

Sustainability Advisory Commission

Having seen the Sustainability Advisory Commission meeting video held on November 7th 2018, I understood the agenda of the meeting and the efforts and recommendations suggested for the Climate Action Plan for the City of Urbana.

The existing proposal and implementation of retrofitting street lights with LED bulbs is a good option to work with the Climate Action Plan. As compared to traditional lighting, LEDs are 80% more efficient with only 5% energy wasted as heat. In addition, the idea of having motion sensed lighting in the parking area/garages would help saving the energy to a great percentage. Such areas are not occupied by people for a long time and having put on lights for the entire while is a big loss in energy and in turn generates heat.

Talking about LEED-ND, the idea of evaluating existing zones and development codes for all possible integration, it would be a great way to incorporate sustainable development around the City of Urbana. Along with this, vehicle usage should also be limited and car-pool and use of bicycle would be an effective alternative. Less use of public and private transport would result in less consumption of fuel, thereby reducing the carbon footprint in the environment. Plantation of trees and incorporating more green areas, even vertical green areas would provide a relief on the climate effect. As discussed more number of Maple trees in the landscape design would be a sustainable option which is very much feasible and economical. Aiming to have as much as possible LEED certified structures around, which may require initial capital investment but would yield a good long term result.

As we say, charity begins at home, even small changes at personal level contribute to the environment and these small level changes turn out to be magnified in the end. For example, replacing a leaking tap at home would help save the water wastage and contribute to the sustainable society welfare.

New innovation and technologies have been working on construction of roads using plastic wastes. This at present might not be a very popular technique but should be given emphasis on in the future. Using solar panels is one of the most common and sustainable ways to trap solar heat and use it for power generation. An effort could be made in getting the panels installed on private residences and not just in huge public buildings.

Green power from Ameren could help in the Climate Action Plan. Not knowing the exact numbers or statistics about how much is it incorporated, but would prove to be a contributing factor greatly.

Furthermore, use of certified woods for construction would be another sustainable move for the city. As, most of the construction involves wood, it would make quite a difference to the climate and environment on the whole.

Talking about the iMatter, the resolution proposal is a great way to get things implemented as quickly as possible. But, to be realistic, such huge changes take time and patience. The aim should be to achieve maximum output in minimum time period.

To summarize, sustainable alternatives and recommendations could be found even in the smallest actions of our daily lives. One just needs to be aware and active about their activities and habits.