

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 11/9/23

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:00 PM Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, in the City Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Pam Blough, Brittany Goode

Administrative Liaison, Eric Law and City Planner, Brain Urquhart

Audience Members: Jan O'Connell and Steve Negen

1. Call to Audience: No public comment
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (10/12/23) approved unanimously.

AGENDA

Item 1: Madden provided an update on the Forest Management (FM) Task Force. Madden reports that the FM task force hosted a table at the Ski Swap. Twenty-seven people signed up for the Forestry newsletter. Many of the attendees asked about "deer management". Information about the Forestry task force has been added to the City's webpage.

1(a). The Forestry Summit" has been confirmed for Dec. 6 (6:00-7:30 PM). The Summit is for the City Departments and other Stakeholders to learn about the FM Plan. The goal is for Stakeholders involved with the forests to get to know each other. The event will be open to the public.

1(b). Mathews provided an update on the COGH Deer Management Plan (DMP). The task force has received a \$3000 grant from the GHACF (Grand Haven Area Community Foundation) for a "flyover" (drone) to count the deer. It is unlikely that a flyover can occur in 2023 because they are generally scheduled far in advance. Winter is the best time for the flyover, so hopefully in early 2024. There was discussion about the scope of the flyover. The last deer count was in 2007 (156 deer) and Monetza said he thinks that was City-wide. According to Ottawa County, the "carrying

capacity” is 20 deer per square mile. The ecological carrying capacity of Duncan Woods, Mulligans Hollow and the Cemetery combined is 10 deer. Ottawa County parks and Norton Shores are actively managing the deer population, Grand Haven is not. The next step is to seek approval for the Deer Management Plan (DMP). Mathews made a motion to approve the draft copy of the DMP be submitted to the City Manger for consideration. Madden supported. Unanimous approval from SEC members.

Item 2: Kinch provided an update on the Community Energy Plan (CEP). There are two tracks: data gathering and community outreach. 5 Lakes Energy has been collecting the data about energy use in the BLP service area. The GHBLP has provided data going back 9 years. Michigan Energy Options is working on a Community Outreach Plan to seek public input and answer questions about the Community Energy Plan. A “Kick Off” event is being planned for the near future to seek public input and answer questions about the CEP. Paul Isley of the GVSU Business School is helping the CEP with an economic piece regarding cost/benefit decisions. There is a huge potential for Federal and State grant funding, though many of the grants require an “energy plan” to be in place in order to submit an application. There is a Grand Haven Township council meeting on Monday Nov. 13. Their agenda includes a discussion about contributing to the CEP. Part of the township (44% residential) is in the GHBLP service area.

2a. Kinch also provided an update on the Grand River Coastal Corridor (GRCC) focus group. The focus group is led by the Audubon Great Lakes. The GRCC area is a bird mecca*. The GRCC is a large area, and there is continuing conversation of how Harbor Island fits in with restoring habitat. (*“The Grand River Coastal Corridor is home to some of the highest quality natural communities in the entire state of Michigan and supports high levels of biodiversity, including sensitive or rare species of conservation concern and is regionally and globally important for birds,” said Erin Rowan, Senior Conservation Associate at Audubon Great Lakes.)

2b. Urquhart presented information about an EGLE (The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) grant opportunity for EV chargers. The purpose is to advance strategic deployment of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure along Lake Michigan. The Lake Michigan Circuit is a [multi-state initiative](#) with Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana to create a scenic route with reliable charging stations along Lake Michigan's 1,100

miles of drivable coastline. Matching grants are available to public, private, or nonprofit entities, for publicly available level 2 chargers or direct current (DC) fast chargers that can fulfill the locations identified in the "Lake Michigan Circuit" layer of the [Michigan Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Programs Map](#). The application for the grant is due Dec. 4, 2023. Mann made a motion for a resolution of support for the City of Grand Haven to apply for the Lake Michigan Circuit grant for EV chargers. Cotton supported the motion. Unanimous approval.

Item 3: Compost/Recycling Discussion. Tabled until December meeting

Item 4: Michigan Green Communities (MGC) Update. Tabled until December meeting.

Other: Bob Monetza has been elected Mayor, and therefore is resigning from the SEC.

Small made a motion to adjourn at 7:25, Mathews supported, unanimous approval.