

President's Commission on sustainability meeting on February 8, 2023

Present: Chair Kovacs, Commissioners: Mary Jane Fallot, Chris Finch, Chris Grant, Kate Greenwald, Kasim Korkmaz, Kirsten Olson, Dieter Otto, Ronald Rich, Beth Smith, Mike Valdes, Aurelia Wade, Anke Wolbert, Luke Yates, Guests: Kaja Zum Mallon, Karl Gage

1. Approval of meeting minutes (see attached) 12-0-0

2. Reports:

- Commission chair report

- 1) STARS Bronze Certification media attention

Our STARS Bronze certification attracted good attention from the media. EMU Today and mLive reported on it and Chair Kovacs has been interviewed by the Eastern Echo and the Eastern Magazine and is scheduling an interview with the Sustainability Business Network in Detroit. Hopefully, this will help our commission and university gain awareness on our sustainability efforts.

- 2) EnergySage collaboration

EnergySage provides a marketplace, developed with funding from the U.S. DOE Sun-shot program, and an education platform to make solar and other renewable energy options affordable and accessible to all Americans. EMU has partnered with EnergySage on a cobranded website, with links on our sustainability website, to bring EnergySage resources to EMU alumni, faculty, staff, and students. For each system purchased through the marketplace, EnergySage helps support the sustainability commission financially.

- 3) Fund Raising through crowdfunding platform Scalefunder

The sustainability commission has a site on the crowdfunding platform Scalefunder developed for us by Aric Bird Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement and Donor Communications. Aric and I are trying to organize a time to gather footage to use on the site and we need something to raise money for. Commissioner Otto had approached me to discuss purchasing a \$40 k electric commercial lawnmower, which is the only example of a purchase to move us forward on our sustainability fundraising. It is not too large to start and may be a way to test the alumni donations in the area of sustainability. The plan is to call it the start of the electrification of our ground's maintenance, which should be consistent with our plan to work toward electrification to take advantage of DTE's Clean Energy Plan to become netzero energy by 2050.

- 4) STARS score improvement

STARS score improvement to reach Silver rating in 3 years is underway. The following criteria has had some discussion and I am hoping to hear about efforts in the subcommittee chair's report about these or other criteria we should pursue in the next 3 years. I plan to write a sustainability plan that includes a comprehensive improvement to our STARS score that will move us 1 full certification level (20 weighted points). These improvements will be based on

approved efforts by the commission and university staff and faculty. Some will require recommendations to the president's office. Some will lead to press releases. Efforts have already begun on the following:

EN 2 Student Orientation – The commission reached out to Hayley Clock, New Student Orientation Coordinator. Looking for the following ways to participate:

- Recycling/trash stations in the resource fair with signage about the importance of recycling and the university's efforts in relation to this (Commissioners Grant, Rich).
- Signage where food is provided and a highlight of the sustainability efforts at EMU and how this relates to sustainability principles during dining's mini presentation (Commissioners Smith and Wade).
- Housing sustainable efforts in our Welcome 2025 housing plan (Commissioner McKinnie (nee Lescelius). Chair Kovacs will reach out to Commissioner McKinnie to discuss this.
- Wellness, which may include things related to our STARS score such as wellness and financial consultations, a wellness library, wellness programming, and related wellness resources to students through the REC/IM, Eagle Nutrition Services, etc. Commissioner Finch will reach out to Wellness.

If we could ask all those mini-presentations to connect what they do to our sustainability efforts as a whole with our website (maybe through QR code) and logo prominently included.

EN 12 Continuing Education – EnergySage partnership has a site counter

OP 2 Greenhouse Gas emissions – Hopefully we will hear more from Centrio energy

OP 3 Building Design and Construction – LEED certifiable construction but no certification will reduce the hit we take in no longer seeking certification

OP 17 Support for Sustainable Transport – scooter sharing

OP 18 Waste Minimization – hopefully we will hear more from Commissioner Greenwald, Steve Siller now weighs all recycled e-waste

PA 2 Sustainability Planning – Chair Kovacs has started a sustainability plan and will present goals to the commission in a future meeting

PA 4 and IN 11 External Reporting Assurance – Reporting assurance through Chair Kovacs's connections with AASHE and Michigan Sustainability Forum

- **Academic report (Ron Rich chair)**
Contacted Misty Sparrow to include sustainability features of the university in the prospective student tours. Misty shared with Commissioner Rich that sustainability is a popular selling point for prospective students.
- **Engagement report (Mary Jane Fallot chair)** Commissioner Fallot will reach out to Sean Woolf for Wellness sustainability activities at SOARS.
- **Operations report (Mike Valdes chair)** Looking at converting university fleet to EVs and charging stations with a partnership with Enterprise. In relation to this the university is interested in developing a survey across campus about expectations (do you own, purchase one, etc.). LAZ parking is also interested in such a survey and Chair Kovacs will connect these efforts with Commissioner Bell's efforts on a survey.
- **Planning and Administration report (Kevin Kucera chair)** Kaja Zum Mallen gave the report in place of Commissioner Kucera. Kaja discussed the time to complete another employee satisfaction survey. Chair Kovacs mentioned that such a survey in the past had given us STARS points and that we would need to complete this again to maintain our STARS points. In our last report we only received partial points because only 29.5% of employees were included in a survey. Reaching out to more employees would give us more points. The survey must include the following:
 - Job satisfaction
 - Learning and advancement opportunities
 - Work culture and work/life balance

3. Old Business

4. New Business

Swoops parking – Commissioner Kovacs and Swoops

Commissioner Kovacs noticed that Swoops shoppers and volunteers did not have a dedicated place to park and are spending donated money to pay for a parking permit. A meeting with Swoops and commissioners Kovacs and Bell led to possible solutions. One of them involves 2 15-minute temporary parking spots outside of Pierce Hall shared with the facilities' parking spots. We need to know if this is something we could discuss at this meeting or in a separate meeting?

WEMU tower property for composting – Commissioner Greenwald has a number of students engaged in research in biodiversity protection and permaculture and composting activities are desirable. However, an approximately 1-acre sized space is needed. The WEMU tower property is owned by EMU and sits on a 20 acres site of which the tower is taking only 0.25 acres. Emergency services and WEMU may have numerous reasons for protecting that land that we would need to contact to pursue using that land. Alternative locations were also mentioned including surrounding the area surrounding the Giving Garden.

EMU Energy production, distribution, and consumption management- Centrio Energy
Centrio Energy did not attend the meeting and Commissioner Otto mentioned that a partnership with Centrio Energy or another suitable partner could help us to sell energy provided by our Cogeneration Plant during the summer when the cogeneration plant can cheaply make electricity through the 100% natural gas-source power generator. Details of the partnership were summarized to the commission by email. Many of these details were vague, particularly the financial arrangement of such a partnership. A second meeting with Centrio Energy will be held on February 24, 2023.

Commissioner Kovacs requested a second meeting in early April to update efforts to improve our STARS score and continue our discussion with Centrio Energy with possible recommendations to bring to the president's office. The commissioners were in general agreement that a meeting in April at a similar time would work well.

Adjourned 4:48 PM