

CITY OF WAUSAU SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Time and Date: The Sustainability, Energy and Environment Committee met on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. in the Maple Room of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Pat Peckham, Ralph Fischer, Mary Kluz, Paul Kage

Others Present: Mayor Mielke

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Welcome and introductions

Peckham called the meeting to order in absence of the chairperson at 4:05 p.m. Everyone present introduced themselves.

Approval of the minutes of August 28, 2019 meeting

Motion by Kluz/Fischer to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2019 meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and possible action on selecting a new committee chairperson

Sippel noted the Siewart resigned due to a new responsibility at work that conflicted with the schedule and time commitment of the committee, so an appointed position opened up and the committee will need to select a new chair. Paul Zouski was appointed and confirmed at the Council meeting yesterday. Peckham will be taking over the meetings in the meantime as Vice Chair.

Discussion and possible action on sustainability recognition program

Peckham asked if this item was related to the previous discussion about a potential Chamber recognition program for sustainability. Sippel said that this was one option that was discussed, and is about potential ways in which to recognize residence and businesses for sustainability. Peckham talked to Dave Eckman at the Chamber, who was interested. Sippel said Lee has done some research about what other communities have done in relation to this.

Kluz said she would like the recognition to be tied to the charge given to the committee. Kluz sees this as broader than energy issues, and could include categories that encompass sustainability and resiliency, such as taking care of employees so that they can be functioning community members, saving energy here, or installing alternative energy there. Peckham said this could also include stormwater retention efforts. Kluz said that we should talk more about the purpose of the recognition program, and how it ties to the committee's purpose. Kluz said that this could also be educational to highlight that there are many things a business can do to improve sustainability, and it doesn't necessarily mean they have to install solar panels to achieve the recognition. Peckham said that he could also see different categories, such as natural resources, human resources, and energy. Peckham said sustainability could also mean health maintenance program for employees, or maybe an employer that gives employees an extra 10 minutes break to allow for walking the trails at lunch. Kluz asked what is the bar or standard of innovation we are looking to set with this idea to make sure it is being given out for things that are truly innovative or impactful.

Peckham asked how often we should give out the recognition. Should it be monthly, quarterly or annually? Sippel noted that it was mentioned at the last meeting that we also need to figure out where the program would be nested, because there was some discussion last time that the committee did not want to limit it to members of the Chamber of Commerce. Peckham said that it could be dished out to nonprofits or entities

such as the school district as well. Kluz also mentioned that the location decision if an institution, such as a school moving to an area where most people have to drive to get there could hugely affect the sustainable choices available to students. Kluz asked if this committee has the ability to define sustainability for the actions of this committee. Sippel said that the ordinance creating the committee addresses it, though it does not define what sustainability is. Sippel asked the committee how broad we want the program to be, should it be limited to residents, and businesses in Wausau? Kluz asked if it could be an item for the next agenda item. Kluz said that we could also learn from the community what sustainability means to them through this process.

Discussion and possible action on future City newsletter article

Sippel asked if there was any preference among the committee on an education article for the next City newsletter. There have been several potential topics discussed before, including invasive species, pesticide usage, PACE funding and energy savings. Peckham said he thinks a newsletter article should let people know that the City is looking at putting solar energy on or around City buildings. The committee discussed and there was consensus that a newsletter article about City energy savings should be the first article.

Updates on previous items

Peckham asked if there were updates on items mentioned from previous meetings. Sippel said we are getting time of day electrical rates for several of the City meters, and Pergolski said they work with WPS to get the cheapest electrical rates possible for each meter. Peckham he would like to know if we are doing anything we can that is as simple as filling the water towers at night. Sippel said he will talk with Pergolski to make sure any opportunities have been realized.

Kluz mentioned Washburn County solar development that was funded through the state and said Nancy Turyk from UW-Extension would probably be willing to come speak to the committee on solar. Sippel said the Washburn County solar mentioned earlier used a RECIP grant which is available through Focus on Energy. We likely need to have a quote for a solar system before applying for a grant, but if we get a quote we could apply for the grant. Kluz said she mentioned Washburn because she thought it could be a great learning opportunity to find out how they were able to get a big project completed. Kluz said she will reach out to Turyk to see if she is willing to come talk about this at the next meeting.

Kluz and Peckham briefed the committee on the climate change bill that went to the last Council meeting. Kluz asked if there would be an opportunity to give Council members more information when things are sent to them. Peckham said they got a copy of the SEEC meeting minutes so they got a summation of the discussion at the committee. Sippel noted one of the purposes of the committee is to try to send recommendations to the Council so the full Council does not have to debate every issue. Peckham said the procedure on this can differ depending on the issue. Kluz said that the federal bill did not seem to be fully explained and could maybe have addressed the economics of the bill, in that it would keep more money in the local economy due to local energy production.

Future items for consideration

A discussion on the sustainability recognition program should be in the next agenda, and a discussion about the definition of sustainability.

Future meeting date

October 23 is the next regularly scheduled meeting, however Sippel will be at a training that day and will not be able to attend. The committee decided to move the next meeting to October 30.

Adjourn

Motion by Kage/Kluz to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.