

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 4/11/24

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:06 PM Thursday, April 11, 2024, in the City Council Chambers.

Present: Ryan Cotton, Brittany Goode, Jim Hagen, Jim Mathews, Patti Nelsen, Dan Small,

Absent: Pamela Blough, John Kinch, Jean Madden, David Mann, Nancy O'Neill, Andrei Skelly, Joe Wallace

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

1. Call to audience. In attendance: Jan O'Connell, Jacob Tater, Alexis Stanhope,
2. Previous Meeting Minutes unanimously approved.

AGENDA

1. Presentation by Jacob Tater: Great Lakes Ecoworks Project Proposal, "Making the Great Lakes Region Greener, One Idea At a Time". The project involves organic waste collection. Michigan is the #1 importer of waste nationwide. If there was mandatory organic waste separation it would reduce up to 58% of landfill methane emissions in the State. The emissions from 1.37 trillion pounds of waste would be reduced by over 50% and we would be able to capture that methane to use as energy and fuel, in turn reducing emissions from the energy sector even more.
2. Community Energy Plan (CEP) Update – Ryan Cotton gave a summary of the Community Energy Plan steering committee earlier today. So far there have been 355 responses to the survey. The responses indicate a diversity of opinions. Approximately 250 responses indicate that local government has a role to play. David Gare talked about the data that has been gathered so far and how that will drive "good, better, best"

strategies. All strategies will be discussed and subject to City Manager and Council review.

3. Forest Management Taskforce Update – Jim Mathews gave an update about the Eagles Fundraiser “Save our Forests” which is happening on Saturday.
4. Landmark Tree Ordinance Discussion Requested by the City Planner – Brian Urquhart. Developers in Grand Haven don’t have any restrictions when they clear-cut sites on private property, except for a few exceptions that are considered “sensitive areas”. Some municipalities such as Ann Arbor have added “Landmark Tree” protections in their zoning ordinances for residential and private property. It includes mitigation strategies if a healthy tree must come down. There are areas in the City that have “old growth trees” that have no protection. This discussion has been tabled until next month.
5. Earth Day & City Beach Clean Scheduling – Brittany Goode has requested help with the State Beach Park Clean Up on April 27th which is being hosted by the Sustainability and Energy Commission. There was discussion about how the use of plastic garbage bags is counterproductive to overall goal, and using buckets is preferable. We can ask people to bring their own if they have one. Law will explore the possibility of getting additional buckets to use. There will be four additional “clean ups” during the year that coincide with Memorial Day, July 4th, Coast Guard Festival, and Labor Day.

Other:

Law talked about the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announcement yesterday that mandates the first-ever national standard for the presence "forever chemicals" in drinking water. The new standard limits six types of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, found in drinking water -- a move the EPA says will protect about 100 million people from exposure. The new EPA benchmarks have a lower threshold than the Michigan threshold. The Water Treatment Plant tests monthly for the presence of these chemicals. The Grand Haven Water Treatment Plant has tested consistently below the thresholds established by both Michigan and the new EPA rule. Michigan has been a leader in testing for contaminants

in water, and the other states who have done nothing will need considerable guidance.

Small made a motion to adjourn at 7:56. Cotton supported. Unanimous approval.