

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 5/9/24

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:03 PM Thursday, May 9, 2024, in the City Council Chambers.

Present: Ryan Cotton, Brittany Goode, Jim Hagen, John Kinch, Jean Madden, Jim Mathews, Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, Dan Small, Joe Wallace.

Absent: Pamela Blough, David Mann, Andrei Skelly,

Also present: Eric Law (Administrative Liaison), Bob Monetza (Mayor), Tim Price (Assistant City Manager).

1. Call to audience. In attendance: Joe Burnett and Jan O'Connell but no public comment.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes unanimously approved.

AGENDA

1. Drone: The City Manager's Office (CMO) has requested a resolution regarding the City purchasing a drone with thermal imaging technology. The SEC held a discussion about the possible uses of the drone and also legal implications. Hagen inquired about the yearly costs above and beyond a one time purchase. Law suggested that there may be a licensing fee for software and upgrades. Mathews said that the price of the drone will depend on the quality which can vary depending on the quality of the equipment. Mathews reports that \$3000 have been raised through a grant that can be put towards the drone. Mathews also reports that there is a professor at Grand Valley State University who has offered to help train City Staff in the use of thermal imaging. Mathews stated that the City Attorney may need to clarify the use of a thermal image drone when used near private property. The SEC concluded that the purchase of a thermal image drone is a good idea, but the CMO will need to research and obtain competitive quotes. Mathews made a motion for the following: the SEC recommends that the CGH purchase drone technology, batteries, and associated thermal imaging camera that can be used for multiple purposes. Small supported the motion. Unanimous approval.
2. Earth Day & City Beach Clean Up Report and Update: O'Neill attended an Earth Day Committee (EDC) meeting today (along with audience member O'Connell). The guest count for the event at Central Park Place was over 400 people, and the Green March was well attended. The EDC is interested in making it a Zero Waste event in the future. This year, significant strides were made towards Zero Waste, thanks to metal spoon contributions from Dan Small, ceramic mugs from EDC members for the donated Aldea Coffee, compostable food-service containers for the Righteous Cuisine food, and reusable bags from the Grand Haven Board of Light & Power. Next year the EDC will consider having fewer trash cans and increasing the number

of recycle and compost containers with better signage. The EDC is looking for new members for the Earth Day Committee because most of the current members have been involved for many years and would like to reduce their participation. Goode reports the Beach Clean Up was a success. There were over 44 volunteers. They collected over one thousand pieces of trash that weighed 33 pounds. The next Beach Clean up is scheduled for May 23rd at City Beach.

3. Community Energy Plan (CEP) Update: A CEP Steering Committee (CEPSC) meeting was held earlier today. Things are going well with the plan to date. The CEPSC has good representation from the municipalities participating. Michigan Energy Options (MEO) held a community input session last week at the Unicorn, which was well attended with at least 27 people who had not attended a previous event. The survey results were presented. The survey results indicate that 73% of respondents think strategies to combat climate change are important and that local government has a role in it. Upcoming meetings will focus on “good, better, best strategies”, and local officials can choose the scenario which fits their municipality. The “good” scenario is based on the new State regulations to address climate change. The entire presentation will be presented at the next SEC meeting on June 13. There was discussion about keeping City Council and the GHT Board informed of updates prior to any votes taken. At some point later in the summer there will be an official presentation to City Council. The anticipated date for a draft report is August 19.
4. Forest Management (FM) Taskforce Update: Madden reports that the FM team doesn't have a fundraising total from the Eagle event as of yet, but hope to have it soon. She also talked about the tree planting event in Mulligan's Hollow. A citizen had donated 27 good size native trees to the City last year, and the Department of Public Works (DPW) took care of them. The group of volunteers recently planted the trees in Mulligan's Hollow.

Other

- Nelsen provided information about the upcoming “Old Growth Forest Walk” at Duncan Woods at 5:45 on May 16th. It is a guided walk with naturalist, Bill Martinus, that will highlight the variety of trees in Duncan Park, which has recently been recognized as an “Old Growth Forest”.
- O'Neil suggested that people plan Lupine in their garden to help the Karner Blue Butterfly population which has been listed as an endangered species.
- Hagen brought in a poster board display regarding his suggestion for a Community Solar Garden on Harbor Island. A similar proposal was also discussed at the recent Harbor Island Open House. Hagen also talked about the potential for Community Solar on top of the DPW building which could provide energy to 78 average BLP residential customers (not including DPW building use).

Final Call to Audience

Small made a motion to adjourn at 7:30. Mathews supported. Unanimous approval.