

Energy Plan Commission

Meeting Minutes November 18, 2020

Attendance: Commissioners: Maria Jose Gomez Quijano, Fosam Foncham, Brian Hinderliter, Nate Lacoursiere, Gary Olson, Cassie Theisen. Absent: Alison Hoxie

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

Call to Order:

The meeting started at 5:05 pm

Facilities Strategic Planning:

Erik Birkeland, Property & Facilities Manager, updated the Commission on recent efforts he and his team have been making regarding City of Duluth Facilities management. Currently his team is working to finalize a strategic facility plan that will be used as a framework to engage City Administration and help guide discussions on building investments and the prioritization of capital assets. This work directly relates to the goals and charge of the Energy Plan Commission as ultimately we are aiming to increase energy efficiencies throughout our building portfolio.

Internal Energy Policy:

Lily Strehlow, AmeriCorps VISTA member, Energy and Sustainability gave a brief overview of the work she has done to initiate and draft our internal energy policy. The proposed draft policy closely mimics other similarly-sized municipalities. Her presentation outlined the following sections: (1) New construction standards (2) Prescriptive renovation standards (3) Requests for Proposals (4) Variance process for anomalous buildings (5) Energy savings (6) Building retirements. This work has been a collective effort between Facilities and the Sustainability team.

City Buildings and Energy Use:

Alex Jackson, Energy Coordinator, gave an overview of the projects he has been working on. Most recently, he has focused on conducting energy audits and energy analysis at several of our facilities. Inventory and replacement of lighting at our *many* hockey buildings. He has recently taken over the management of building controls due to staffing changes. This is a great opportunity to manage our buildings more closely and have increased controls and data that will help institute change!

Sustainability Officer Updates:

Mindy Granley, Sustainability Officer, gave an update on her position and current initiatives. She has been focused on some of the goals from the Mayors formal charge, specifically promoting the use of clean energy and endorsing community best practices and strategies. She encouraged Commissioners to check out the [new sustainability website](#) that is focused on demonstrating the City's commitments and actions as well as providing resources for both citizens and local businesses. She explained how she has been able to leverage over \$478,000 in external funding and has assembled an amazing team of five sustainability interns! Mindy was recently asked to write an article on the creation of a sustainability office in the City of Duluth that will be featured in December's edition of Public Management Magazine, see: [A Strong Start; Integrating Environmental Goals with Economic and Social Systems](#).

Mindy explained that the carbon emission tracking data will soon be transferred into the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) ClearPath web-based calculator. This will help to maintain consistency with accepted GHG reporting protocols. In addition, she described several grant applications that were in the works including a Mayor's Environmental Health grant, Electric Vehicles (MnDOT), and a FEMA grant that if awarded would increase resiliency in Duluth's Backup power and generator systems. Lastly, she shared her vision on the creation of a Climate Action Work Plan for the City and detailed many partnership projects that are occurring.

2021 Meeting Schedule:

The Commission discussed the proposed meeting schedule for 2021 and asked City staff to conduct a Doodle poll to help determine the best time of day to hold meetings next year.

Future Energy Projects & Priorities:

The Commission suggested that Mindy invite her interns to share their progress and work over subsequent meetings.

IRP/ MN Power – draft plan (15 year)

EPC – Annual report discussion; 2019 data; Executive Memo and “year in review”

Duluth Steam

Adjournment:

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 PM, M/S/C.