

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 8/10/23

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Brittany Goode at 6:00 PM Thursday, August 10th, 2023, in the City Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Erin Turrell, David Mann, Joe Wallace

Also present: Eric Law

1. Call to Audience. Steve Miller stated his concerns about a “street widening” DPW project on Howard Ave, and the impact it will have on the trees. He would like there to be a full public account of the project.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (7/13/23) approved unanimously.

AGENDA

Item 1: Housekeeping (Goode). Goode introduced Carmen Tolliver and Isabella Nelson, the two girl scouts who co-hosted the SEC Beach Clean up on August 7 following Coast Guard Festival week-end. Carmen and Isabella are working on their “Silver Award”. Their task was to spend 50 hours on a sustainability task that benefited the community. They created a sticker for the event and handed them out at parades, created posters for the downtown area, made a Tri-Fold project about micro-plastics that was on view at the Muskegon Party in the Park event, and they recruited 28 volunteers for the Beach Clean-Up. Goode asked to have the “Beach Clean Up” events be posted on the 2024 City Calendar. Cotton motioned that Goode choose the dates for the Calendar and Small supported the motion. Unanimous vote in favor. Cotton and Nelsen were interviewed by a WMEAC intern for an article about the Community Energy Plan that will be submitted to the Grand Haven Tribune. Law gave an update on the City Calendar. A City employee will take the pictures used for each month.

Item 2: Cotton gave an update on the Steering Committee that met to choose a consultant for the Community Energy Plan. Four consultants

submitted proposals and three were chosen to be interviewed. Interviews were held July 20th. On July 27th the Steering Committee voted in favor to recommend Michigan Energy Options/5 Lakes Energy to the City Council for the contract. City Council will vote on the resolution at their Aug. 21, 2023 meeting.

Item 3: Madden gave an update of the Forestry Management (FM) task force. The first FM newsletter has been published, and more are planned. There is a link to share the newsletter with others. The 2nd newsletter will include a fundraising appeal. Madden is working on education and marketing materials, including a tool kit that can be used at tabling events. Larry Burns continues to treat the trees in the City forests. Recent drone footage indicates devastating loss of Hemlock trees. Several of the task force members recently met with a wildlife biologist from the Muskegon DNR office to discuss recommendations for the FM plan. The task force has discussed getting an accurate count of the deer via a thermal imagery flyover in the winter. The last flyover (2007) indicated 156 deer which is beyond the ecological carrying capacity.

Item 4: 2022 City of Grand Haven Greenhouse Gas Inventory Summary Report (Urquhart). The City of Grand Haven was awarded Gold certification from MI Green Communities. However the City scored poorly on the GHG emission inventory section. Urquhart applied for a “Fellow”, a graduate student from MSU, to complete an inventory for the GHG emissions in the City. For the City of Grand Haven, the Fellow used an EPA software program. (The Fellow also completed an assessment of Rockford using the Clearpath software.) The Data Identification & Collection was based on Electric Utilities, Natural Gas Supplier, Local Departments, Waste Haulers, Regional Planning Bodies, and Transit Systems. The summary of the results provided direction for city in developing a sustainability plan.

Other:

The next Beach Clean Up is scheduled for Sept. 5, 2023.

Hagen went to the Planning Commission meeting to hear about a proposed convenience store/gas station on Beacon Blvd. The developer’s engineer mentioned that they install EV chargers as part of their standard build. This

led to an SEC discussion about ordinance updates to facilitate carbon reduction and energy optimization. Monetza and Kinch have begun to look at the current zoning ordinances.

Hagen reminded the SEC members that he has approximately 60 Dawn Redwood trees to distribute.

Madden reports that she will be hosting a “Solar Up” event in October.
<https://solarupnet.org>

O’Neill will be turning in the Terracycle box after the next SEC meeting. Please bring old pens, mechanical pencils, glue sticks, highlighters, watercolor containers, dental care items (toothbrushes, empty toothpaste tubes, floss containers, empty deodorant containers,) etc. to the meeting in September.

Adjournment: Mathews made a motion to adjourn at 7:34, Small supported. Unanimously approved.