

# Energy Plan Commission

Meeting Minutes 20 November 2023

Regular Meeting (City Hall Room 430, Lakeside Conference Room)

**Attendance:** Commissioners: Alison Hoxie, Cassandra Theisen, Robert Reichert, Tari Rayala, Scott Wishart, Gary Olson **ABSENT:** Brian Hinderliter

**City Staff:** Mike LeBeau, Construction Project Supervisor; Alex Jackson, Energy Coordinator; Brett Crecelius, Community Resilience Project Coordinator; Jim Filby-Williams, Property, Parks, and Libraries Director

## Call to Order:

The meeting started at 4:04pm.

## Approval of May 19<sup>th</sup> 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Approved by Commissioner Rayala and seconded by Commissioner Reichert.

## Approval of November 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 Agenda.

Approved by Commissioner Rayala and seconded by Commissioner Reichert.

## Old Business:

**None**

## New Business:

### **Planning for net Zero: Duluth's Gas Utility – Representatives from the Duluth Climate and Energy Network.**

- "Climate effect" – methane leaks, is 80x more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub> as GHG for 20 years, still 36x more powerful at 100 years = methane has climate effect of 2.6 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Questions: Gary: Is anyone at the City identifying leaks in the NG system? No.
- National trends:
  - o Electrification
  - o ACEEE modeled gas cost increase when various levels of electrification are in place
  - o Stranded assets – on both the utility/City side (pipelines) and also on the consumer side (furnaces/boilers/gas appliances)
  - o High energy burdens
- Duluth specific:
  - o 62% of Duluth households use gas
  - o No current plan to transition away from gas

- C-LEAP work to analyze existing building stock and develop energy efficiency packages
- Examples of other Cities:
  - o Vermont Energy Systems – IOU, 55k customers, transitioning from NG to thermal, doubling rebates for HPWHs, ASHPs integrated with gas, they’re a one stop shop for IRA rebates
    - Morgan Hood – New Product Development Manager
  - o Framingham Massachusetts – networked geothermal
  - o Lowell, Massachusetts – fully electrifying a neighborhood
  - o Rapid changes coming – example is HEET
- Incentives:
  - o Consumer
    - IRA
    - State
    - Utility
  - o Utility
    - Federal – EIR loan program, methane emission reductions
    - State – MNPUC dockets (Future of Gas, NGIA)
- Two asks:
  - o Ask CS to develop a plan and modeling to determine how it can align with City’s net-zero goal.
  - o Ask City to assign a person to oversee this.

**DRAFT Recommendation Discussion – Commissioner Gary Olson (Informational)**

- Commissioner Reinert asked that the draft recommendation include a policy for someone at City to work with new construction/significant remodels to promote electrification.
- Eric Enberg suggested adding the request for a person to do this work, funded by CS. Commission agreed but remove the piece about how it gets funded and leave that more open.
- Who should we send this to? Discuss with Mindy about passing along to City Council & Mayor. Need to be very selective with how/when we make an ask this high up. Jim suggested that we don’t ask for more than 1 item per year.
- Jim suggested making a 1 sentence ask at the beginning of the draft recommendation if it goes to council/city.

**Sustainability Officer Updates – Brett Crecelius (Community Resilience Project Coordinator)**

- Addition of Ella, Jeanette, Olivia to Sustainability team
- Sustainability Fund: leveraged \$3.2M
  - o EV for facilities
  - o Hybrid for library
  - o Charging stations

- Park Maintenance
- Street sweepers
- LNPK
- C-LEAP
  - 18 mo technical assistance for future of transportation, buildings, etc..
  - NREL doing presentation on 10/10 at DECC – email Mindy if anyone wants to attend (maybe she'll send out to commission)

### **RACER Grant updates and progress – Brett Crecelius (Community Resilience Project Coordinator)**

- Sent out RFQ for 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors to complete site assessments
- Eco3 drafting a survey to collect community input
- Created Critical Infrastructure Team (CIT) of 30 people from City and partner organizations to explore what a city-wide power outage would look like
- Geothermal DOE grant kicked off – year long planning session for incorporating geothermal (waste heat from WLSSD) as W Superior street is completely redone
- Upcoming:
  - Conferences: UMD Climate Change & Midwest Climate Resiliency
  - Grants: Energy Futures, CERTs
  - EPC:
- Ella asking for a letter of recommendation for a grant to fund community outreach in partnership with Duluth Folk School – Asked EPC to write a letter of recommendation by 10/10. Olson motioned that we write a letter and Reinert seconded. All voted and all approved. I will write the letter and send to Ella on EPC's behalf.

### **City Energy Updates – Mike LeBeau & Alex Jackson**

- Hit 50% completion of City Hall, lots of delays due to electrical equipment availability and lead/asbestos abatement
- 2<sup>nd</sup> St Parking – Added EV charger (conduit in ground to add 4 more in future) & upgraded lighting
- Ordering heat pump water heaters – some in City Hall, some in other buildings
- Coordinating with Mindy for funding to potentially buy 40 HPWHs

### **Future Meeting Topics**

HEET joining at next meeting

#### **Public Comment:**

None

#### **Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 pm.