



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

PUBLIC MEETING ROOM

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023

6:00 PM

Meeting Items

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Environmental Commission was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chair Sonny Wasilowski. In attendance were Martha Brown, Teresa DeMars, Dick Huston, Lee Nordmeyer and Chair Wasilowski. Also in attendance were Mathias Hughey, Community Development Coordinator, and Kari Casper, Recording Secretary.

2. Approval of the Minutes of October 23, 2023

Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Martha Brown to approve the meeting minutes of October, 23, 2023. Commissioner DeMars abstained from the vote since she hadn't had a chance to read them over. The motion passed on a 4/0 with one abstention.

3. Items for Discussion

A. 2024 Work Plan Discussion

The final subject to be discussed was the work plan for 2024. Hughey started out stating that he's done some recent presentations at local churches on solar. He also mentioned pollinators. Commissioner Huston stated that he would like to see some focus on getting rid of parsnip and buckthorn. These are both present in the city and a safety issue. Hughey mentioned that we could focus on River Bend and Huston stated that River Bend has done a good job so far. Huston stated that he doesn't believe the city has tackled it yet. The only area that has had work done on was Crocker's Creek, which was done by Rotary. There may be a way to apply for a grant to help fund this project. There may be Legacy money for something like that.

Commissioner Brown talked about what has been talked about in the past that hasn't been done yet, like updating the building codes. Hughey stated that with the tree preservation, they had to wait for engagement after the busy season as well as other compounding issues like staffing. Nothing has been dropped, just pending. We are also working on the landscape ordinance. They are both in the works and still happening. Brown asked what the City's priorities are in this regard. She asked about a vision. Hughey stated they should refer to the Comprehensive Plan that the city developed. He also mentioned the Energy Action Plan would be another good resource. Wasilowski mentioned that there seems to be a lack of coordination in efforts and discussed concerns about the new park and parking lot. Brown asked if they could draft a position statement and make a list of 10 things that they could do in 2024.

The main thing that seems to be a concern is the lack of staff, money and the return on investment (ROI) that drives what can be done. Huston gave an example of Ethanol - when it was developed, they now learned that it takes more to make it than what they get out of it. We need to keep in mind the end game.

Hughey mentioned that this is only for discussion at this time, and we will come back with more suggestions at the next meeting in December. No action was taken at that time.

B. Commissioner Steinkamp's Extended Absence

This was the next item up for discussion at the recommendation of Hughey following the approval of the minutes. With the announcement of Commissioner Steinkamp's request for an extended leave of absence through possibly May of the next year to travel abroad, Hughey wanted the board to weigh in on whether they should request that Steinkamp resign or wait for his return. By a unanimous decision, the board felt that it was in their best interest to request that Commissioner Steinkamp resign at this time and will have the ability to re-apply when he returns. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Martha Brown to approve a recommendation for Commissioner Steinkamp to resign his seat at this time. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Routine Business

A. Announcements and Updates

Commissioner Appointments

This was the next subject discussed. Both Commissioners Nordmeyer and Chair Wasilowski's seats are due to expire in January of next year. Chair Wasilowski stated that he will not re-apply for another term on this board but may consider a position on another board. He made the recommendation that when the Council makes their decision for someone to fill his seat, they will consider including someone from the deaf community or a person of color, and keep it diverse. No action was taken at that time.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Lee Nordmeyer to adjourn at 7:17 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

By: _____
Kari Casper, Recording Secretary