

City of Oregon
Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

The Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee met Monday July 14th, 2025, at 9 am.

Present: Tim Benedict, Melanie Cozzi, Darin DeHaan, Cheryl Hilton, Joyce Lewis, Tom Pacey, Steve Rypkema, and Vic Zaderej.

Meeting called to order at 9:00.

No public comment.

Tom Pacey moved to approve June 16th, 2025 minutes, Seconded by Steve Rypkema.

Motion carried. No Nays.

Potential Green Space for Pollinators: Melanie Cozzi said the idea of turning public spaces into prairie grass and wildflowers was mentioned at a City Council meeting. On Pines Road at the county building, a piece of the property was turned into a poppy/wildflower field. Joyce Lewis said people have enjoyed the field and felt it was good for the community. The committee discussed potential public spaces that would be good locations to do more of these types of fields. They discussed the area in front of the city owned dog park. They also felt adding a walking path and educational signs would be beneficial, and the field would help to reduce mowing costs. Darin DeHaan said he would reach out to Brian from the Ogle County Soil and Water Committee as this is their line of expertise. Vic Zaderej invited the committee to tour his property; he has an established prairie.

Update of Rock River Sweep: Melanie Cozzi and Steve Rypkema have been organizing the event. The committee discussed collaboration from other local entities such as Ogle County Solid Waste, Oregon Park District, Sheriff Department, Oregon Fire Protection District, White Pelican, and IDNR. They discussed supplies, collection of trash, and liabilities. The event is being held on September 6th, 2025 from 8am to 1pm. Together for Taft is also hosting an event that day. Melanie Cozzi will reach out to see if there are possibilities of the two groups co-marketing their events since the goals are similar. There will also be flyers, handouts, signup sheets, and additional information available at the Farmer's Market on Thursday.

Lee/Ogle Outdoor Education Program: Darin DeHaan said the Ogle County Soil and Water Conservation committee host a program to teach 3rd grade students about natural resources and sustainability. He said about seven hundred students attend the program. The event is being held October 1st and 2nd. He said they are looking for volunteers if anyone is interested.

ECO Oregon: Melanie and Tim will meet to discuss creating a list to provide to business owners to get the program started. They will reach out to business owners who are already committed to sustainability efforts. The committee will be reviewing/updating the current logo.

Other Potential Projects: Discussed holding a lunch and learn in the fall as well as solar updates. They also discussed changes needed for future meeting times and dates. The next meeting will be held on August 11th, 2025 at 9 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Submitted by City Clerk Cheryl Hilton