



*"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."*

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**PARKS, RECREATION & FACILITIES  
MANAGEMENT**

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**To:** Alderpersons

**From:** Dean R. Gazza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management

**Date:** April 16, 2018

**Re:** 2018 Sustainability Summit and Exposition

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The 2018 Sustainability Summit and Exposition was held on April 11-12 at the Milwaukee Area Technical College. This year's theme was "Moving Toward a Sustainable Economy – Engaging our Future Leaders."

Both days were kicked off by local leaders including Mayor Tom Barrett, City of Milwaukee and Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive. Both talked about their support for Sustainability within their organizations and shared their political viewpoints.

A variety of breakout sessions were held throughout the two days also. Though not always specific to cities, they all provided many transferable themes and ideas for any organization. The programs I attended included:

- Living, Learning, Leading: Why Sustainability Matters to Colleges & Universities in Milwaukee.
- GreenPath: Stewardship at Miller Park
- Towards a World Class Eco-City: How Milwaukee's Local Governments Support Sustainability
- Finding Your Sustainability Style – A Storytelling Session
- Disclosure Effect: Evidence from Public Building Energy Consumption
- Intelligent Economic Growth: Making the Case for a Sustainable Economy
- Sustainable Business Operations in Practice
- Energy Technologies Update

The main takeaway that I was left with and proud to say is that the City of Appleton is doing more than most organizations. There is a lot of talk and not as much action for many organizations.

I jotted down a couple quotes that I felt mirror the City of Appleton's approach:

"Carbon emission reduction is not our mission. We have a mission statement for the college. Instead our focus is on how much energy does it take to accomplish our mission and how do we reduce that". – Kate Nelson, Chief Sustainability Officer, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

"Sustainability is driven into our core. It's not a side pet project. It comes from leadership and says who we are. It doesn't have to have sustainability in its title to be sustainable". – Ginny Routhe, Sustainability Manager, Milwaukee Area Technical College

I wanted to learn more about what others were doing in the area of renewable energy, so I am especially interested in any emerging trends. The use of solar panels continues to be of interest, but it was stated that incentives are minimal or non-existent, thus finding it hard to justify the investment in many cases. In regards to wind, there is not a return on investment and the sentiment was that in a public setting the use of public money could not be justified. One speaker noted that when someone wants to install solar panels, he first asks them if their lighting, insulation and windows, etc. have been upgraded; noting that everyone wants to do the most noticeable projects over what make the most common sense!

With regard to the topic of Global Warming or Climate Change, there continues to be debate, but what was agreed upon was that the population of the earth is currently around 7.5 billion people and will grow to about 11.2 billion by 2110. In regards to how countries are responding, the United States is not implementing various technologies or policies at the level some are. One speaker shared his disappointment over the EPA rollbacks at the federal level and recent changes at the state level including the elimination of Energy Star in the most recent state budget.

Last, I was able to talk to various vendors and other attendants about their initiatives specifically with regard to using technologies to reduce energy consumption. In addition, I connected with a past colleague from The Wisconsin Association of Energy Engineers who inquired about the City of Appleton hosting a meeting at the Wastewater Plant this upcoming July.

Overall, the conference was beneficial. I was disappointed that we were the only City and/or County in attendance other than Milwaukee. Much of the focus was on Energy Reduction, whereas Sustainability is much broader including transportation, health, food supply, economic development, water, stormwater, green spaces, etc. Hopefully, this will be expanded in the future at this conference.

Please feel free to contact me at 832-5572 with any questions, or by email at [dean.gazza@appleton.org](mailto:dean.gazza@appleton.org).