



## Environment & Sustainability Action Team Minutes

Tuesday, October 6, 2020 – 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

**Location:** By Zoom video-conference because of the Covid-19 Pandemic

**Attendees:** Clyde Anderson (Convener & Scribe), Kathy Jeffers, Mark Loscutoff, Renee O'Brien, Mary Ruth Stegman, Alan Vovolka, Elaine Wells

1. **Reflection** – Renee read excerpt from Pope Francis LAUDATO SI' on Care for Our Common Home.
2. **Check-in** – Everyone reported good health. Clyde received emails from Dennis & James with regrets they couldn't attend.
3. **Feedback from OTOC's Leadership Team Meeting Sept. 28** – Clyde
  - a. Approved OTOC sponsorship of Elders for the Earth Retreat – Clyde worked with Sarah on PowerPoint slide for showing at event breaks.
  - b. A team was appointed to develop a process for review and approval of future OTOC sponsorships.
  - c. Steering Committee Meeting Monday, Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> – Need to work on turnout. Primary agenda item will deal with OTOC member institution dues, and the need for institution conversations about funding OTOC.
4. **Updates on Environment-related Bills before the NE Legislature** – Clyde – Nothing to report.
5. **Update on Bellevue Adoption of the 2018 edition of the International Energy Conservation Code** – Team reviewed Mark and Alan's draft letter to Bellevue Mayor Rusty Hike. The Team recommended they confer with Mary Spurgeon for her input since she lives in Bellevue. Mark also learned that Washington County adopted the full Code, and he will mention that in the letter. [Mark and Alan discussed the letter with Mary getting her input, and the final draft appears on page 3.]
6. **Update from Omaha Waste Committee** – Kathy reported that on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> the City Council held a public hearing on whether to accept the 10-year recycling contract from NebraskaLand Recycling located at 39<sup>th</sup> & D. NebraskaLand bid \$2.28 million per year compared to FirstStar Recycling's bid of \$3.55 million/yr. Testimony went on for about 3 hours! Some speakers supported the relatively new firm, but many expressed concern about NebraskaLand's ability to handle the volume given its small facility with some outside sorting. Residents living nearby complained about all the added truck traffic, especially at the intersection of 42<sup>nd</sup> & D. Kathy and Mary Ruth will prepare a letter expressing ESAT's concerns for delivery to the City Council members and Mayor. [See final draft sent Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> on page 4.]
7. **Update on OPPD Issues Committee** – Alan attends the monthly OPPD Board meetings. OPPD needs to update its Strategic Directive 7 to include why they have a decarbonization goal, and how that goal affects climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. We discussed the natural gas peaking plants that OPPD plans to locate in Sarpy and Douglas

counties. See OWH article [OPPD announces sites for two backup natural gas plants](#). The Sarpy site is just west of the old Sarpy County Landfill. The Omaha site is near 120<sup>th</sup> & Military. When currently planned utility solar sites are completed, OPPD's renewable generation should be at 50%. However, OPPD is now facing opposition from Washington County for the large solar installation planned there. For several months Sarpy County has opposed OPPD's solar site near 156<sup>th</sup> & Plattview Road.

8. **Update Food and Water Committee** – Dennis – No report.
9. **New or Old Business?** – Elaine and Kathy reminded the Team about the Elders for the Earth Retreat via Zoom October 12 & 13. Register at <https://elders4theearth.com/>.
10. **Next meeting** - The November meeting falls on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3. Team decided to go ahead and meet since it's unlikely any meaningful election results will be available until later in the evening.
11. **Adjourn**

## Announcements

### Upcoming Events (via Zoom)

Technology Training Meeting:	Wednesday, Oct 7 @6pm
Building Relationships Across Differences:	Saturday, Oct. 10, 10am-2pm
Steering Committee Meetings:	Monday, Oct 12
Leadership Team Meetings:	Mondays, Oct. 26, Nov. 23
Spanish Leadership Training:	Friday & Saturday, Nov 13/14
Sarah Keeney on Vacation	Nov 26 – Dec 13

CLA 10/15/2020 Rev.



