



June 9, 2017

Citizen's Environmental Quality Committee
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Dear Committee Members:

The next meeting of the Citizens Environmental Quality Committee meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 15, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. in the Misato Room of City Hall.**

- 1) **Call to Order**
- 2) **Review and approval of May 9, 2017 Meeting notes**
- 3) **City of Winona Comprehensive Plan 2007 – Chapter 7 (5 minutes)**
- 4) **Goal Setting Exercise for the future of CEQC (30 minutes)**
- 5) **City of Winona Solar (5 minutes)**
- 6) **GreenStep Cities Implementation (10 minutes)**
- 7) **Xcel Partners in Energy Update (5 minutes)**
- 8) **Other Business (5 minutes)**
- 9) **Adjournment**

Sincerely,

John Howard

Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: Tuesday May 9, 2017

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Hans Madland, Chris Meyer, Lynette Power, and Bruno Borsari

GUESTS: Glen Olson (Winona Daily News)

STAFF: Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator John Howard

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 4:35 pm by John Howard.

Answering roll call were Chris Meyer, Hans Madland, Bruno Borsari and Lynette Power.

2. May 2, 2017 Meeting minutes: Hans made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Chris, approved unanimously without edit.

3. Review and discussion of City process for committees and commissions

John discussed the structure of the Committee to be clear on the limitations and abilities of the Committee. Presently the CEQC is an advisory committee to the Planning Commission, but if it were to become a standalone commission, the work product would not change. The CEQC provides resolutions and reports as the ultimate conclusions. A resolution is a request for a specific action, which gets voted on by the higher commission or Council.

John also sees the potential for the CEQC to work as implementers, for example working on doing education with pollinators, which is somewhat unique compared to other commissions. These activities are already passed by resolutions or approved by the city administration.

4. Planning, goal setting and discussion of the future of the CEQC

Hans recommends working through the Planning Commission to separate into a standalone commission, and getting the Planning Commission's ok. Chris wondered about adding to or modifying the current charge as outlined in the Council resolution that created the CEQC rather than starting from scratch.

John stated that there is an opening with the Planning Commission, and having a CEQC member on the Commission would help with communication and collaboration between the Planning Commission and the CEQC. John said that he presented a brief summary of the first meeting (5-2-2017) of the CEQC to the Planning Commission yesterday. The Commission did not comment on the CEQC's interest to pursue being a standalone commission, or have specific instruction for CEQC topics.

CEQC members reiterated that there is a desire to become a standalone commission and that the first step in being independent would be to work through the Planning commission. Council ultimately would need to approve the CEQC being its own Commission.

Hans is skeptical of the CEQC having a seat on the Planning Commission since it could reduce the committee's independence. Hans also is not comfortable working off a foundational document (authorizing resolution) that is 22 years old.

John discussed that many commissions are structured and created by Chapter 22 of City code. Chris suggests that John develop a draft ordinance of the CEQC being a commission to mirror the format of Chapter 22. Hans would like to slow down. He is concerned that only 4 members are present, so any decision made tonight may not be representative of the CEQC. Lynette did not see an issue in pursuing and discussing goals with only 4 members since it was simply ideas being put forth.

Hans believes we need to start with blank slate for visioning: "What do we want to do?"

Bruno asked the CEQC about how broad the definition of sustainability should be – does quality of life, and other social dimensions of life in Winona fit with environmental sustainability? Chris believes focus should be on more traditional definition and topics like air, water and energy.

Chris described her role in GreenStep cities, which is a part time job. Numerous communities have utilized the GreenStep cities framework successfully with a citizen advisory council.

Hans believes we have an opportunity with the inactivity and new membership of the CEQC to have a fresh start. The work of the CEQC can be tailored to personal interests. Thus we need to have a conversation about what issues matter most.

John noted that established commissions tend not to come up with their own plan from scratch - rather they typically work on what is presently before the commission or assigned from the higher levels. John is unsure of a specific Council or Planning Commission vision for the CEQC. Lynette said her experience with the Fine Arts Commission was open, meaning that Commission did a lot of work independently without specific direction from the City Council.

Bruno recommended that the CEQC work off the "General Function" statement in the 1996 resolution creating the CEQC. General Function statement: "Advisory to City Planning Commission, responsible for the attainment of environmental goals and implementation of environmental policies, of the Winona 1995 Comprehensive Plan along with modifications of the plan as they occur."

Hans recommends all CEQC members review the 2007 comprehensive plan, and see if that provides any clarity of purpose. John said chapter 7 is the relevant section of the comprehensive plan, and should only take five minutes to get a general feel for the goals in chapter 7 of the comprehensive plan.

