

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 1/11/24

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission was called to order by Dan Small at 6:03 PM Thursday, January 11, 2024, in the City Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Pamela Blough, Ryan Cotton, Andrei Skelly

Also present: Eric Law, Administrative Liaison and Mayor Bob Monetza

1. Call to audience. Steve Miller and Jan O'Connell introduced themselves. No public comment.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes (12/14/23) approved unanimously.

AGENDA

1. Forest Management Taskforce Update: Madden and Mathews provided an update on the 4 Pillars of the Forest Management Plan (Control Invasive Species, Manage Deer Overgrazing, Stop Erosion, and Reforestation). Madden has started a Soil Erosion Plan. Cotton has written a draft reforestation plan. Mathews has proposed to City Staff that the City buys its own drone for aerial photography and thermal imaging. He projects at least half the cost can be obtained from fundraising. a.) Native Landscape Discussion. Inspired by a recent Ottawa Way Winter newsletter article regarding a Native Garden Landscape project being planned for the Fillmore Street Complex, Madden suggested that the City of Grand Haven consider a similar project to help the City control costs and protect water resources. From the county newsletter: "From July through December 2023, the bulk of thirsty turf grass was eliminated and replaced with installations of low-maintenance, native plantings of grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees. Once established, the new landscape design will require little to no supplemental irrigation or maintenance. Per year, the project will save an estimated \$16,000 in mowing and water costs plus conserve more than five million gallons of water. After 15 years, the accumulated savings will be an estimated \$240,000 and 76.5 million gallons of water." The City would need to identify appropriate properties and find volunteers to help implement the plan. It may be possible to get grants to help pay for it. Small made a motion that the SEC recommend to the City Manger that the SEC, in conjunction

with City staff, identify a parcel of land in the City suitable for pilot Native Landscape project. Mathews supported the motion. Unanimous approval.

2. Community Energy Plan (CEP) Update: The steering committee for the CEP will continue to meet once a month (instead of bi-weekly). Michigan Energy Options (MEO) has presented a draft of an “infographic” to the CEP. It is the first of several. The first one provides a frame for the CEP and is meant to enlist more community interest and participation. Kinch and Goode report that they are in the process of forming focus groups and affinity groups. They are also looking for opportunities for additional grant funding for the CEP. They have been in contact with the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum (WMSBF) to arrange a meeting with the business community. Kinch reports that he made a presentation to the Grand Haven Rotary Club last week that was well-received.
3. Discussion about the West Michigan Action Climate Forum on Jan. 8th in Grand Haven which was attended by Cotton, Hagen, Kinch, Mann, Nelsen, O’Neill and Monetza. West Michigan Sustainable Business (WMSBF) in collaboration with Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) and KERAMIDA (<https://www.keramida.com/>) invited residents, leaders, and stakeholders to actively participate in the creation of the West Michigan Climate Action Plan. GVMC is working to develop a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) for the Grand-Rapids-Kent Metropolitan Statistical Area (Kent, Ottawa, Ionia, and Montcalm counties) as part of the EPA’s Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program. This plan will prepare local communities to compete for \$4.6 billion in implementation grant funding in the spring of 2024. Ideas for grant proposals are due by Jan. 22nd.

OTHER

1. Michigan Green Communities has announced a new Platinum designation for participating communities. Grand Haven plans to participate.
2. Two GVSU professors will be talking about the current state of Grand Haven’s forests at the Duncan Woods Commission on Jan. 16th.

Small made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 PM, supported by Madden. Unanimous approval.