

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 2/8/24

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:01 PM Thursday, February 8, 2024, in the City Council Chambers.

Present: Pamela Blough, Brittany Goode, Jim Hagen, John Kinch, Jean Madden, David Mann, Jim Mathews, Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, Dan Small, Andrei Skelly Joe Wallace,

Absent: Ryan Cotton,

Also present: Eric Law (Administrative Liaison), Brian Urquhart (City Planner) and Mayor Bob Monetza

1. Call to audience. Salim Al-Shatel is running for US Congressional District 3. Jacob Tater and Alexis (last name unknown) -said they are interested in community composting in the area. They have been collecting coffee grounds from area coffee shops. Jan O'Connell is from the Sierra Club.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (1/11/23) approved unanimously.

AGENDA

1. **Michigan Green Communities (MGC) Update:** The MGC Challenge is an annual program that serves as a guide to help communities measure their progress towards sustainability. Last year, The City of Grand Haven earned Gold certification. Urquhart reports that this year's challenge has added a new Platinum certification which has a higher bar. Identified areas to improve upon (or meet GH community goals) in at least 4 of the following areas: Percent reduction in GHG emissions from municipal operations from baseline year, Percent reduction in community wide GHG emissions from previous year, Percent of energy supplied by renewables sources in municipal operations, Percent reduction in water use from municipal operations in the 2022 calendar year, Community-wide water use per capita (compared to previous year), Percent of municipal vehicle fleet that are EV/clean fuel vehicles (improve upon previous year), Tree canopy cover (meet your community's stated goal for the tree canopy cover).
2. **Forest Management Taskforce Update.** Madden reports that the DPW has the Native Garden Project on their radar, and are working on a list of recommended sites. SEC discussion regarding how a drone (using thermal

imagery, topographic surveying, aerial mapping) could be used to assess the health of the forests. The Forest Management (FM) subcommittee is exploring the option of a public opinion survey on FM similar to the Diesel Plant survey in 2021. Blough made a resolution that the Forest Management subcommittee should work with the City Manager and staff to draft a city-wide survey. Mann supported. Unanimous approval. Madden reports that The Eagles have selected "Save our Forests Grand Haven" as their charity of choice this year. They are hosting a fundraiser for FM in mid-April that will include corporate and business sponsors. Curt Ter Haar (Coordinator of Park Planning and Development at Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission) has completed a proposal for the FM Soil Erosion pillar, and will be presenting it to the FM subcommittee next week. Madden reports that she has a meeting scheduled with a representative from the High School Green Team. Mathews reports that he has applied to the DNR to serve on a Citizens Committee regarding deer populations in urban settings.

3. **Community Energy Plan (CEP) Update:** Kinch and Goode report that they are adding events to the Community Outreach plan, including a Trivia night at a local brewery and an Earth day event. Michigan Energy Options (MEO) is creating a survey to send out to the public to garner more information about what the community wants to see in a CEP. Kinch and Goode also gave an update on affinity groups that they are contacting. Kinch reports that the City of Grand Haven could apply for a grant (due Feb. 21) from the State of Michigan to put solar panels on the new roof of the DPW (Department of Public Works). It would add resilience to the grid as it would produce more power than what would be used by the DPW.
4. **BLP Green Energy Rider Promotion:** The Grand Haven Board of Light and Power (GHBBLP) has a "Green Energy Program". This may be a good option for customers interested in having more of their household energy come from renewable sources. (Currently approximately 24% of the BLP's portfolio is from renewable energy.) From the GHBBLP website: *With our Green Energy Program, GHBBLP will purchase additional renewable energy credits from sources like wind and solar. That means your utility payments directly support the generation of more renewable energy on the grid. Both residential and business customers can choose to purchase more renewable energy for an additional charge of \$.008/kWh. Beyond the renewable energy already in our power supply portfolio, GHBBLP uses your green energy funds to purchase additional renewable energy credits from regional renewable energy providers. Renewable Energy Certificates (sometimes called Credits) or RECs are a product on public energy markets, and each certificate directly*

represents actual, renewable energy generated from wind, gas, hydro and solar resources. <https://ghblp.org/energy-waste-reduction-programs/>

5. Proposal Review- Harbor Island Community Solar Project: Hagen reports that he has submitted a proposal to the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) for a Community Solar Project with a pollinating garden on Harbor Island. ([GVMC](#) is working to develop a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) for the Grand-Rapids-Kent Metropolitan Statistical Area as part of the US EPA's [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants \(CPRG\) Program](#).) Hagen reports that Community Solar on Harbor Island would generate enough energy (4 GWh) to provide the annual equivalent electricity to 600 residential consumers per year. Community Solar could be coupled with a native pollinating garden to help reverse the decline of pollinators such as bees and Monarch Butterflies. One of the unknowns for the proposal is that a remediation plan for Harbor Island has not been established yet.

Blough made a motion to adjourn at 7:29, supported by Small, unanimous approval.