Chris summarized her view of what the CEQC should do, which is working with priorities listed in the 1996 authorizing resolution, while also working on priorities beyond the comprehensive plan and planning role. She stated that priorities can change.

Chris described the process that the County uses for Committee planning, which is each member listing medium and long term goals for the group on sticky notes, and then the notes are tabulated. Hans wants to make sure we have buy-in from everyone before the CEQC dives in.

Hans wants to go slowly; have a meeting to discuss overall priorities including those of networks. It is important for him to have time to think and to talk to thought leaders in the community before setting topics for the CEQC.

Lynette stated that spending a long time on bylaws and process can be hindrance since it can discourage people, at least this is her experience from other work.

Hans asked whether the group feels it is important to come up with a framework and vision to present to Council before seeking independence. Agreement by the group that this is a good strategy.

CEQC also summarized that there was agreement at the last meeting, and still agreement among those present, to seek being a standalone commission.

Hans believes we should have the next meeting to set vision - one meeting should suffice for visioning.

Lynette believes it is important to stay connected to Planning, since zoning and building designs are lasting and important parts of sustainability. She acknowledges there are other dimensions to sustainability that are important beyond the Planning Commission's purview, which is why the CEQC needs to discuss being independent. There are simply a large number of topics that are not covered by planning, nor are applicable to the work that the Planning Commission normally does.

Hans expressed some confusion and bewilderment as to why so much information was presented in the CEQC packet for the first meeting. John offered to meet with Hans, and explain the importance of the various documents that he included in the packet. Hans asked that John print out some of the key information and offer that to the CEQC. John stated there about 20 key pages in the first meeting packet, so he will crystallize info, and offer to print out for any CEQC member who desires printed information.

Lynette reiterated her interest in working on GreenStep Cities, and sees many opportunities. Lynette asked John to discuss some of the specific ways the CEQC can engage in the 5 big topics he discussed at the first meeting.

- Partners in Energy with Xcel: Opportunities for the CEQC to review and comment on the work being done by the Partners in Energy action team. John will provide updates to the CEQC on Partners in Energy work.
- EPA Building Blocks Workshop: A sub-group from this workshop is focusing on improving transit. CEQC members are welcome to participate in this group, and like with Partners in Energy, John will share work that this group produces.
- Pollinator Resolution: The CEQC can be instrumental in developing guidelines for City pesticide use, and Bruno's experience with beekeeping may be very helpful. Chris indicates there are good web-based resources on integrated pest management (IPM), and is wondering if IPM would be a strategy the City could adopt? John indicated IPM appeared promising.
- Next Step Partners grant: This grant includes energy and water conservation contests that the CEQC can work to implement. Individual involvement outside of the CEQC is also welcome.

- GreenStep Cities: John would appreciate help determining the current actions that the City is achieving within the GreenStep Cities framework. The CEQC is specifically appointed out as the community's coordination team in the GreenStep resolution passed by the City Council. Once the City's GreenStep status is clarified, the CEQC and John could develop a strategy or plan for next steps to pursue.

CEQC members committed to reading the environmental sections of the Comprehensive plan, and to come up with goals for CEQC to pursue by the next meeting.

Availability for summer meetings may be difficult. John proposed subcommittee structure where a committee takes on a topic or focus area, which would allow progress without all CEQC members needing to be present.

5. Other Business:

Hans would like John to be more concrete with agenda items and accessory items included in the CEQC packet, and describe why items are included. Minutes are too long from the first meeting in his opinion.

Hans enquired about process of sharing info. Generally send to John to pass along and evaluate. Items sent to the full group by John would go in the CEQC packet and therefore be public information.

6. Next Meeting:

Thursday June 8th at 4:30pm. John to share details about meeting room.

7. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Hans, seconded by all. Approved unanimously at 6:18pm.

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: 3. City of Winona Comprehensive Plan 2007 – Chapter 7

PREPARED BY: John Howard

DATE: June 15, 2017

Please read the included Chapter 7 of the City's 2007 Comprehensive Plan. This Chapter discusses the official environmental considerations and goals of the City.

Below is the "General Function" statement from the City Council action that created the CEQC. Chapter 7 of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan is the "modifications of the plan" in the last line:

WINONA CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

GENERAL FUNCTION: Advisory to City Planning Commission, responsible for the attainment of environmental goals and implementation of environmental policies, of the Winona 1995 Comprehensive Plan along with modifications of the plan as they occur.

