



# SHAKER HEIGHTS

## Sustainability Committee Minutes

Thursday, July 10, 2025

8:00 A.M.

### VIA ZOOM PURSUANT TO CHAPTERS 113 AND 115 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES (AS AMENDED IN ORDINANCE 22-28), AND RESOLUTION 22-29, ENACTED ON MARCH 22, 2022

Members Present: Kim Bixenstine, Council Member, Committee Chair  
Tenille Kaus, Council Member  
Nancy Moore, Council Member  
Shanna Keown, Citizen Member

Others Present: David Weiss, Mayor  
Charles Orłowski, Public Works Assistant Director  
Brian Talaczyk, Public Works Grounds Superintendent  
Michael Fodor, Emerald Green Environments  
Joshua Romig, Shaker Heights Public Library Community Engagement Librarian  
Michael Peters, Sustainability Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Kim Bixenstine at 8:01 A.M.

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#### Approval of the June 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The draft meeting minutes were presented for approval with the motion moved by Nancy Moore and seconded by Tenille Kaus. The acceptance of the minutes was unanimously passed.

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#### Update on the Solar System on The Service Center

Kim Bixenstine provided an update on the project approved by City Council to install solar panels on the roofs of the Service Center buildings. The project team has weekly meetings to monitor progress.

Prior to installing the solar panels the roof is being replaced and that work is expected to start next week. The contract was signed with Compass Energy as the developer, who is in the process of completing a contract with YellowLite to be the installer (who will also hire the engineer) – they were selected through a competitive bid through the County.

The federal legislation for the tax credits and the Direct Pay program was discussed. With construction commencing in 2025 and completion before 2027 the expectation is that we will qualify for the credits. We have paid 10 percent of the projected costs, which is one of the “safe harbor” provisions and construction is expected to commence by October. There is increased demand for the panels and this is being monitored by Compass in case action needs to be taken quickly. The Mayor indicated that Law

#### **CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS**

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Director Gruber was working on clarifications but moving in the right direction. The other concern is about a potential Executive Order relating to tax credits for solar but the team remains confident that the credits will be available.

The contract with Giraffe Financial for consulting on the Direct Pay is completed.

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### **Overview of Air Quality Data**

The City has three air quality monitors at two major intersections and at The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. Last month a short timeframe was reviewed to see the impact of the wildfires in Canada. Additional data was presented to expand on the timeframe to include the prior month and then year to date.

Over the past month the air quality index was generally around 50 (the upper end of the best air quality category) but on occasion it is exceeded. Over the year-to-date data there were higher readings in the winter (less tree canopy?) and then in the summer (higher temperatures and more ozone).

Kim Bixenstine asked about alerts to residents when the air quality index is high; residents can opt-in to receive alerts but no general alerts are proactively sent. Tenille Kaus suggested that the opt-in option be publicized in the eNews. Nancy Moore noted the Chagrin-Lee intersection and Chagrin-Warrensville track relatively closely but Chagrin-Lee has some higher readings – could this be that there is more stopping at this intersection which could increase pollutants so should traffic be moved more quickly through that intersection. Michael Peters to follow up with Planning to see what the traffic counts are at the intersections and about signal timing. The Mayor noted that many newer vehicles have the auto on-off technology that could be helpful in reducing emissions. Shanna Keown asked about seasonality of traffic counts, which could also explain some of the seasonal changes in the data. Do more people drive in the winter than spring, for example. Tenille Kaus asked if we knew how many residents drive electric vehicles? Also, could there be a link to this conversation when residents opt-in?

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### **Subcommittee Updates**

Stormwater & Greenspace (Kim Bixenstine)

- The subcommittee discussed recruiting new members, please send anyone interested
- Grow Not Mow updates: some Site 3 trees didn't survive and Kathy Smachlo and her husband donated replacements; a work day with PEERS youth group on invasives at Site 2 was held but it poured rain so it became more of an education session including a presentation from Public Works; working on a project to connect all of the tree commissions in the region.
- Next planting day is September 27<sup>th</sup> at Site 2 for National Public Lands Day.
- Discussed zero waste efforts and the skip the stuff campaign to make single use plastics optional for take out food; Kim Bixenstine was at a block party recently where there was a composting bin available.
- The Citywide composting program is going very well, with 966 households sign up with just over 38,000 pounds collected since April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mercer has the highest amount collected to date with over 8,000 pounds. Data is being tracked as it impacts the budget and given the popularity of the program there may need to be supplemental funds from the Sustainability Budget to cover any overage.

- Update on the electric aggregation program included a comparison of the City’s program versus others in the area, including the price to compare from the electric utility. The City is at \$0.0949 per kWh, the current price to compare is \$0.0939 (for brown power) and the City of Cleveland is increasing to \$0.0924. The City’s rate is through May 2026. NOPEC seems to have stopped publishing its rates.

Shaker Heights City Schools Updates (Michael Fodor)

- Michael Fodor shared an update of the work with the Schools, with energy audits completed for the K-5 buildings. Still fine-tuning the recommendations that will be released at the end of the month. Improved ventilation strategies and local (staff) control over temperature is one expected outcome. Replacing fluorescent lamps, improving boiler efficiency, and other opportunities will all be included in the final report.
- Also working with the Woodbury team on helping to prioritize the recommendations in that work to assure alignment.
- Finishing up recommendations on other sustainability elements, including many of the policies that have been discussed with the Committee: landscaping, green cleaning, nutrition, etc.
- Continue to dig through utility data for greenhouse gas emissions inventory that the Schools can use as a baseline.
- A question was asked about solar for the Schools and an analysis regarding solar will be in the recommendation package.
- The question of using durable serving ware was asked, to reduce plastic exposure, and this will also be included in the recommendations. On-site cleaning equipment is a concern but the desire and making this a priority has been heard from many stakeholders.

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**Chair’s Remarks/Old Business/New Business**

- Last month a suggestion was made to consider a rebate program for residents planting trees in their yard. At that time Public Works suggested a list could be created and the Mayor suggested determining if specific areas with a lower canopy should be targeted. A meeting was suggested with Charles Orłowski, Nancy Moore, and Michael Peters.
- Additional work with the larger Schools Sustainability group will resume in the fall along with student engagement.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for August 14, 2025 at 8:00am.




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Michael Peters  
Sustainability Coordinator