DRAFT PROPOSAL

Public Engagement Planning and Survey for Stoughton Sustainability Committee, 2022 Revision, 7-7-2022

Prepared by UW-Madison Extension Dane County (Sharon Lezberg, Community Development Educator)

Introduction

The City of Stoughton Sustainability Committee was established by the Stoughton City Council and began meeting in September, 2021. The City of Stoughton strives to create a sustainable future – one that balances economic resilience and growth with environmental protection and social equity, such as to meet the needs of the City in the present without compromising the resources available for future generations.

To that end, the Sustainability Committee has been charged with conducting research and developing recommendations on actions that the municipality and the community can take to reduce current environmental impact in order to assure a sustainable future. Research on how other local and national municipalities have addressed sustainability, coupled with deliberation and community input, will inform the development of a ***Sustainability Plan.*** This plan will guide City efforts to improve sustainability of internal (municipal) operations, while also engaging the community in education about and actions toward resource conservation, energy efficiency, and environmental improvement.

Sustainability Committee members have developed a **vision and mission** to guide their work:

> *A sustainable community requires a new ethic of living on our planet; considering the long-term impact of actions and policies on our community's environmental, social and economic health. The Stoughton Sustainability Committee will:*
>
> - *Develop a Sustainability Plan to guide the policies and efforts of city departments, committees, and commissions*
> - *Collaborate with city staff to generate an annual report that measures progress against benchmarks established in the Sustainability Plan*
> - *Identify and collaborate with local and regional partners to promote sustainability efforts, including community outreach.*

The Sustainability Plan will develop goals, actions, and indicators for six focus areas: (1) Energy usage; (2) Transportation; (3) Water quality and use; (4) Solid waste management; (5) Land use, development, and buildings; (6) Community engagement, education, and health.

Community input is essential to developing and vetting a sustainability plan. The Sustainability Committee has approached UW-Madison's Division of Extension, Dane County for assistance with community input related to developing the plan. The draft proposal outlined below presents a menu of options for community input. Extension Educators Sharon Lezberg and Michelle Probst will work with the Sustainability Committee to determine the extent, timing, and process for community input.

Working with Extension

The approach that we take, as Extension Educators, is different from that of the "outside expert" or consultant, in that we work in partnership with local leaders and residents. Extension brings tools and processes to the initiative, but our goal is to build the capacity of the local group to sustain the work. The Stoughton Sustainability Committee is a community-led initiative in response to a local and global issue that affects the community in the present and future. Local residents have volunteered to be members of the Sustainability Committee and are actively involved in information gathering, deliberation, and decision-making. Resident leadership and engagement is essential for assuring that the processes utilized and recommendations made are appropriate to and respectful of the people of the place.

Sustainability Committee members will assist in designing public engagement processes as well as survey questions and distribution. Committee members will take the lead on some components of the initiative, such as outreach informing the community about the survey and public input events. Committee members review and interpret the results of both the survey and public engagement processes (community meetings, public open houses, focus groups).

Extension Educators facilitate the process by providing:

1) expertise in survey development* (draft questions, survey administration, survey data analysis),
2) guidelines and suggestions for public engagement processes,
3) facilitation of public engagement efforts,
4) assistance with recording public comments and analysis of public engagement responses,
5) facilitation of discussions to interpret and consolidate survey and public engagement findings.

*Survey expertise will be provided by Dr. Kristin Runge, UW-Madison Extension Community Economic Development Program; Principal Investigator for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center.

Plan of Work and Responsibilities

The following menu of activities are the components of community engagement that have been discussed with the Sustainability Committee. For each, UW-Madison Extension Dane County and the Stoughton Sustainability Committee are working in partnership. The lead party is specified in the right hand column and in parentheses under methods, but even in the case where Extension is leading the activity, we will consult with the Sustainability Committee throughout.