# Omaha Together One Community

October 12, 2020

Mayor Rusty Hike

Dear Mr. Mayor,

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) is a faith-based organization of institutions who identify issues of mutual concern and work together for the common good. OTOC requests, and recommends, that the City of Bellevue adopt the 2018 IECC (International Energy Conservation Code) in its unmodified form. The State of Nebraska has done so. Washington County, Nebraska also has adopted the 2018 IECC without modification. The following information may have guided their decision.

A new energy code is produced every three years. Bellevue is currently on the 2009 code, and is past due for an update. The U.S. Department of Energy has determined that adopting the 2018 energy code will save energy relative to the current code; approximately 25% for residential buildings.

Science tells us that the extreme weather we have been experiencing is just a taste of what we can expect in the future, if we do not reduce our emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses. According to the Energy Information Administration, about 20% of U.S energy is consumed by residences. Improving energy efficiency of homes and other buildings can play a major role in reducing harmful emissions. Besides protecting the climate for our children and grandchildren, energy conservation reduces pollutants that contribute to asthma and other public health problems.

Also, energy conservation is cheaper than energy generation. Today's new homes will be lived in for the next hundred years or more. The energy they use will cost the owners money, and will have environmental costs that affect us all. The best time to reduce a building's energy consumption is at the design and construction stage. Building in energy efficiency is much cheaper and more effective than Retrofitting.

The 2018 code provides air-tightness standards, combined with minimum ventilation requirements. This combination results in indoor spaces that are healthy, comfortable and inexpensive to operate. An analysis done for the National Association of Home Builders indicates that the additional cost of building to the updated code will be paid back in energy savings in less than ten years (a return on investment of 10 percent per year!) Very few investments have such a favorable return on investment for decades. Thus, energy efficiency can be an important wealth-building strategy for Bellevue families.

OTOC urges you to consider the needs of future residents of Bellevue: our children and grandchildren. Adopt Nebraska's energy code, the 2018 IECC.

Sincerely,

Mark Loscutoff, member of the OTOC Environmental Sustainability Action Team

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[2] <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/use-of-energy/>



# Omaha Together One Community

October 12, 2020

Since 2017 OTOC's Environment and Sustainability Action Team (ESAT) has been advocating for improved recycling in Omaha's waste stream by composting yard waste and increasing citizen participation in the City's recycling program.

This letter is in regards to Omaha's proposed contract with NebraskaLand Recycling. We believe that the City Council members are aware that there are several concerns about the proposed contract with NebraskaLand Recycling.

Our primary concern is whether a small start-up company located in Mid-town Omaha will be able to manage mixed recyclable materials as efficiently as FirstStar Recycling has done. We understand that NebraskaLand is the low bidder for the contract. The low bid did not seem to be the primary concern when the Mayor and City Council voted to award the solid waste contract to FCC. The concern then was that FCC was able to provide the service to the City of Omaha.

Additionally, the location of NebraskaLand, 39<sup>th</sup> and D, will cause added congestion at 42<sup>nd</sup> St. That street is a main thorough fare to South Omaha and is already congested during most of the day.

Furthermore, we are concerned that NebraskaLand does not have the equipment to sort recyclable plastics. It is unclear whether this company will collect plastic milk jugs, #3-7 plastics and continue the Hefty Orange Bag collection for transport to plants that reprocesses unrecyclable plastic by pyrolysis. How will glass be recycled under the new contract? If NebraskaLand is unable to fulfill the contract will the mixed recyclables go to the landfill like yard waste did when Waste Management could not fulfill its contract?

Finally, although there does not seem to be as much public concern about the mixed recyclable contract as there was with the solid waste contract, many Omaha citizens are acutely aware of the hazards of plastics that are clogging our sewers, rivers and are deteriorating into micro-particles that are respiratory health hazards to us all. One cannot be unaware of the plastic pollution that has inundated our way of life.

We ask that the Mayor and City Council consider the long- term effects of their decision as to which company will process mixed recyclables for five or ten years with the efficiency and reliability and that there be no interruption in this very important service.

Sincerely,

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