

DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2014

Members Present: Councilor Zack Filipovich, Councilor Jennifer Julsrud, Rob Prusak, Linda Sellner, Councilor Joel Sipress, Jason Thorsell

Members Absent: Jim Ramnes

Staff Present: Jodi Amundson, Jim Benning, Liz Bieter, Leanna Gilbert, Howard Jacobson, Chris Kleist, Eric Shaffer, Glenn Strid

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:13 p.m. by President Prusak.

Johnnie Green appeal

The appellant, Johnnie Green, did not appear to present his case. The appeal was unanimously rejected.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Old business:

Updates to utility capital improvement plans

Eric Shaffer requested that this discussion be included with the utilities budget update.

New business:

Green infrastructure - Stormwater

Commissioner Sellner gave a presentation on the importance of green infrastructure in the city with emphasis on the benefits of trees. Commissioner Julsrud mentioned current and upcoming projects that promote green infrastructure in the city.

Utilities budget update

Glenn Strid gave an overview of the proposed 2015 budget for each utility and answered questions from commissioners. Eric Shaffer provided details on budgeted capital projects.

Updates from staff

Jim Benning mentioned that the Commission should discuss post consent decree items soon, since partial termination has been requested.

Eric Shaffer gave updates on projects including CIPP lining in Lincoln Park, the natural gas blanket project, Kingsbury Creek water and gas, the West Duluth Reservoir, and Hidden Valley pipe bursting.

Upcoming Council actions

The Public Works & Utilities budget presentation to City Council is tentatively scheduled for November 10th.

Commissioner questions or comments

Commissioner Thorsell inquired about the signs regarding tree removal in the area of 19th Ave E and 4th Street. Jim Benning stated that it is a county project that is scheduled for construction in 2016.

Commissioner Filipovich stated that the intent is to replace the trees and that the existing trees are nearing the end of their useful life.

President Prusak asked if there was any update on the Ecolibrium3 project. Commissioner Julsrud said that the project is moving forward and will mainly involve the steam plant.

President Prusak mentioned that there were no overflows in Lake Superior during the storm event in August. Commissioner Thorsell asked how full the tanks got. Eric Shaffer responded that the first tank at 18th Ave E was full but not the second tank.

Commissioner Sellner inquired about the property that used to be a natural gas site that is up for development. Commissioner Julsrud explained that the old building had been sandblasted and the lead paint fell to the ground. The City requested and received a grant to pay for part of the cleanup costs. A residential development of 8 to 12 houses is planned. Commissioner Sellner said that the site would make a good green space.

Preview of upcoming business

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2014, at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will review utility budgets. After the budget process has ended, the Commission will discuss post consent decree topics.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.