

## **Green Team Meeting Minutes**

### **September 21, 2022**

Attendees: Patti Hamilton, Linda Frame, Stephanie Hysmith, Emmett Pepper, Amy McLaughlin with Charleston Beautification Commission, Bella Goni with Dream.org, Quenton King, Brent Webster, and Dennis Strawn.

Patti called the meeting to order at 12:05. Quorum not established. Patti welcomed the meeting's guests.

Bella Goni, a Policy Analyst with Dream.org, works with Quenton. She presented funding opportunities in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). There is a big segment in the bill on climate action of \$370 billion with \$60 billion for environmental justice. The goal is to cut greenhouse gases by 40% by 2030. She discussed the Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program which is funded at \$3 billion. The goal is to address past harms in transportation systems, support equitable transportation planning, and more. The Federal Highway Administration is administering. Local governments may have to match 20%, similar to the Reconnect Communities pilot program. Examples of programs include: covering/capping a highway, turning a highway into a boulevard, creating sound barriers, adding trails and bike lanes, installing green stormwater infrastructure, and expanding rapid bus transit services.

She also explained a second IRA program: the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant program which has a broader focus and is community based and lead. It is run by the US Environmental Protection Agency which could provide up to 100% cost share. Examples of programs are Investment in low and zero-emission technologies (community solar) and mitigating urban heat islands and extreme heat (green roofs).

Other programs in the IRA include Clean Heavy Duty Vehicles Program (under EPA) and Urban and Community Forest Program (US Forest Service).

Programs are intentionally broad in purpose so that communities can be involved. There is no timeline to apply in place yet. The California-based Transformative Climate Communities Program can give ideas on how to address disproportionate harm. Linda asked about size of typical grants. Bella said they will likely be different for each agency and program.

Councilmember Pepper asked about help with finding local partners so we could start putting ideas and coalitions together now ahead of time. Can there be more than one community partner organization? Bella answered that usually the more the better and they can have their own area of expertise. Councilmember Pepper said that the Green Team can play a critical role in getting info to the administration.

Dennis asked how city administrations will become aware of these programs. This may also be an ask for Councilmember Pepper to take to the administration. Bella said that federal agencies

have the top-line funding number but there are no funding deadlines yet. She shared concerns that cities might not have enough resources to be aware of and apply for grants. She offered her help and said there isn't a centralized way to digest the information. Dennis pointed out that the city budget might need to be increased to cover any necessary matching funding.

Quenton thanked Bella and suggested we set up a meeting with her and Mayor Goodwin. He volunteered to help set up an action plan to get communities involved. This is new work for Dream.org. Bella will send a one-pager to us today and we can email her with any questions.

Patti introduced Amy McLaughlin, Chair of the City Municipal Beautification Commission who provided updates on the Tree City USA application. The Commission is starting a tree inventory for the city to establish tree health and other information so a multi-year management plan can be designed. This is better for the city and citizen relations. Bob Hannah is the WV Urban Forester and he passed along there is a 1 for 1 match federal grant that can help with tree inventory. City portion can be in-kind. Have to be a Tree City USA or in the process of applying.

Amy added that Andy \_\_\_\_ and Bob said entity serving as tree board needs to be the one that applies. She will run this past the full commission to see if they want to take the lead and will get back to us after their November meeting.

## **Updates**

**Recycling:** Committee has not met.

**Communications:** Linda suggested we put together a list of ideas and questions for Tina and we provide it to her in advance and set up a time to meet in October.

Recycling Center: Pepper said there should be a proposal coming in the next month or so. There is no agreement as of yet. Linda asked if solar and glass involved. Stephanie has a resource in Ohio. Patti wondered if it fits into any of the IRA grant opportunities.

**Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program:** no updates.

No announcements or other business.

Next meeting is Wednesday, October 26 at noon at City Hall. Possible agenda items: supporting letters for projects, and discussion with the City's grant administrator.

Dennis mentioned that the Mall renovations have green innovations, including a green roof, and we can lend our support in a letter. Maybe have a speaker come to talk with us. Walking and biking opportunities available.

Meeting adjourned at 1:13 PM.