Component	**Primary methods**	**Responsible Party & anticipated timeframe**
Community Open House (includes education but is primarily a way to inform survey development about potential options in each focus area)	- Identify date, venue (SSC) - Develop process for the session(Ext) - Determine format of table conversations & discussion prompts (Ext) - Develop introductory presentation and educational components (SSC) - Line up interpretation services if required (Ext) - Identify means to publicize event across diverse populations/ages (SSC) - Publicize event (SSC)	UW-Madison Extension Dane County (Ext) (Lezberg, Probst) Stoughton Sustainability Committee (SSC) Timeframe: - Open House design: August 2022 - Invitation Sept. 2022 - Sessions: Oct., 2022

	- Identify and train note-takers and table hosts (Ext) - Facilitation of the session (Ext) - Consolidate, review table notes (Ext) - Record findings (Ext) - Use findings to inform survey (Ext) - Evaluate Open House (Ext)	- Data consolidation and analysis: Nov-Dec., 2022
Resident Survey	- Develop Qualtrics survey draft to understand resident interest in sustainability, willingness to support City initiatives, and support for recommendations of the Sustainability Committee (Ext) - Identify venues to distribute survey (SSC) - Assist the Committee with survey distribution (Ext) - Prepare report with survey responses (Ext) - Assist Sustainability Committee with survey analysis (Ext/SSC)	UW-Madison Extension team (Lezberg, Runge, Probst) & Stoughton Sustainability Committee Timeframe: - Survey design: Oct-Dec., 2022 - Survey release: Jan.- Feb., 2023 - Survey analysis: Feb.-March, 2023
Design & implement post-survey **community conversation(s)** (engaging community members in talking about the issues for the community and getting feedback on recommendations)	- Identify date, venue (SSC) - Develop process for the session(Ext) - Determine format of table conversations & discussion prompts (Ext) - Develop introductory presentation and educational components (SSC) - Line up interpretation services if required (Ext) - Identify means to publicize event across diverse populations/ages (SSC) - Publicize event (SSC) - Identify and train note-takers and table hosts (Ext) - Facilitation of the session (Ext) - Consolidate, review table notes (Ext) - Record findings (Ext) - Evaluate Community Conversations (Ext)	Extension Dane County (Lezberg, Probst) & Stoughton Sustainability Committee Timeframe: - Community Conversation design: March-April, 2023 - Invitation logistics; April, 2023 - Sessions: May-June, 2023
Focus Groups (for specific audiences, such as business community, public officials, city staff, faith community)	- Determine purpose/expectations for each focus group audience (SSC) - Determine focus group questions (Ext) - Identify venue (SSC) - Develop invitation list and invitation letters (SSC) - Follow-up with invitees to assure participants attend (SSC) - Identify and train note-takers and focus group leads (Ext) - Consolidate and review notes (Ext)	Extension Dane County (Lezberg, Probst) & Stoughton Sustainability Committee Timeframe: - Focus group design: March-April, 2023 - Invitation logistics; April, 2023 - Sessions: May-June, 2023 - Data consolidation and analysis: Nov-Dec., 2022

	- Record and share findings (Ext)	
Education Sessions, events, tours	- Identify topics where public education would be beneficial (SSC) - Identify speakers and venue (SSC & Ext) - Publicize sessions (SSC) - Evaluate sessions (Ext)	Sustainability Committee leads, with support from Extension Dane County (Lezberg, Probst) Timeframe: - These could occur before and/or after the community conversations and survey (July/August, 2022; Jan- April, 2023)
Public input on final report and Sustainability Committee recommendations	- Share recommendations with City Officials & seek input (SSC) - Publicize report & recommendations (SSC) - Prepare public presentation of report and recommendations (SSC) - Recording of comments (SSC) - Revision of recommendations based on public comments (SSC) - Prepare public presentation of report and recommendations for City Council (SSC)	Sustainability Committee leads, with process support from Extension Dane County (Lezberg, Probst) Timeframe: - After Sustainability Committee has drafted recommendations and shared these recommendations with various City officials & departments
Report on public input	Written report on process and results of public input (Ext)	Extension Dane County (Lezberg, Probst)

Fee Structure

UW-Madison Extension Dane County charges a reduced fee for services. For City government, we charge a flat fee of $300-$500 for planning time; $65/hour for facilitation time; and a flat fee of $300-$500 for report preparation.

