.

BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF MONONA, WISCONSIN

  
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Robert E. Miller  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joan Andrusz  
City Clerk

Approval Recommend By: Sustainability Committee, 2/16/12

Council Action:

Date Introduced: 3-5-12

Date Approve: 3-19-12