



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

PUBLIC MEETING ROOM

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2024

6:00 PM

Meeting Items

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Environmental Commission was called to order by Chair Wasilowski at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were Commissioners Brown, DeMars, Diessner, Nordmeyer and Chair Wasilowski. Interpreting for Chair Wasilowski was Keystone Interpreting Service. Also in attendance were Mathias Hughey, Community and Economic Development Coordinator and Kari Casper, Administrative Assistant II.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Motion by Martha Brown, seconded by Lee Nordmeyer to Approve the meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed on a 4/0 vote. Commissioner DeMars arrived at 6:05 p.m. following the vote.

3. Items for Discussion

A. Coordinating Environmental Efforts

Hughey said that he gets a lot of emails with suggestions on collaboration efforts with regard to issues that could be or are being discussed with the Environmental Commission. He made a suggestion that the board come up with a list of these potential collaborations and suggested the chair assigns each board member two of these. They would then be able to discuss their findings at end of each agenda in an item that could be called "Monthly updates from other commissions". There were several suggestions, such as the Park & Rec Board, HRA, Rotary, Grows, River Bend Nature Center, Isaiah, and the School Board; some of the commissioners have ties to those organizations. Hughey suggested having the commissioner read over the organizations' notes or attend the meetings, but not in an official capacity and to be aware of potential Open Meeting Laws that may apply if more than three members of the board were in attendance. A motion was made by Diessner, seconded by Nordmeyer to first create a list and second to send a letter out offering support. Chair Wasilowski suggested a memo. The vote came to 4/1 with Brown in opposition to request a second motion which suggested that the City come back with no more than seven departments that the commissioners would collaborate with and requesting that each take on two boards. After some discussion, Brown then changed her vote to Diessner's motion of a yay instead of a nay, making it a 5/0 vote.

B. 2024 Work Plan Development

Hughey started off by stating that previously their efforts were with the Green Step Cities and the Energy Action Plan and would like to continue with those efforts. Last year the board worked on the landscape and tree preservation ordinances. Brown voiced her frustrations about how to get actions into these workplans. Hughey put forth a few suggestions on what he referred to as a short list. DeMars is working with the Citizens for Pollinators and wanted to focus some efforts on promoting pollinator

plantings.

He then asked the commissioners to choose what they would like to focus on. After the polling, they decided to focus efforts on adopting a drain program; energy action plan outreach, energy efficiency tool library support/training for which the City received a \$3,000 grant to include tools which could be used to table events. They would also like to prepare a resolution on the removal of the parking minimums.

C. RSDP Project Opportunity

Hughey mentioned the Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership which is an extension program through the U of M. They've identified four priorities, which are 1. agriculture and food systems; 2. clean energy; 3. natural resources and resilient communities. He requested that each commissioner email him by the next meeting their thoughts and provided a list in the staff memo. The project ideas are due by February 14th. After some discussion, they decided to focus on water quality and the adopt a drain programs.

4. Routine Business

A. Announcements and Updates

DeMars mentioned the Faribault Community Drinking Water Meeting set up by the MN Dept of Health, who are looking for citizen input. They are also interested in neighboring well input. People with these wells can bring in a water sample and have it tested for such things as nitrogen, which can be a harmful contaminant. This is set up for January 30th from 6-8 p.m. at the Community Action Center on Cannon Circle. Chair Wasilowski mentioned the Free Radon Testing for homes and the Food Waste Challenge, both listed on the County's website. He stated that he was the recipient of a compost bin in the past and had donated it to the school as a result of winning/participating in the Food Waste Challenge.

5. Adjournment

Hughey wanted to thank Chair Wasilowski for his service on the commission and greatly appreciated his thoughts and ideas and welcomed him to continue to send him emails with suggestions in the future.

Motion by Teresa DeMars, seconded by Lee Nordmeyer to adjourn at 7:18 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

By: _____
Kari Casper, Recording Secretary