

## Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 10/12/23

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:00 PM Thursday, October 12, 2023, in the City Council Chambers.

Present: Brittany Goode, Jim Hagen, John Kinch, Jim Mathews, Jean Madden, David Mann, Bob Monetza, Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, Bob Monetza, Andrei Skelly, and Dan Small,

Absent: Pam Blough, Ryan Cotton, Erin Terrell,

Administrative Liaison: Eric Law

Audience: Jan O'Connell

1. Call to Audience: No public comment
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (7/13/23) approved unanimously.

### AGENDA

Housekeeping: a.) Goode has stepped down from chair, and Vice-chair Small facilitated the meeting. b.) We have a new member of the SEC, Andrei Skelly. Skelly is in his third year at GVSU. He is studying Environmental Sustainability with a certificate in GIS.

Item 1: Community Solar Opportunities (Hagen). Hagen presented a power-point on "Community Solar Potential". He explained the benefits including improved access everyone in the community, lower cost of installation, decrease community carbon level locally, and financial incentives offered through the IRA (30-70% of the costs). He also presented on potential locations such as the DPW Jackson roof and Harbor Island (which could be a shared space with energy, recreation and a pollinator garden). Furthermore, Community Solar adds to local resiliency since there will be some power generated in the City. The IRA funds may disappear in the future, so the City should make the investment soon while funds are still available. Mann made a motion to ask City Manager Latsch to schedule a special work session with City Council for Community Solar. Small supported. Unanimous approval.

Item 2: Community Energy Plan Update (Kinch). Kinch explained that there are two tracks. 1) Five Lakes Energy is currently collecting comprehensive data on Grand Haven region's energy consumption in sectors such as electricity generation and transportation. 2) MEO is formulating a strategy for Community Involvement including hosting focus groups to find out what citizens are thinking and what they know. They are assessing community input for overall sustainability, not just energy use. For example, landscape conservation, smart growth and the future of Harbor Island.

Item 3: Michigan Climate Action Awards (O'Neill). O'Neill provided information on the Michigan Climate Action Awards to recognize individuals doing exceptional work to address the climate crisis in Michigan. They have three categories: The **Climate Champion Award** will go to a professional doing exceptional climate and justice work for an organization, a municipality, or business in Michigan; The **Climate Action Award** will be awarded to an individual doing exceptional climate and justice work as a volunteer for an organization in Michigan. This award recipient will receive a \$1,000 prize for a non-profit of their choice, and The **Young Climate Leader Award** will go to a student or other young person doing exceptional work as a volunteer or individual. This award recipient will be granted a \$1,000 prize. O'Neill suggested we all consider a potential recipient for the award. Not only does it honor the person, but it also promotes the community and the environmental cause. The deadline to nominate someone is Nov. 3, 2023.

Item 4: Forest Management (FM) Task Force Update (Madden and Mathews). Madden updated the SEC on "marketing materials" (flyers, stickers, table cloths for tabling events), and creating a "Save our Forests" space on the City's homepage. Madden is also working on a PowerPoint template and presentation for community events and education. SEC members discussed additional ideas to communicate with the public regarding the City's FM Plan. There is a Forest Management Summit scheduled for November 21st 7:00-8:30 PM. Latsch will coordinate stakeholders and place the agenda on the city website. Cotton has submitted a 25K grant for the Urban and Community Forestry Program Grant: 10K to treat trees suffering from invasive species and 15K for planting of native trees on City boulevards and in parks. Deer Management Update - Mathews reports that the Deer Management Plan is nearly

complete. It will be presented at the next SEC meeting. He reports that there are 3 GVSU professors who are interested in obtaining a grant to fund a drone and the camera for a thermal image flyover in order to count the deer in the City forests. Madden made a motion to ask Latsch to put a special work session on the schedule to update City Council about the Forest Management Plan. Mathews supported. Unanimous approval.

Item 5: SEC Chairperson Vacancy. Mann nominated Small to fill the Chairperson vacancy, and Monetza supported. Unanimous approval. Small was previously the vice-chair, so now there is a vacancy for this position. The approval of a vice-chair has been tabled until the next meeting.

Other:

Small updated the SEC on our application for the Arbor Day Foundation “Tree Cities of the World”. Due to some “bugs” in the on-line application, the deadline has been extended to 2024. Small is working on completing it. Currently Grand Haven has “Tree City USA” designation. There are no cities in Michigan who have been designated as “Tree Cities of the World”. <https://treecitiesoftheworld.org>

Mann reports that planning for Earth Day (April 22, 2024) has started. The committee has met a couple of times.

Adjournment: Nelsen made a motion to adjourn at 7:45PM, Small supported, unanimous approval.