Environment and sustainability commission
Minutes
Jan. 8, 2020
Community Room, City Hall

Members present: Chair Claire Lukens, Abdi Ali, Thor Anderson, Shaina Ashare, Nicole Ciulla, Stefan Collinet-Adler, Jim Leuthner, Bridget Rathsack

Excused absence: Sue Bloyer, Zoe Frank, Ryan Griffin

Staff present: Emily Ziring, sustainability manager

Guests: Jeremy Anderson, Dave Herrera, Jess (no last name available)

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chair Lukens.

2. The minutes of the Dec. 4, 2019 meeting were approved with one abstention (Commissioner Leuthner).

3. Feb. 24 St. Louis Park board and commission annual meeting
   a. Discuss presentation and report – will be social time and a dinner prior to the meeting, and will be held offsite.

   The process for submission to city council will be 5-6 minute presentation and will be based on 2020 work plan.

   2020 work plan was revised and adjusted as needed including:
   1. Advise city council and staff on CAP and topics, and include a cross-regional collaboration to continue to be a leader – increasing communication, discussion efforts, working with external partners, sharing resources and tracking and supporting CAP goals
   2. Engagement and outreach on CAP with non-residential property owners, including benchmark tools
   3. Engagement and outreach on CAP with residents, benchmarking tools, and with multifamily buildings included and developing community resources, creating videos, advertisements, op-eds, radio, host or attend events to engage, develop a plan for sharing resources available for residents
   4. Engage greater community, adding more stakeholders, explore outreach
   5. Tracking success, event attendance and sign-ups

   The council requires that the commission use a standard template to show the commission’s work plan and how it fits into the city’s goals. Chair Lukens will work on fitting the work plan into the template noted. She will also work on PowerPoint slides for the All Commissions meeting as well. Invitations will be coming from staff to the All Commissions meeting, and commissioners will need to RSVP by Feb. 14.
The commissioners stated they would also like to partner with the Human Rights Commission -- either on a joint event or tabling at an event together.

4. 2020 ESC work plan

The ESC 2020 work plan presentation to city council will be at a council study session in March or April. All commissioners are invited to attend this meeting. They decided to request the presentation be done on April 13 with the council. Emily Ziring will let the commissioners know when the date is approved by staff.

5. Staff updates

Ms. Ziring stated there were three solar power hour sessions held in 2019 and 31 property owners signed up for site assessments, which is twice as many as in 2018. MREA will partner with the City for another round of the solar group buy program this summer.

She added the efficient building ordinance is now law and are waiting on Hennepin County for the joint powers agreement to be fully executed. Ms. Ziring noted articles in the Sun Sailor newspaper and in Finance & Commerce.

Ms. Ziring stated that two electric vehicle chargers have been installed at The Rec Center and are now active.

Ms. Ziring gave updates on the Climate Champions program, stating meetings have been set up with Twin West and MN Chamber, and incentive programs are being set up, including programs for rebates in 2020.

She also noted an update on carbon emissions, stating the regional indicators website will be updated for the city in order to calculate the latest greenhouse gas emissions. She stated this will make it easier for constituents to view and create more transparency around the CAP.

Ms. Ziring stated she joined the internal Community Engagement Work Group to learn how to better engage with external groups. She has also been learning about the city’s internal energy consumption.

Ms. Ziring added she is looking at updates to be made on the Sustainability website, and will continue work on this.

She added this year is the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. Ms. Ziring stated she has been meeting with staff to plan an Earth Day event on Saturday, April 25. The event will have a wider focus than past Arbor Day events around this date and will be more of a solemn event given the current climate crisis. Tours of the nature center will also be given, along with other activities, and volunteers will be needed.

Ms. Ziring stated a new hire – a specialist – will also be joining the staff in February.
Mr. Anderson asked about trucks parking in front of electric vehicle chargers in protest, noting this has been happening. Ms. Ziring stated she will talk to The Rec Center about this, and monitoring will be conducted to see if it is an issue. She added that signage is going to be installed this week.

6. Work group and/or project updates
   a. Xcel IRP letter – this is due in April, and is ready to be sent. Ms. Ziring will follow up and send as soon as ready.
   b. City council report – the ESC will start working on a draft report and review at a future ESC meeting. Ideas for the report include:
      - A report on the COP25 climate meetings in December
      - Governor’s subcabinet on climate change
      - Encourage the council to work with other metro cities and align goals
      - Ideas that may come out of the All Commissions meeting, details can be added
      - Important that cities take action since nothing came out of the COP25 UN Climate Change Conference in December

7. Upcoming events/events recap
   a. Jan. 22, 2020 – Hennepin County Environment Commissions Gathering – not a lot of information is known at this point. Ms. Ziring will try to contact Sean Gosiewski about this meeting. The ESC will then plan how to conduct this meeting and work on materials. Commissioners will be asked to help a week or so prior to the meeting.
   b. Feb. 9, 2020 – West Metro Home Remodeling Fair – The ESC will table at this meeting and a sign-up was sent by Ms. Ziring. The commissioners were encouraged to sign up for one of two shifts, and staff will also be at the event. A sign-up sheet will be available so residents can sign up for more information on sustainability.
   d. April 18, 2020 – 2020 Environmental Commission Conference at United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. All day event. Sign up at SignupGenius. More information will be provided by Tim Sandry from Bloomington commission.
   e. Other future events –
      - Earth Day – already discussed
      - possibly another electric vehicle event – partner with another St. Louis Park event or with another city’s event – in conjunction with Ecotacular
      - possibly a bike event – around Bike to Work Day or Bike Month
      - Jan. 16 – MN EV owners meeting – 6-9 p.m. at American Lung Association offices in St. Paul
Jan. 22 – media swap at The Rec Center – 5:30 p.m. – great idea for reduce and reuse
• Breakfast Champions – Children’s First Event – Ice Cream Social in May/June – ESC could table at this event

Chair Lukens stated there are two vacancies on the commission now, and the commissioners were encouraged to re-apply if interested. Applications are accepted through the end of February, and terms are 3 years.

8. Topics for February ESC meeting

   a. Racial equity and inclusion 101 presentation – Alicia Sojourner will present—this will be moved to the March meeting with the planning commission because the planning commission could not fit it into their February meeting agenda.

   b. Discussed future staff presentations. Chair Lukens stated that additional staff presentations should be an effective use of both staff and the commissioners’ time. Commissioner Collinet-Adler stated the presentations from staff were positive and helpful, and much appreciated. Commissioner Collinet-Adler requested a copy of the city’s organizational chart so that he could better understand whether there were specific departments he had not yet met with that he wanted to learn about. Ms. Ziring offered to provide the chart.

   Commissioner Leuthner added it would be helpful to have the school district present. Commissioner Ali noted it would be helpful to also have a city council member present, such as Council Member Kraft, or another.

   c. 2020 ESC work plan – will discuss in February and approve so it can go to city council for approval as well. Also discuss the work plan presentation for April 13 and agree on what to talk about.

   d. Discuss redesigning and improving the sustainability website – March meeting.

   e. CAP internal tracking tool – possibly hold a working session on using the tool at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.