

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 7/13/23

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Brittany Goode at 6:00 PM Thursday, July 13, 2023, in the City Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Erin Turrell, Pamela Blough

Also present: Eric Law

1. Call to audience. No audience initially.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (6/8/23) approved unanimously.
3. Item #1 added to agenda

AGENDA

Item 1: Commission Membership Announcement (Goode). Jim Hagen is a new member of the Sustainability and Energy Commission.

Item 2: Forest Management Update: The Five Pillars (Madden & Matthews). Madden presented "The Five Pillars" of the Forestry Management Plan to City Council on July 3, 2023. City Council members indicated approval of the progress of the SEC's Forestry Management subcommittee (task force). Madden has created a newsletter for City residents interested in being kept apprised of what is happening with the Forestry Management Plan. Ashley will review before it is emailed to the citizens on the list. The Forestry task force will continue to work on obtaining donations (to help educate the public) and seeking volunteers to help clear invasive species in the City's forests. Mathews read a proposal regarding the detrimental affects of deer over-browsing on the forests. He explained that a deer population can double in two years with adequate food and shelter. There are also concerns with the "ecological carrying capacity". (Carrying capacity refers to the maximum number of individuals of a species that the environment can carry and sustain.) It's important to have an accurate count of the current deer population in Duncan Woods,

Mulligan's Hollow and the Cemetery. Mathews suggest thermal imaging during the winter months. He also suggested at least three trail cameras, one in each section of concern in the forests and potentially a 4th one on Harbor Island. This will require funding to cover the expenses as well as a DNR permit to attract deer with food.

Item 3: Community Energy Plan Update (Cotton). Cotton summarized the CEP progress to date. We now have a steering committee comprised of additional members from Grand Haven Township, Ferrysburg, and Grand Haven (including Grand Haven council members Lowe and Fritz). The steering committee reviewed 4 proposals from consultants to assist the City and surrounding BLP service area (except for Spring Lake Township who declined invitations to participate) in creating an energy plan for lowering our carbon footprint through demand-side efficiencies. The Steering Committee has scheduled interviews (combination virtual and in-person) from three of the consulting firms. They are scheduled for July 20th. The Steering Committee will make a recommendation to the Grand Haven City Manager and City Council regarding the selection.

Item 4: Harbor Island Update (Law). Law reports that the City has received a 2.5 million grant from the State of Michigan for PFAS mitigation and research, with another 5 million pending from a federal grant that is sponsored by Peters and Stabenow. HDR is 3/4s through sampling events and data validation. While there is less PFAS than anticipated, there needs to be more research into the depth of the PFAS.

Item 5: Coastal Resilience Plan Opportunity Grant (Wallace). Blough and Wallace attended this webinar: *The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), Water Resources Division (WRD), Michigan Coastal Management Program (MCMP) is seeking proposals for round 2 of the Creating a Culture of Resilience Capacity 2023 Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO)*. Wallace reports that the deadline to apply for the grant is Aug. 4, and there is a stipulation for 50% matching funds. There is a resolution requested from the SEC to support the grant application and it will be used to update the City's current resiliency plan. Mann made a motion to support the resolution and Small seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.

Item 6: Waste Management Planning (Goode). Goode has read the current City of Grand Haven contract with Republic Services. City Manager Latsch has suggested that it would be helpful to have additional baseline data when this current contract ends, and a new contract is discussed. Goode, O'Neill, and Monetza will form a new "Waste Management" task force to make recommendations for the next contract.

Item 7: Sustainability Column (O'Neill). Several months ago, Goode contacted the Grand Haven Tribune about the possibility of a sustainability Column. O'Neill recently followed up with the GHT editor. Law expressed a concern that since the SEC is a City Commission it may be best for another group to take the lead. WMEAC currently prints occasional articles in the GHT. They have an eco-journalist intern who may be interested in SEC activities.

Item 8: Coast Guard Clean-Up event (Goode). The next SEC Beach Clean-up is scheduled for Aug 7 @ 6PM. Mann suggests that we have the Great Lakes Alliance sponsor our Beach Clean-Ups. They provide education materials, marketing, and data collection materials. Mann has volunteered to keep the data. Law reports that a 13-year-old local girl scout and one of her friends would like to run the Beach Clean-Ups. He suggested to her that she work through the SEC.

Item 9: City Calendar (Goode). Goode reports that if the SEC plans to sponsor the 2024 City Calendar, all submissions (photos and written blurbs) must be submitted by July 30th. We discussed potential themes for each month. Goode will provide a follow e-mail regarding ideas that were identified.

Other: Larry Burns, member of the Forestry Management task force, has recently been named as an intern for the City of Grand Haven. He is also a member of the Duncan Woods Commission.

Adjournment: Small made motion to adjourn at 7:55, Mathews supported. Unanimously approved.