

## **CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

DATE: November 8, 2017

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Committee members: Chris Meyer, Dan Hall, Hans Madland, Bruno Borsari, Lynette Power and Fran Goodin

GUESTS: Paul Schollmeier

STAFF: Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator John Howard

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1. Meeting called to order by Chair Hall at 4:31 pm.
2. Minutes from Oct. 25th, 2017 meeting approved unanimously without edit. Motion by Bruno, seconded by Hans.
3. Winona Farm (moved up in agenda from #6):
  - Bruno is in communication with Dick Gallien, and Elizabeth “Liz” Micheel at SE Tech. Prof. Micheel is building a sustainable agriculture program and is talking with Mr. Gallien about the Winona Farm. Sustain Winona is also in talks with Mr. Gallien.
  - Chair Hall asked about CEQC role in Farm. Bruno replied that CEQC could support whoever steps up to continue the Winona Farm’s operation.
  - Bruno stated that he had tried to build WSU support in the past and had not garnered adequate support to partner with the farm. Bruno believes Prof. Micheel has the energy and backing to develop sustainable farming that would fit nicely with the Winona Farm’s mission.
  - Hans stated that there are numerous budget and operational considerations that could be difficult to navigate.
  - Chair Hall offered to contact Prof. Micheel and see how CEQC can be helpful. Hans cautioned about giving support to immediate plan, but rather express the CEQC interest in the project.
  - Lynette stated that she met a young resident who would be interested in serving on CEQC, and has a strong food focus. Lynette asked if food should be a goal area? Chair Hall said he feels the current goal slate is a good line up, but maybe add food as goal if this individual joins the commission.

#### 4. Presentation to Planning Commission

John stated that the Planning Commission will not be meeting on Nov. 13, so the CEQC will be on the next meeting on Nov. 27.

Chair Hall enquired about having a PowerPoint for the presentation? John said that PowerPoint is appropriate, but often presentations are given orally.

Fran arrived at 4:45pm.

John and Chair Hall discussed the content of the presentation. Chair Hall would be the designated speaker, and describe the goals put together by the CEQC and then discuss how the CEQC splitting from the Planning Commission is a natural evolution given the divergence in focus areas. The presentation would not get into specifics of GreenStep or Partners in Energy implementation, other than to say they are areas of focus that seem to go beyond topics normally considered by the Planning Commission.

Fran asked why the CEQC was within the Planning Commission? John replied that this stemmed from the CEQC being recommended through the Comprehensive Plan, and there is a specific chapter of the comprehensive plan which references energy and environmental objectives.

Lynette discussed that she sees connections between the Planning Commission and CEQC on topics such as street reconstruction, thus CEQC should still work with the Planning Commission if the CEQC is granted status as a standalone commission.

Hans enquired if sending out the presentation before the meeting would be a violation of public meeting law? John said that the CEQC should not conduct business in a non-public setting, but that sending out the final presentation should not constitute committee business as it is a summary of items already discussed/decided in a public setting.

Bruno feels it is important to bring evidence and reasoning to the Planning Commission meeting.

Hans asked how the Planning Commission feels or is thinking about the separation? John has not heard from the Planning Commission but has heard that some Council members may be hesitant to have another Commission.

Chris stated that many SE Minnesota cities have Environmental Commissions, or similar. John concurred that to his knowledge, many environmental advisory boards at other Minnesota communities are not nested within the Planning Commission.

5. Scheduling: John proposed that meeting the first Thursday of the month would be more conducive to getting on the agenda for the City Council and Planning Commission. No conflicts with this date switch. Next meeting will be set for Thurs. Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.

Lynette suggested adding additional members to help with reaching quorum and broadening the ideas and talents of the CEQC.

6. On-going initiatives:

Partners in Energy:

- Approved unanimously by Council at last meeting.
- John stated that [Energy Action Plan](#) is on the City Website and gave a brief overview of the 4 focus areas, and possibilities for CEQC engagement.
- Fran asked about solar on big box stores, and why it wasn't more prevalent? Paul Schollmeier has done some solar mapping with 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Fran wondered if Xcel offers renewable program. John replied that yes, Xcel Energy offers Windsource and RenewableConnect. Chris said these would only cost a few extra dollars a month.

GreenStep:

- John said that the GreenStep subcommittee (Chris and Lynette) met prior to this CEQC meeting. They input information into the City's GreenStep web portal.
- The group will continue to input information and once a baseline is established, then discuss future steps.

Bruno excused himself at 5:24 pm.

7. Other Business:

- Hans described a [New Yorker magazine article](#) about an Iowa town (Orange City, IA) that is trying to build up their community, and the holistic approach they took. The community apparently focused on young couples. The meaning Hans took is that focusing on "soft" aspects of a place are worthwhile and important. However, these characteristics are harder to measure, so don't get as much attention.
- Lynette said she is very interested in the City advancing a substantial community garden program. She wondered what would be needed to make City Park land available for community gardens? John said that ERC success should help make future program more likely, and if a good case can be made for a garden, he expects the City would be open to considering it. Hans said it is important that people talk about the initiative to create buzz. Fran suggested that the CEQC can promote community gardens.

8. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Chris, second by Fran. All in favor. 5:40 pm.