

# Energy Plan Commission

Meeting Minutes March 17, 2021

## Regular Meeting

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

City Staff: Mindy Granley, Sustainability Officer; Mike LeBeau, Construction Project Supervisor; Alex Jackson, Energy Coordinator ; Jennifer Ondrik, Administrative Specialist; Lily Strehlow, Sustainability Intern.

### Call to Order:

The meeting started at 4:05 pm.

### New Business:

#### **Building Code Standards in the City of Duluth**

Wendy Rannenberg (Construction Services Manager) gave an overview of the current building codes and standards followed by the City of Duluth.

Britt McAdamis (Chief Building Inspector) reported that she was invited to participate in a state wide technical advisory committee charged with improving building energy efficiency in commercial and multi-family construction projects. She explained that the goals of this group are first to support and adopt [ASHRAE 2019](#) and move toward NetZero by 2036. She explained that many other cities similarly sized are supporting this advanced energy standard. The Commission discussed the challenges and increased design and construction costs associated with supporting and adopting this effort.

#### **Minnesota Power Integrated Resources Plan (IRP)**

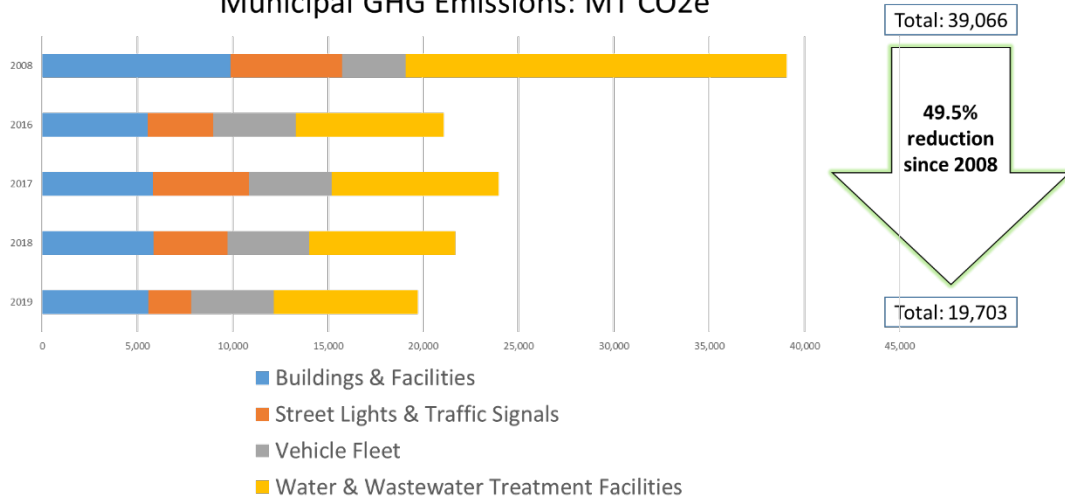
Alex and Mindy updated the Commission on the City's involvement in [the 2021 Integrated resource Planning process Plan](#). Utility Integrated Resource Plans (IRP's) are an important lever for Minnesota cities to achieve climate goals. It lays out how MN Power invests in electricity generation over the next 15 years. By participating in this planning effort the City and EPC can encourage actions such as adding more renewables, idling/closing coal plants, avoiding new fossil fuels, and augmenting efficiency and building electrification programs.

### Old Business

#### **Sustainable Building Policy**

Lily Strenhlow (Sustainability Intern) gave an update on progress made on the City's internal sustainable building policy and greenhouse gas emissions tracking. City staff met with the SB2030 team and are working to modify the City's Owner Performance Requirements, including integrating some of the best practices used by St. Louis County Property Management. We have also been moving our greenhouse emissions gas data into the Clear Path Tool. This tool is an internationally accepted emissions calculation process. Initial figures show a ~50% reduction in total carbon emissions since 2008 (see figure below).

## Municipal GHG Emissions: MT CO2e



### Sustainability Officer Update:

Mindy Granley updated the Commission on recent sustainability efforts. Work continues on the GreenStep Cities program, the next set of metrics are due on April 1, 2021. She aided in drafting a letter of support for the clean car rulemaking as part of the Mayors Climate EV Collaborative. On communications, requests for presentations around the community and engagement with Sustainability through the website/Instagram accounts are both increasing. We are waiting to hear on a FEMA water plant generator grant to increase resiliency (June 2021) and the MnDOT EV grant (March 22<sup>nd</sup>). Lily led the effort on the grant submission funds in support of a Lake Superior Chalkfest event and Mindy is finalizing the application for a small grant for Alternative landscaping equipment for the Park Maintenance Division. A Duluth Solar project update (Docket 20-828) is moving forward in the PUC process, the next steps would be to obtain a special use permit (P-1 Zone) and finalize an environmental assessment and lease agreement. The [Solar cohort](#) with the Rocky Mountain institute continues, the deadline for the bulk buy is April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Lastly, she reported that the City Sustainability Advisory Team (C-SAT) is set to meet on March 30<sup>th</sup>. This group is charged with developing overall strategies and high-level goals for City action.

### Energy Coordinator Update:

Alex Jackson gave an update on his efforts on year end data analysis with the City's many utility accounts. He reported that Facilities will be focusing this summer on updating building controls at the Emergency Operations Center at City Center West and helping with the energy efficiencies in the predesign study at Spirit Mountain.

### Future Meeting Topics/Announcements

This will be Maria's final EPC meeting as she is moving to Canada to start a graduate program. Mindy will begin the application and interview process to fill this vacant seat.

### Adjournment:

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 PM, M/S/C.