

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 5/11/23

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Brittany Goode at 6:02 PM Thursday, May 11, 2023, in the Grand Haven City Hall Council Chambers.

Present: Brittany Goode, Dan Small, Patti Nelsen, John Kinch, Nancy O'Neill, David Mann, Pamela Blough, Bob Monetza, Jim Matthews, and Jean Madden.

Absent: Ryan Cotton, Erin Turrell

Also present: Eric Law and three members of the public.

1. Call to audience: Jim Hagen, John Rattner and Benjamin Genser introduced themselves.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (5/11/23) approved unanimously.

Agenda

Item 1: Commission Membership (Goode). Christian Miller and Addie Knoth-Miller have resigned from the commission. Joe Wallace has been added.

Item 2: Earth Day Recap (Mann). Mann reports that over 60 people attended the Beach Clean-Up, there were 3 showings of Microplastic Madness, and over 500 people attended the "Earth Day Parade and Fair" at Park Place. There were 35 vendor booths with an emphasis on education and science. Over 200 pounds of trash was collected at the Beach Clean-Up. Law and Latsch were thanked for their participation at both events.

Item 3: The Old Rock N Road Project (Mann). Peter Wilson has bought the building previously owned by Rock N Road. He is renovating the building for residences, and wants it to be "as green as possible". He has communicated with the Zoning Commission regarding solar panels. Mann suggested that the SEC become involved to help business owners and residents who want to incorporate sustainability into planning. We should gather and disseminate information (for resources) to make it easier for them to achieve their sustainability goals. Kinch suggested having

someone who can help businesses, municipalities and individuals navigate the rebates and tax breaks for electrifying the grid through the Inflation Reduction Act. (The Inflation Reduction Act, which Congress passed in 2022, provides nearly \$369 billion for renewable energy equipment and energy efficient home improvements. This money will be available for the next decade.)

Item 4: Forest Management Update. Madden provided a PowerPoint Update. There are 200 acres of forestry at risk in Grand Haven. The task force is trying to raise the funds necessary to implement the City's 3-year Forest Management Action Plan for Duncan Woods, Mulligan's Hollow, and Grand Haven Cemetery. (<https://adoptahemlock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Kuipers-2022-Grand-Haven-3-Year-Forest-Management-Action-Plan.pdf>). The City's Finance Department has created a draft "Community Service" Fund Letter Agreement with the Grand Haven Community Foundation Fund. Madden also explained a plan for educational and marketing materials. Members of the Task force participated in a "Erosion Control Walkthrough" with Curt TerHaar of Ottawa Parks. Areas of concern and next steps were identified. TerHaar will create a GPS map of current trails and a proposal for more sustainable designs. He will also recommend contractors who can build infrastructure to minimize erosion and restoration ecologists who can submit reforestation recommendations. Small made a motion to approve the "Community Service" fund letter agreement with GHAFC and recommend approval to the City Manager. Nelsen seconded. Motion passed on unanimous hand vote.

Item 5: Community Energy Plan (Nelsen). A grant request is being made to the Loutit Foundation on behalf of the City of Grand Haven for \$17,500. If received, that brings the total to \$100,000 for the purpose of hiring a consultant to assist with the Community Energy Plan. Cotton presented information about the CEP to the Grand Haven Township board this past Monday, and requested they consider representatives for the Steering Committee that is in the process of forming. There were 4 GHT residents attending that are in support of the plan. The task force is also requesting representation from SLT, but have not heard back from them yet. The Request for Qualifications went out on Tuesday to 25 potential bidders. The last CEP task force meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 1, at 12:00 PM. Current CEP task force members are invited to join a Steering

Committee to work with the consultant. The first steering committee will be directly before the next SEC meeting on June 8th at 5 PM. Nelsen made a motion for the SEC to ratify the Loutit grant request to the City Manager. Blough seconded. Motion passed on unanimous hand vote.

Item 6: Water Infrastructure Management Tour Recap (Goode). Dan Carpenter from Michigan Green Communities (MGC) came to Grand Haven to give an assessment of stormwater run-off green infrastructure opportunities. Goode, Urquhart, Kinch and O'Neill spoke to him at City Hall about areas of concern. O'Neill accompanied the group for part of a walking tour of downtown; Goode and Urquhart continued with him to the waterfront area as well. Carpenter identified and commented on opportunities for improvement. Subsequently, he sent slides demonstrating some of the green stormwater infrastructure projects he has proposed or completed. During the subsequent discussion, Kinch and Monetza brought up possible revisions that could be suggested to update Grand Haven Zoning ordinances to improve storm water management.

Item 7: Recycling Receptacle Improvement Discussion/Recommendations (Goode). Currently, the City has a contract with Republic for trash and recycling. The only item that area businesses can recycle is cardboard. There are a limited number of bins for downtown businesses to use. The contract with Republic is up in 2024.

Item 8: Composting (Goode). Goode, Mann and Nelsen attended the WMSBF (West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum) presentation "Lakeshore Commercial Composting Forum" at The Unicorn. LGROW, the Ottawa County Public Health Department, Aldea Coffee, and Organicycle presented information. Gary Boyd, owner of The Unicorn, is exploring possibilities of Grand Haven having a "commercial composting" route in the future. If enough area restaurants agree to engage in "collective buying", it would offset some of the increased costs of using "compostable" serving containers. The City has an area on Harbor Island that residents can drop off for traditional composting (not for commercial composting). It is managed by DPW. Currently it's unknown if this area is being utilized to its full potential.

Other:

- Brittany presented an update to City Council regarding the Sustainability and Energy Commission on April 17th.
- The City is planning to have a printed Calendar next year. Mann volunteered to help coordinate with City staff to include sustainability events and actions.
- The SEC has a planned beach clean up on the Tuesday following Memorial Day weekend (May 30th).

Public Comment

Jim Hagen asked the SEC to consider looking into Community Solar and the potential for a site on Harbor Island. He reports that the “Sims Site” would generate 4 GWh which would provide equivalent annual power to 600 homes per year. Because of the benefits (rebates and tax credits) available through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the costs can be brought down substantially.

Dale Frye commented that we need to be careful in assessing solar, because the City could lose something by having solar panels in places that could be used for agriculture or forests.

Small made a motion made to adjourn the meeting at 7:36. Blough seconded. Meeting adjourned 7:36.