

Energy Plan Commission

Meeting Minutes May 15th, 2024

Regular Meeting Conference Room 430

Attendance:

Commissioners: Gary Olson, Cassandra Theisen, Robert Reichert, Tari Rayala, Brian Hinderliter, Scott Wishart

Absent: Alison Hoxie

City Staff: Ted Blenkush, Mike LeBeau, Mindy Granley, Alayna Johnson and Ella Stewart **Absent:** Brett Crecelius, Jennifer Ondrik, Jim Filby Williams

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 4:01pm by Commissioner Olson

Approval of March 15th Minutes: Commissioner Rayala moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wishart

Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Hinderliter moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Theisen

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Theisen notified the commission that it is her last meeting. Mindy Granley shared that one person has reached out about the absent position but no interviews have been scheduled.

Commissioner Olson brought up the discussion from the last meeting about the Commission reviewing bigger building projects before they are brought to the Planning Commission. Mike LeBeau mentioned how this Commission is focused on public land and not private land which is subject to building codes and more difficult to out on restrictions. Mindy Granley suggested the Commission should put in a recommendation during the public commenting period.

Send calendar invites for entire year to Commissioners and send slideshows after meetings.

Who appoints the next commissioner? Gary suggested adding a financial person to the commission. Mike LeBeau suggested creating a list of qualities for the new commissioner.

Office Elections: Commissioner Olson moved to nominate vice chair position. Commissioner Olson nominated Commissioner Rayala. All voted in favor of Commissioner Rayala for Vice Chair.

Old Business: Commissioner Olson updated the Commission on his meeting with City Administrator and Mindy Granley regarding Comfort Systems. Commissioner Olson mentioned how he has not heard of any follow-ups yet. Commissioner Olson asked if the Commission should reach out to Council again. Mindy Granley encouraged commissioners to join the Council Presentation on June 10th.

New Business:

LEAP Update: Mindy Granley gave an overview of the finding from Communities LEAP program which wrapped up last month (IRA Incentives, Building Analysis, Green Steel, Electric Vehicles). The final report is in the final review stage at the National Renewable Energy Lab and will be shared with the Commission when complete.

Climate Action Work Plan: there will be an update to the Council of Whole on Climate Action Work Plan progress on June 10th. The update is uploaded onto the Sustainability website '[2023 Climate Action Progress Report](#)'.

Greenhouse Gas Update: Ella Stewart updated the Commission on the [annual GHG inventory](#) for 2023. The City emissions are fairly stable, we had a slight reduction from last year. Aside: coal use will stop on May 1st 2025, but there is a stockpile of coal which was ordered in 2019 that the City is required to purchase. Duluth Energy Systems is trying to sell it. Commission Wishart asked about benchmarking of public buildings. Mike LeBeau said we use B3 Benchmarking but we are not up-to-date.

Thermal Energy Network Symposium: Alayna Johnson shared how she and Mindy Granley attended a Thermal Energy Network Symposium in Rochester, MN and toured the geothermal heating and cooling system at the Olmsted County government. Alayna Johnson shared that the City put in a CPRG application through EPA to fund the geothermal project and should hear back in July.

Energy Futures Grant: Mindy Granley gave an update on the [Energy Futures Grant](#) that the City was recently awarded. The City is the lead partner and currently in negotiations with DOE. The grant would include 1.5 FTEs for 1 year and could possibly be selected for 2 more years.

City Energy Updates: Mike LeBeau introduced Ted Blenkush who has been with the City for almost 2 years. Ted Blenkush was recently promoted to the Energy Coordinator position. There have been 6 applications reviewed for the Energy Technician position but the position is still open which has made the transition slower.

Ted Blenkush gave an update on the City Hall project which should have all staff back in the building by the end of June. Mike LeBeau mentioned that other projects have been put on hold until the Energy Coordinator is settled in.

Ted Blenkush gave an update on a grant from MPCA to install roughly 45 heat pump water heaters in City buildings. Other projects include lighting controls, EV charging infrastructure, and e-gauge technology.

Public Comment: None

Future Meeting Topics: Review CLEAR Report

Adjournment: Commissioner Theisen moved to adjourn and Commissioner Hinderliter seconded to adjourn at 5:17 pm.