7. Environment and Energy Plan

Issues

The Environmental Subcommittee identified major issues through a “SWOT” exercise (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and a review and updating of the goals of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan. These issues can be summarized as follows:

- Strengths:
 - Blufflines
 - Existing public/natural areas
 - Forested slopes and valleys
 - Springs and streams, including trout streams
 - Green space around Lake Winona
- Weaknesses:
 - Lack of connections to the river and barriers to river access.
 - Lack of adequate bike/pedestrian facilities
 - Lack of developable land
 - Current regulations inadequate to fully protect resources
 - Lack of awareness of existing policies
 - Multiple jurisdictions (i.e., Aghaming Park’s Wisconsin location) complicate enforcement of environmental regulations and open space protection.
- Opportunities:
 - Brownfield redevelopment, residential redevelopment in older neighborhoods
 - Utilize and capitalize on the resources of the city’s higher education institutions
 - Developable land southwest of city
 - Downtown revitalization; more green space downtown
- Threats:
 - Loss of historic buildings downtown, increase in surface parking
 - Priority to auto-oriented development
 - Increasing development pressure
 - Decreasing quality of recreational experience on river

Goals and Objectives

1. Protect Key Resources. Protect the visual, aesthetic and ecological integrity of the river corridor, bluffland areas and steep slopes, and other valued resources.



Objectives:

1. Work cooperatively with other units of government, institutions and organizations to manage growth without compromising the natural environment.
2. Promote redevelopment within older portions of the city to minimize the need for development on the fringes.
3. Use low-impact development techniques in both new development and redevelopment to control stormwater runoff and minimize impacts on resources.
4. Promote conservation design in new development in sensitive areas.

2. Maintain and enhance open space connections. Protect and enhance the visual and aesthetic integrity and continuity of public open space, greenways, and recreational corridors.

Objectives:

1. Protect significant natural features when planning public infrastructure improvements and private developments.
2. Restore and maintain the more “undeveloped” parks, such as Aghaming and Prairie Island, as areas for natural recreation and environmental education.
3. Actively pursue permanent conservation easements, acquisition and similar methods of preserving open space.
4. Encourage and support a city-wide tree planting program.

3. Protect water quality and aquatic resources such as streams, rivers, lakes, springs, seeps and wetlands to maintain the integrity of the natural environment.

4. Foster stewardship. Promote a community environmental vision through the establishment of education, preservation and energy conservation programs.

Objectives:

1. Promote environmental awareness regarding low-impact lifestyles, pollution prevention, recycling techniques and benefits, etc.
2. Promote use of native species in City, development and homeowner plantings.
3. Increase public awareness of the need for environmental regulations.

Policies and Actions

1. Continue to Strengthen Environmental Protection Standards. Environmental policies and regulations at the City, County and State level have been strengthened and enhanced since completion of the 1995 comprehensive plan. These policies and regulations include the



City's Wellhead Protection Plan, Stormwater Management Ordinance and Environmentally Sensitive Lands Development Ordinance, and the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge Management Plan. Additional improvements should include:

- Requirements for the use of conservation design in sensitive resource areas. Conservation design, also known as clustering or open space development, concentrates allowable development on the least sensitive portions of a site while protecting key natural, scenic or historic resources; it can also be used to protect working farmland. (See the discussion in Section 3, Land Use Plan.)
- Limitations on impervious coverage in all zoning districts, so that a percentage of each parcel will remain vegetated, providing improved stormwater management, aesthetics and pedestrian comfort.
- Stronger requirements for landscaping as part of the development review process, including both protection of existing vegetation and establishment of new landscape screening around site elements such as surface parking, service areas and outdoor storage.
- Setbacks of structures from bluffs and ridgelines in order to protect biodiversity and key scenic viewsheds.

2. Support Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy. Both the City and Winona County have been at the forefront of government initiatives in this area. In December 2006, the City was approved by the Internal Revenue Service to sell almost \$1.9 million in interest-free Clean Renewable Energy Bonds to install solar panels on City Hall, the wastewater treatment plant and the central city garage. Winona County was approved for \$3.2 million to install a wind turbine project in Mount Vernon Township. In February 2007 the City Council approved the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, committing to programs that reduce global warming pollution levels.

Further initiatives should focus on educating residents, businesses and the development community on how to utilize conservation techniques and renewable energy sources. Examples include:

- Community workshops on sustainable, alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power.
- Continuing to promote the use of renewable energy in city facilities, including the use of alternative fuels for city vehicles
- Encouraging site designs that will minimize energy use through reduction in paved area and other conservation and low impact development techniques.
- Encouraging site designs that will support the use of solar and wind energy.



