

## **Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 3/14/24**

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:04 PM Thursday, March 14, 2024, in the City Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Brittany Goode, David Mann

Also present: Eric Law (Administrative Liaison), Ashley Latsch (City Manager)

1. Call to audience. No public comment. In attendance: Jan O'Connell, Jacob Tater, Alexis Stanhope, Chris Roberts.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes unanimously approved.

## **AGENDA**

1. Forest Management (FM) Taskforce Update: Madden reports that the Eagles Club of Grand Haven plans to hold a fundraiser to support the "Save Our Forest" (SOS) campaign on April 13th, 2024. The funds raised will be used for 3 of the SOS pillars: Manage Invasive Species, Erosion Control, and Reforestation. Madden and Mathews provided a FM task force update to City Council last week. They requested that City Council consider purchasing its own drone that can be used for thermal-imaging to get an accurate yearly count of the deer in the City forests. The City could also use it for other purposes such as promoting tourism. The FM task force reports that the drone can likely be purchased through fundraising dollars. Law reports that the City currently owns a drone for a specific purpose. It is being programmed at GVSU to look for disease and distressed trees. The FM is planning to create a video that will highlight what the forests mean to the City of Grand Haven.
2. Community Energy Plan (CEP) Update: Kinch reports that the Community Energy Plan survey has been posted on the CEP website (<https://grandhavenareaenergyplan.org/>) and the City's Facebook page. He encouraged people to fill it out and to spread the word. Community input is essential for knowing what the community wants in a plan. Earlier today, members of the CEP steering committee (Kinch, Cotten, O'Neill, Nelsen and Deanne Brink from Grand Haven Township) along with Erik Booth and Paul Cederquist (Grand Haven Board of Light & Power), and Ashley Latsch (GH City Manager) attended a meeting in Holland to learn more about the collaboration between the Holland Board of Public Works and the City of Holland (HBPW) to support the City of Holland's long range Community Energy Plan. We met with Dave Koster (General Manager of the HBPW), Dan Broersma (Sustainability Environmental Manager for the City of Holland), Andrew Reynolds (Community Energy Services Manager for HBPW), as well as other

Holland citizens involved with advancing Holland's Community Energy Plan. We learned about their Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) and Beneficial Electrification (BE) programs that lower Holland's carbon footprint and make residential homes more comfortable while saving money. They have improved efficiency for 200 homes by 15 or more percent over the last two years.

3. City Beach Clean-Up Schedule: Law presented possible dates for beach clean-ups that traditionally have occurred before or after summer holidays. Blough stated that she has noticed the beach is much cleaner now since the "beach sweeper" machine started being used. This led to a discussion about whether other areas of the City of Grand Haven might benefit from clean-up instead of the beach. The discussion was tabled for now.
4. Small announced that City of Grand Haven has been designated as a "Tree City of the World" by the Arbor Day Foundation. There are only 200 cities in the world that currently have this designation. Grand Haven has been designated as a "Tree City USA" for 28 years. <https://treecitiesoftheworld.org/directory.cfm>

**OTHER:**

Hagen suggested that everyone take the survey about Harbor Island available on the Harbor Island Website. <https://form.jotform.com/240667968214163>

Hagen provided an update on the Community Solar proposal that was submitted to the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) to be considered for the EPA's Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP). The proposal was selected and is contained in the 4 county PCAP submitted to the EPA on March 1. Hagen had an online meeting with Mayor Monetza and GVMC's Cara Decker today regarding the proposal. The proposal can't move forward to request grant funding until it has advanced beyond a conceptual framework with actual Request For Proposals (RFP) etc. Although a grant request can't be submitted now due to the project not being far enough along, there may be another opportunity in the future for it to be included with a larger group of projects.

O'Neill is on the Earth Day Committee. She suggested that the Community Energy Plan have a booth with Kinch and Goode available to answer questions.

Small made a motion to adjourn at 7:09, supported by Blough. Unanimous approval.