

Energy Plan Commission

Meeting Minutes - Special Meeting - June 17, 2020

Attendance: Commissioners: Alison Hoxie, Brian Hinderliter, Cassandra Theisen, Fosam Foncham, Gary Olson, Maria Jose Gomez Quijano.

Absent: Nate Lacoursiere

City Staff: Erik Birkeland, Property & Facilities Manager; Mike LeBeau, Construction Project Supervisor; Alex Jackson, Energy Coordinator; Mindy Granley, Sustainability Officer; Jennifer Ondrik, Administrative Specialist; Kaija Roy, MN GreenCorps Member.

Call to Order:

The Commission meeting started at 5:04 P.M.

New Commissioner – The Commission welcomed its newest Commissioner - Cassandra Theisen.

OLD BUSINESS

ByLaws

A few minor edits were discussed to the proposed draft bylaws. The Commission agreed to adopt the draft bylaws with these changes. **(VOTE: 6 – Yes, No – 0)**

Resolution Update

The City of Duluth wrote a letter in support of the effort to allow local choice in adopting an advanced building code and work on a coordinated the statewide energy code update. Mindy will represent Duluth on a statewide committee on this effort

NEW BUSINESS

Sustainability Officer Updates – Mindy updated the Commission on her position and progress over her first few months. She aided the City and County by applying for funding for a COVID prevention shelter for high-risk people experiencing homelessness. Much time has been devoted to understanding how the City operates internally but also initiating external partnerships and collaborations. Mindy reported that we will be hosting three interns who will be working primarily on communication strategies and carbon sequestration pathways. To build capacity, she will supervise one full-time MN GreenCorps member and one full-time Americorps VISTA member for a year, starting in fall 2020. Lastly, she informed the Commissioners on her efforts in collaborative efforts, including a \$9,000 Partner for Places grant for green infrastructure in Lincoln Park and other grant applications still pending.

GreenStep Cities – Kaija Roy, MN GreenCorps member serving with Property & Facilities, updated the Commission on Duluth's accomplishments in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program.

[Minnesota GreenStep Cities](#) is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based upon a menu of 29 optional best practices. Each best practice can be implemented, as decided by city elected officials, staff and community members, by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of

four to eight actions. These voluntary actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation.

Because of Kaija's work on metrics and data collection, the City of Duluth recently achieved a level 3 status and we expect to reach level 4 by the end of the summer. Of the participating cities, currently only 30% of Cities have reached this level. Kaija will lead summer interns to create communications mechanisms to share Duluth's actions and progress.

For additional information on Duluth's progress please see: <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/city-detail/11981>.

2019 City of Duluth Energy Consumption – Alex Jackson, Duluth Energy Coordinator, updated the Commission on energy use and costs by sector. He highlighted current projects with the Aerial Lift Bridge and Energy modeling in City Hall. Lastly, Alex described his work examining energy use by building(s). Commissioners gave positive feedback on the energy use and cost trends for the past few years, due to his efforts. This data may be used to devise a plan on future building use and potential consolidations/closures.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

The Commission expressed interest of the following topics to be discussed during upcoming meetings: Discussion on baseline consumption; Public Works & Fleet Services; Current projects and what's coming up from Facilities; Energy Tracking Tools; Utility Tracking and analysis; Background on utilities; Tour of the Steam Plant, Greenhouse Gas Emission trends.

ADJOURN

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 p.m., M/S/C.