Below is a table of anticipated expenses:

Component	Estimated time	Estimated cost
Survey development & administration	60 hours	$500 (Dr. Runge is able to offer her support free of charge)
Survey report	10 hours	$500
Facilitation of committee discussion/deliberation to analyze survey findings	2 hours	$130
Open House planning & preparation	40 hours	$500
Community Conversation(s) planning & preparation	40 hours	$500
Community Conversation training of recorders and table hosts	2 hours	$130

Facilitation of Open House & Community Conversations – anticipating 3 sessions at 2.5 hours each plus 1.5 hour set up/clean up	8 hours	$780
Focus Group preparation	20 hours	$300
Focus group facilitation – anticipating 2 sessions (1 hour session; 1 hour set-up)	4 hours	$260
Report from Community Conversations and focus groups	20 hours	$500
Total anticipated cost		$4,100

Inclusive Engagement

A primary goal of public engagement is to increase the transparency of government processes of decision-making, so that all residents are aware of the issues addressed and of the decision-making process. Inclusive community engagement prioritizes community involvement, particularly by those community members most impacted by decisions around an issue, and by those who are under-represented in decision-making due to disenfranchisement or lack of access. UW-Madison Extension values inclusion and is intentional in our efforts to ensure equity and fairness. We will encourage the Sustainability Committee to identify audiences that are hard to reach or less engaged, and to develop outreach materials to reach these audiences to assure their participation.

Proposed Timeline

Note that the proposed timeline can be adjusted to meet the schedule of the Sustainability Committee and to take into account any community events that might conflict with the proposed timeline.

University of Wisconsin Extension Personnel associated with this proposal

Sharon Lezberg, PhD.
Community Development Educator, Extension-Dane County

Sharon Lezberg's primary areas of focus include organizational capacity building, participatory engagement, community economic development, leadership development and sustainability. Over the last eight years, Dr. Lezberg has worked with numerous non-profit organizations on strategic planning, program development, and evaluation. She spearheded the Edible Startup Summit for five years, and is working with colleagues to develop the Nonprofit Peer Learning Program. Previously, Dr. Lezberg worked as an Associate Scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on research and outreach projects addressing community, local and regional food systems (food security/food access within local food systems), bioenergy training, and women in sustainable agriculture. Dr. Lezberg's work brings together research, outreach, and community engagement. Dr. Lezberg holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Michigan, an MA in International Development and Social Change from Clark University, and a PhD in Environment and Resources from the Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
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Michelle Probst
Natural Resources Educator, Extension-Dane County

Michelle supports community organizations, committees, and departments in navigating complex issues, facilitating challenging conversations, and making informed decisions that protect our environment. Michelle develops educational programs around home composting, climate adaptation and mitigation, water resources, PFAS, pollinator protection, and more. Prior to becoming the Natural Resources Educator at Extension Dane County, Michelle was a regional Natural Resource Educator with UW-Madison Extension.
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Kristin Runge, PhD.
Center for Community & Economic Development
Communication Research Specialist

Kristin Runge's primary areas of focus are: communication research, economic development, community branding, placemaking, and the development of public opinion related to controversial issues. Previously, Dr. Runge worked as a lecturer in the Department of Life Sciences Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and held several marketing positions for non-profit organizations including the American Red Cross, American Cancer Society and Community Blood Center of Appleton. As a quantitative social scientist, Dr. Runge's work focuses on individual media use and personal predispositions as filters for attitudes related to controversial issues in both emerging technology and economic development. Dr. Runge holds a B.A. in communication arts from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, an M.S. in marketing from The Robinson School of Business at Georgia State University and a PhD. in mass communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
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