

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: February 25, 2014

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Hoffman, Meyer and Dr. Nosek

STAFF: Mark Moeller, City Planner; Carlos Espinosa, Assistant City Planner

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m. with an introduction from staff stating that member from the Winona Area Citizens Concerned about Silica Mining (CASM) group had requested this meeting with the CEQC. Mr. Espinosa then asked if everyone in the room would introduce themselves. Individuals from CASM included Dale Shauer, Marie Kovesci, Craig Thompson, Mike Kennedy, Steve Schild, and Wendy Larson. Also present was Tesla Rodriguez from the Winona Daily News, Wendy Davis from the Planning Commission, and Jeff Faulk.

Next, Committee member Hoffman asked the following questions:

1) What was the sequence of events that lead to the air monitoring on top of the YMCA?

Mr. Espinosa responded that after the CEQC's air monitoring recommendations were sent to the Planning Commission, the Commission requested that a staff person from the MPCA attend a meeting to help answer questions. City staff then sent a list questions that might be asked at a meeting to the MPCA, and the agency responded with the letter that included the proposal for air monitoring.

2) Which silica sand facilities in Winona are currently active?

Mr. Espinosa explained that activity has been low due to the season, but the Winona Port operation has recently been active as well as 370 West Second Street. Mr. Espinosa stated that the Gould street operation was also active late last fall.

3) Is there a retroactivity clause in the silica sand CUPs that have been issued?

Mr. Espinosa responded that there is language in the CUPs which would require operators to retroactively comply with any new air quality monitoring regulations.

4) When is the MPCA meeting to finalize air quality regulations?

Mr. Espinosa stated that the EQB is meeting on March 19th to take the next step in finalizing their "Tools to Assist Local Governments in Planning for and Regulating Silica Sand Projects" document.

Next, CASM members thanked the CEQC for agreeing to meet and stated that their main questions have to do with process and how the committee feels about the communication between themselves and the Planning Commission.

CASM member Mike Kennedy asked if the CEQC members had seen the letter from the MPCA. The CEQC members said that hadn't. Mr. Espinosa stated he could forward the letter to the committee members.

Mr. Kennedy stated that when it comes to fenceline monitoring all parties are still learning a lot.

Ms. Kovesci stated that Dr. Crispin Pierce at the University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire has stated that fenceline monitors at silica sand operations are likely to have higher particulate readings than non site-specific air monitors.

Next there were questions about data on the City's website and how long the monitors would be running. Mr. Espinosa responded that he could put the links to the air quality information in a more prominent location on the City's website, and that he would inquire about the exact dates for the air monitoring.

There were also questions about the posting of CEQC minutes on the City's website. Mr. Espinosa stated that the City does its best to get everything on the website.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the CEQC had a Chairperson. Dr. Nosek stated that the committee does not have a chair, and that it has been quite some time since there was a chairperson on the committee. Dr. Nosek stated that there is a need for better lines of communication between the CEQC and the Planning Commission and that he's sure a better procedural connection could be made. Mr. Espinosa affirmed this statement.

Dr. Nosek also stated that since CASM is showing appreciation to those who helped establish the air monitoring at the YMCA, Dr. Holly Lenz should be contacted.

Ms. Kovesci asked how agenda items come to the CEQC. Dr. Nosek stated that recently agenda items had come from the Planning Commission and city staff.

Mr. Kennedy noted that according to City Code, it's the responsibility of the Planning Commission to designate the chair of the CEQC, and a member of the Planning Commission is supposed to be on the committee. Mr. Moeller stated that this has been an issue – not only with the CEQC, but on other city committees simply because of the time involved in serving on two groups. Mr. Moeller also stated that the CEQC can initiate projects and respond to Planning Commission requests.

Ms. Hoffman stated that she liked the idea of improving communications and it would help to have a CEQC member present recommendations of the group to the Planning Commission.

Dr. Nosek stated that it would also help if the CEQC's membership was rounded-out a bit.

Ms. Kovesci asked about fence-line monitoring and if the CEQC saw itself following up on this part of their recommendations.

Dr. Nosek stated that the group's original recommendations deferred to the MPCA and the group doesn't have greater weight than the Planning Commission. Dr. Nosek also said that he didn't feel as though he could state that all of the recommendations must be followed. Dr. Nosek stated the group did not take offense to what the Planning Commission did with the recommendations. Mr. Espinosa clarified that both the CEQC and the Planning Commission are advisory bodies – that often the Planning Commission's recommendations are overruled by the City Council.

Mr. Schild asked if the CEQC's recommendations went away after the Planning Commission did not recommend them in full. Mr. Espinosa stated that both the CEQC's original recommendations and the Planning Commission's recommendations went to the City Council for their consideration.

Ms. Kovesci asked again what would be happening with the original CEQC recommendations. Dr. Nosek stated that he doesn't see the current situation as the end of the line and the group could take another run at it. However as of now, the committee hasn't gotten beyond the monitoring at the YMCA.

Ms. Kovesci asked about additional monitoring along truck routes. Dr. Nosek stated that was examined but logistics cancelled it out.

Ms. Hoffman stated that if the CEQC re-sends the recommendations, perhaps it would be a good opportunity to discuss them with the Planning Commission.

Next, Mr. Espinosa and the committee members decided to wait to meet again until after the EQB reviews the silica sand "tools" document on March 19. At the next meeting the group could discuss reiterating and re-supporting their original recommendations.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.



Carlos Espinosa
Assistant City Planner