

City of Oregon  
Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

The Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee met Wednesday November 12<sup>th</sup>, 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.

Tim Benedict moved to approve October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, minutes, Seconded by Steve Rypkema.

Motion carried. No Nays.

**Solar Farm Tour:** The company was incredibly open and explained everything. They walked through the safety features and plans to install a tree barrier. They are also working on a plan for pollinators that could include bees. This solar farm is the first in the state of Illinois to have backup battery technology. They also said local entities will receive solar credits.

**Food Insecurity:** The committee discussed how the federal government shutdown is affecting SNAP benefits and food insecurity. The health department is receiving a lot of phone calls and donations have decreased. Joyce Lewis said a monetary donation to a food bank goes much farther than donating food items. She also explained the food pantry buying power compared to a person donating food items. The food pantry can purchase food items at a food bank for eighteen cents per pound, which allows them to purchase three times as much food. She also said the number of people visiting the mini food pantries has doubled. The city will begin gathering resources to push out to the public that includes resources for local food pantries, phone numbers, and hours. Joyce said the Ogle County Health Department website has a lot of resources already available. The committee also discussed helping the food pantry with online donations, food donations from grocery stores and restaurants, and a coop or municipal run grocery store.

**Eco Oregon Update:** The committee discussed creating a list of potential sustainable items to start with and ask business owners to produce more ideas or share what they are already doing. The committee would like to dedicate the next meeting to creating the list.

**New Business:** Vic Zaderej said maybe it would be possible to collaborate with NIU. They have been growing all their food on campus. Tim Benedict said the Everything Local conference is being held in Springfield in January. He said the conference has multiple workshops and includes education for market managers, community networking, bee keeping, and local food advocates, everything from food to flowers. He recommended getting an Illinois Stewardship Alliance membership before signing up for the conference. The next meeting will be held December 8<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 10:30am to discuss Eco Oregon.

Melanie Cozzi moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 a.m., Seconded by Vic Zaderej.

Motion carried. No Nays.

Submitted by City Clerk Cheryl Hilton