Environment and sustainability commission
Minutes
Feb. 5, 2020
Community Room, City Hall

Members present: Thor Anderson, Sue Bloyer, Nicole Ciulla, Stefan Collinet-Adler, Zoe Frank, Ryan Griffin, and Jim Leuthner

Excused absence: Chair Claire Lukens, Abdi Ali, Shaina Ashare, Bridget Rathsack

Staff present: Emily Ziring, Sustainability Manager

Guests: Stephanie Phan, Council Member Larry Kraft, Mike Stolte, Jason Stolte

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Vice Chair Collinet-Adler.

2. The minutes of the January 2020 meeting were approved with two abstentions (Commissioner Griffin and Commissioner Bloyer).

3. Staff updates – Two commissioners are up for reappointment and are encouraged to apply again.

Ms. Ziring noted on Monday, Feb. 3 the city council met with legislators to discuss the city’s priorities and one item was the energy building performance stretch code. She noted she met with the MN Chamber of Commerce energy smart program to present the Climate Champions program to businesses. She met with community development staff also about residential offerings and signed a contract with LHB to update greenhouse gas data through 2018, including water data and getting this on the city website.

Ms. Ziring added she presented to the City of Roseville’s Public Works, Transportation and Environment Commission on St. Louis Park’s climate action plan.

She noted electric vehicle chargers are up and running at the Rec Center. Some visitors are parking their non-EVs there, so staff will be adding more signs.

Mr. Stolte noted his concerns with water quality both in the pipes and on the ground and asked how things are handled in St. Louis Park and if herbicides are used in the city.

Commissioner Bloyer stated the city does not use herbicides, and Ms. Ziring stated she would be available to speak to this issue after the meeting. Vice Chair Collinet-Adler stated the commission is concerned about this issue as well.

Ms. Ziring is planning the Earth Day event and Ecotacular event as well. She asked for commissioners to help with tabling at these events. She is also working with community development on the Glenhurst house which is owned by the city and leased to a resident. The
home was energy renovated and there will be open houses there in March showing the energy efficient features.

Ms. Ziring added city council will adopt a resolution soon on the energy stretch code, and the resolution will be reviewed by the commission prior to being submitted to the council.

She asked the commissioners to RSVP for the all boards and commissions meeting, to be held on Feb. 24 at Treehouse.

Ms. Ziring added a sustainability specialist will be starting in February, and she will attend the March meeting.

4. Work group and/or project updates

Commissioner Ciulla spoke on the Jan. 22 Hennepin County Environmental Commissions Gathering. She stated that building and energy was discussed and interesting ideas were brought up and discussed. She added Best Buy is looking to be involved also in climate and energy programs.

Vice Chair Collinet-Adler added the group discussed ways to help cities work together in renewable energy, energy efficiency in buildings and transportation.

The takeaways included continuing to meet and organizing Hennepin County officials and representatives from each of the commissions. Also, the youth participated and Commissioner Anderson noted there were good conversations.

Commissioner Griffin said the meeting went well and St. Louis Park stood out as a leader on climate action.

Councilmember Kraft stated he would like to follow up on the Best Buy interests. He stated the commission can definitely lead.

Ms. Ziring stated it would be helpful to brainstorm ideas and what can be done collectively and collaboratively. The commissioners agreed this is a value opportunity to keep getting the commissions together to meet.

Vice Chair Collinet-Adler noted working on items such as car and delivery truck idling. Councilmember Kraft mentioned there are many cities that have ordinances on this issue. Ms. Ziring stated enforcement will also need to be discussed.

A motion was made and seconded to create a work group for anti-idling. The motion passed 6-1 (Commissioner Bloyer abstained).

Commissioner Frank noted on March 5 Roots and Shoots will speak at the Children’s First event at the Doubletree Hotel.
5. City council written report

Ms. Ziring stated the commission might want to have the council review the ESC work plan before presenting them with the written report.

6. 2020 ESC work plan

- Review and make sure the following items are included in the work plan and presentation:
  - race equity
  - benchmarking
  - living streets

A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the 2020 work plan and include the above items in the 2020 ESC work plan. The motion passed 7-0.

- Reminder of the April 13 presentation to city council study session

7. Upcoming/proposed events

- Feb. 9, 2020 – West Metro Home Remodeling Fair – Commissioners Bloyer and Anderson signed up to table at the event. Ms. Ziring will be there as well. Anyone else available is welcome to sign up and help. More information is on the city website.

- Feb. 24, 2020 – St. Louis Park boards and commissions annual meeting – please RSVP to Ms. Ziring. The event takes place at Treehouse, 5757 Wayzata Blvd.

- April 18, 2020 – 2020 Environmental Commission Conference – several commissions usually attend. Location has not been determined. Commissioners Anderson and Frank may be able to get a room at the high school for the event if needed.

- April 25, 2020 – Earth Day event at Westwood Hills Nature Center – parking at the Middle School and shuttle to the nature center. There will be tours, tree planting, climate change activities, vendors and food will be available.

Mr. Stolte noted electric vehicle ordinance in California and asked if this is something that could be done in St. Louis Park.

Vice Chair Collinet-Adler noted an electric vehicle event done in the city last year, as well as EV charges being added at various locations around the city.
Mr. Stolte asked about city fleet vehicles and progress here. Ms. Ziring will provide additional information after the meeting.

Commissioner Leuthner asked if electric vehicle chargers are added to a registry within the city. Ms. Ziring stated yes, they are noted on a city app, it is free and charging costs the city a minimal amount.

Commissioner Leuthner asked if new construction with parking above a certain number will be required to have electric chargers. Ms. Ziring stated an ordinance has been passed related to this.

Mr. Stolte asked about air quality and if there is education information within the city for residents to do plantings on their property to help with carbon and soil issues. He also asked if the city has regulations against the use of pesticides on lawns. He added that spraying poison that they cannot contain to their footprint is a grotesque infringement on everyone’s rights.

Ms. Ziring stated residents and homeowners have the right to use whatever they want in their homes and on their property, so this needs to be addressed at the state level.

Vice Chair Collinet-Adler stated carbon neutrality by 2040 is part of the Climate Action Plan of the city, which is part of the goals of the ESC. Interim goals to 2030 get the city about 2/3 of the way to carbon neutrality. He stated trees, prairie grasses and plants with deep roots are helpful, and these issues will need to be discussed and worked on as part of this.

He added these are important conversations to have with neighbors, and there is a bee-friendly group within the city that folks can join as well.

Commissioner Griffin stated the ESC has decided their goal is climate action but added if Mr. Stolte can provide information and help the city lobby the state on this issue, that would be helpful.

Commissioner Bloyer added that Jim Vaughan, in forestry on city staff, can help with these issues also.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.