

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: November 25, 2013

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairperson Porter, Commissioners Boettcher, M. Olson, Davis, Buelow, English, Hahn and L. Olson

ABSENT: Commissioner Ballard

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairman Porter.

Approval of Minutes – November 12, 2013

The minutes from the Commission's meeting of November 12, 2013 were reviewed. Upon motion by Commissioner Boettcher and second by Commissioner L. Olson, the minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Air Quality Monitoring Recommendations

Chairman Porter called on Carlos Espinosa, Assistant City Planner, to provide a summary of this agenda item.

Mr. Espinosa stated that during the Commission's last meeting, it had considered, and discussed, a number of recommendations that had been submitted from the Citizen's Environmental Quality Committee (CEQC) and relating to air quality monitoring issues. Following that discussion, and a failure to reach consensus on a recommendation to Council, the matter was tabled to this meeting.

Mr. Espinosa stated that the agenda for this afternoon's meeting generally includes the same information that he had submitted with the agenda for the Commission's last meeting. In part, this information includes the full set of recommendations from the Citizen's Environmental Quality Committee, along with a proposal from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to establish a single air quality monitoring station within the City.

In concluding, Mr. Espinosa stated that since the MPCA proposal is attached to a general time line, he was hopeful that the Commission would be able to address this issue this afternoon in order that a recommendation could be submitted to Council, for its December 2nd meeting.

Upon discussion of this item, Commissioner Boettcher made a motion to recommend approval of the MPCA monitoring program for the purpose of establishing a baseline air quality standard for the City. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Hahn.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 25, 2013
PAGE 2

Upon discussion of the motion, Commissioner Boettcher stated that, in addition to his motion, he was hoping that the air quality pilot program would be conducted over a minimum 12 month period. Mr. Espinosa responded that it was his understanding that initial testing would be carried out over a one year period.

In seconding the motion, Commissioner Hahn explained that he hoped the testing program would establish baseline data serving to initially define if major problems exist.

Commissioner Davis asked what would happen after the one year pilot program lapses. Mr. Espinosa responded that if initial testing shows that air quality problems exist, additional monitoring might be considered. At this point, it was uncertain as to what role the City or MPCA would play in extended monitoring activities. However, those would be discussed at that time. On the other hand, if readings generally show that air quality levels fall within acceptable thresholds, monitoring beyond the 12 month period may not need to be conducted.

Commissioner Davis again emphasized that she continues to be concerned as to what the plan for this information will be. Mr. Espinosa explained that monitoring equipment would essentially be on loan to the City of Winona. Given that there may be a need for this equipment at some other location following the one year period, he was uncertain as to whether or not it would be available for an additional site.

Commissioner Porter noted that since testing would begin in early January and be completed in January of 2015, data will not be available for the annual air monitoring network plan. Mr. Espinosa responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Hahn emphasized that although extended monitoring may be required, he felt it was premature to address this issue until such time that it is actually determined that it is needed. At that point, all involved could sit down and work out specific details relative to additional monitoring or other procedures needed to address the issue.

Commissioner Boettcher stated that it was critical that MPCA testing begin after the first of the year in order that it is completed before bridge construction activity begins. He again stressed the need to complete the baseline study as soon as possible.

Commissioner Buelow felt that results of monitoring reports may be beneficial to other areas of the City and will serve to define if problems exist. He emphasized that since the MPCA is willing to provide financial resources to the pilot project, the City of Winona should take advantage of this resource.

In response to a question, Mr. Espinosa stated that, at this point, the proposed location of the monitoring site would be on the roof of the YMCA building at Fourth and Winona Streets. In part, the program will include the use of current city staff in checking equipment and collecting data. Training of staff members will be under taken in early December. No new City staff will be hired for this project.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 25, 2013

PAGE 3

Chairman Porter emphasized that his position has not changed since the Commission's last meeting. Again, although the MPCA has offered to initiate and pay for the air monitoring program, he felt there was no defined need to spend money for this purpose.

Commissioner Hahn noted that he expects additional traffic in the City as a result of the frac sand industry. Although the City is unsure as to what impacts will result from that activity, the proposed pilot program will serve to define a current air quality baseline.

Commissioner Porter stated that, in his opinion, once the frac sand industry begins to settle out a bit, he questioned whether it will continue to rely on Winona as a primary transportation distribution hub.

Following brief discussion, the vote of the motion presented by Commissioner Boettcher was as follows: Ayes; Commissioners Boettcher, Buelow, Davis, English and Hahn, Nays: Commissioners Porter and L. Olson, Abstaining; M. Olson.

Chairman Porter declared the motion adopted, and explained that this item will now be forwarded to Council for final approval.

Adjournment

Chairman Porter asked if there was any other business to come before the Commission. There being no other business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Mark Moeller
City Planner