

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: Thursday June 15th, 2017

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Dan Hall, Hans Madland, Fran Goodin, Chris Meyer, Liz Reach and Bruno Borsari

GUESTS: None

STAFF: Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator John Howard

1. Meeting called to order at 4:33 pm with members Hall, Madland, Goodin, Meyer and Reach being present. Member Borsari joined the meeting at approximately 4:40 pm.
2. Minutes from May 9, 2017 meeting approved unanimously.
3. City of Winona Comprehensive Plan 2007 – Chapter 7

John explained that Chapter 7 of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan contains the current official environmental goals/objectives for the City. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan replaced the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, which was the basis for the CEQC. John stated that his interpretation of the authorizing resolution for the CEQC would mean that the CEQC's "mission" would be to achieve the Chap. 7 goals and policies.

Fran enquired how the GreenStep Cities process would coincide with the comprehensive plan. John replied that implementing the comprehensive plan would likely complete a number of the GreenStep best practices – one best practice is actually having a comprehensive plan. Fran would find it very helpful to see the list of current GreenStep practices and where the City ranks on them. Liz and Chris expressed interest in working on GreenStep planning and implementation.

4. Goal Setting Exercise

Each member was asked to share a couple of concrete goals for the CEQC to pursue. (Hans and Chris Meyer provided print outs, which are attached at the end of the notes).

Hans:

1. Open River shoreline to pedestrians via removal of the railroad tracks
 - a. Fran would like to see more attractive area by railroad tracks
 - b. Liz supports the idea, but feels may be challenging to achieve.
2. Monitor silica sand air quality

Dan:

1. Document our successes and progress. Use GreenStep as a framework.
2. Find low hanging fruit and accomplish.
 - a. Dan does not have specific items in mind, but sees value at addressing meaningful and easy low hanging fruit.
3. Develop special projects that are important, and improve the image of the City.

Liz:

1. Silica Sand air monitoring: would like to see it move forward.
2. GreenStep in general
 - a. Bike and Ped. Safety are concerns
 - b. Record the number of educational events, and the achievements of the events. It would also be useful to track if events are annual or just one off.

(Hans left at 5 pm)

Fran:

1. Address standing water throughout City – better infiltration to cut down on mosquitoes and smells.
 - a. Dan believes it is a matter of the water table.
2. No parking along bike routes as it makes them unusable and unsafe.
 - a. Chris suggests protected bike lanes. Liz would like to see better biking safety and condition. One idea is to educate about the “Dutch Reach” where motorists always look for bicyclists.

Bruno:

1. Sustainably designed landscape, such as raingardens. Opportunities for infiltrating water that also beautify the City.
 - a. Fran noted this has great potential to improve the look of the City.
2. Pollinators – fits with a sustainably designed landscape.
3. Supports documenting and celebrating successes. Tracking success has great value in Bruno’s opinion – helps maintain vitality.

Chris:

1. Complete B3 benchmarking for City Buildings. Use to set priorities for efficiency upgrades.
2. 100% Renewable energy – subscribe to Community Solar Gardens (CSGs), host CSG(s) on City property and/or let third party install panels and purchase the electrical output.

Chris volunteered to work on B3 and GreenStep initiatives. Chris noted that how info is entered into the GreenStep program impacts the number of stars awarded for that practice.

(Chris left at 5:30 pm)

John recorded goals, and will synthesize for next meeting. Bruno suggests the CEQC pick a few high priority items to focus on.

5. City of Winona Solar

John stated that the City is seriously looking at the solar energy models Chris described. At the City Council meeting this Monday, June 19th, a CSG developer from SolarStone will be presenting. SolarStone is the same company that signed up other local entities like Winona County, WAPS, and St. Mary's University for CSGs.

6. Greenstep Cities:

John summarized that the City is a Step 1 City, meaning we passed a resolution saying we are joining the GreenStep program. Dan and John attended an awards breakfast where they received a wood block commemorating the City's Step 1 status.

John will provide extensive information in the packet for the next meeting so that GreenStep Cities can be the main piece of next meeting. This will include educating CEQC members on which steps are complete, and what remains.

7. John provided a summary of Partners in Energy. No immediate action for CEQC, but John will provide more information for the next meeting. John said the CEQC's input and ideas on the Energy Action Plan would be much appreciated.

8. Other Business:

John stated that it would be ideal if the members would take more leadership in the near future. John would continue to take notes.

Generally the 4:30 pm meeting time will work for those in attendance. Wednesdays and Thursday tend to be the least problematic for scheduling. John suggests trying for the second Weds of the month, and will confirm with those not in attendance. So the next meeting is preliminarily set for Weds. July 12th at 4:30 pm in the Misato Room.

Bruno wondered about i-Tree capability at the City. I-tree is a computer program that computes economic value of trees and provides very useful info. John said that the city has four tree crew staff, and a number are certified arborists, so they may know how to use i-Tree. The City's current Green Corps member uses i-Tree for his projects.

A couple members expressed concern that too many leaves are in streets, and there is inadequate clean up by the City. Dan noted Lacrosse did street side leaf vacuuming, and this seemed effective. John noted that the City is reviewing options for leaf collection at the request of Council members. Bruno suggests compost ordinance requiring space for lawn composting at properties. The County's recycling system works well, may serve as a good model for leaves.

9. Motion made by Bruno to adjourn, seconded by Fran and Liz. All in favor. Adjourned: 6:05pm.