Example of green roof and solar panels on office / industrial building.

3. Create Incentives for Low Impact Development. “Low Impact Development (LID) is based on the philosophy that stormwater should be treated as a resource, not a waste product. Rather than using one or two large, costly treatment facilities at the base of a drainage area, LID uses small cost-effective features at the lot level. These are designed to store and treat rainwater where it falls. If done correctly, LID features are viewed as an amenity by landowners. LID can be incorporated into new development as well as redevelopment projects.”³ Examples of incentives include:

- Workshops for homeowners and business on LID techniques such as green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales and pervious pavement, and on the use of native species in home landscaping.
- Small grants or loans to businesses for installation of LID facilities.



Example of planted swale between sidewalk and property line.

4. Develop Street Standards that Minimize Impervious Coverage and Runoff. While the City’s existing street system relies largely on the existing stormwater collection system, new development outside the Island has the opportunity to use drainage swales rather than the typical curb and gutter system, as a means of managing stormwater more effectively. This type of street design can be used in conjunction with sidewalks or a pathway system, either placing the swale between the sidewalk and the property line or within the planting strip between street and sidewalk. The narrower street widths recommended in the Transportation section of this plan would also reduce stormwater runoff.

5. Develop a Comprehensive Tree Planting and Urban Forestry Program. Street trees can reduce energy consumption and cool the urban environment while increasing the level of pedestrian comfort during the summer months. While the City’s original street system was designed with street trees, placed in boulevards (planting strips) between curb and sidewalk, there is currently no street tree planting policy in place. Several steps are recommended:

- Institute a requirement for street tree planting as part of new subdivisions. Options could include requiring developers to provide trees within the street right-of-way as part of their required improvements, or for the City to plant trees, possibly under a cost-sharing arrangement. The City would then commit to maintaining street trees and replacing them if they are damaged or destroyed.
- Require at least one tree to be placed on any new lot created under the subdivision ordinance, with future maintenance by the homeowner.

³ Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, *WaterPro* newsletter, Fall 2005.

- Assist homeowners wishing to plant trees on their properties by providing appropriate tree species at low cost or providing matching funds. Offer educational materials to homeowners on proper selection, planting and maintenance of trees.

6. Open Space and Public Lands Enhancements. The City's parks and public lands, while extensive, have tended to be managed with conventional methods – use of pesticides and an emphasis on “manicured” turf rather than native vegetation. These policies should be re-evaluated so that areas are managed according to their level of use. Adopt-a-Park or other volunteer programs should also be considered as a way to enhance City parks and public lands by re-introducing native plants and removing invasive species.

7. Emphasis on Enforcement and Education. Since the 1995 comprehensive plan, much progress has been made to improve environmental regulations. However, an increased commitment of staff time is needed to adequately enforce environmental regulations, and to educate landowners and developers about how best to comply with these standards. This commitment of staff time should be explicitly defined in the City's annual budget.



Street trees on 7^h Street



A block of Washington Street shows mature street trees and locations where trees have been removed.

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: 4. Goal Setting Exercise for the future of CEQC

PREPARED BY: John Howard

DATE: June 15, 2017

Please consider creating two or three goals for the CEQC, which we will discuss at the meeting. Let's aim for SMART goals, which is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound. One specific consideration to keep in mind is whether the goal fits with the Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 7 (#3 on agenda).

The next page is a worksheet to help with the process. I would like to be able to spend our time together discussing the goals, rather than brainstorming goals.

If you would like a word document of the worksheet, one is available by clicking here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3W2scn0FpecYnJXOGJWNnVRT1U/view?usp=sharing>

CEQC Goal Setting Worksheet – adapted from the [Univ. of Virginia](#)

The Goal:

1. **Specific.** What will the goal accomplish? How and why will it be accomplished?
2. **Measurable.** How will you measure whether or not the goal has been reached? If not quantifiable, how will you determine success?
3. **Achievable.** Is it possible? Have others done it successfully? Do you have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to accomplish the goal? Will meeting the goal challenge you without defeating you?
4. **Relevant.** Is this Committee the place to take on this goal? Does it fit with the Comprehensive Plan or other City objectives?
5. **Time-bound.** What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a practical sense of urgency?

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: 6. GreenStep Cities Implementation

PREPARED BY: John Howard

DATE: June 15, 2017

John will provide an update on the status of work to implement the GreenStep Cities framework for the City of Winona. We should be receiving our official placard as a GreenStep City on the morning of June 15th.

The City's GreenStep page is accessible here:

https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/cityInfo.cfm?ctu_code=2397348