

## CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: Thursday July 5, 2018

TIME: Scheduled for 4:30 pm at the City Hall Misato Room

PRESENT: Fran Goodin, Dan Hall, and Bruno Borsari

GUESTS:

STAFF: Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator John Howard, Business Energy Efficiency Outreach Intern Sadie Neuman

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1. Call to order by Chair Hall at 4:38 pm
2. Minutes from May 21st and June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. John noted that the wastewater treatment plant staff had a few comments regarding the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, largely clarifying that references to the “biodigester” would more accurately be called the “microturbine” or “biodigester and microturbine”. CEQC in favor of wastewater treatment plant staff suggestions. Motion by Bruno, second by Fran, to approve May 21 minutes as amended by wastewater treatment plant staff and approve June 7<sup>th</sup> minutes as written. All voted in favor.
3. Presentation by City’s Business Energy Efficiency Outreach Intern: Sadie gave a presentation discussing the energy efficiency outreach work she is doing with Winona businesses. Sadie relayed that the City’s Energy Action Plan that was approved in fall of 2017 laid out four focus areas: Residential, Institutional, Small & Medium Businesses, and Commercial/Industrial. Her work with the City began in the late winter/early spring of 2018, and one of the first items she worked on was preparing for a “business blitz”. This event took place in early March and consisted of her and four others going door to door to talk with downtown area businesses about energy efficiency. The event was delayed a day due to snow. Nearly 100 businesses were contacted as part of the blitz, and 29 signed up for free EnergySmart energy audits.

Since the blitz and EnergySmart visits were new to Winona, Sadie did follow up with businesses to get feedback on how the audits went. Sadie joined some business owners for the audits as well as some lighting and HVAC audits. Sadie noted that some businesses implemented measures almost immediately while others were slower. The City will receive a quarterly report on overall progress with businesses in August or September. Dan asked what the audits are finding? Sadie said lighting was the major item, but one challenge to learning the results is the privacy laws that limit sharing of the audit results to third parties, such as the City, so the City needs to reach out to businesses to hear how the audits and energy saving actions are going.

Sadie is continuing to do door to door outreach to businesses and has visited nearly 500 businesses. Dan wondered how she is finding businesses since there are so many, including ones that are hard to find. Sadie built a list via google searches, maps, and walking around. She has found that it is much better to go to the physical location in person to do outreach, ideally in the morning, compared to doing phone calls or less

personal communications. She finds that she is more likely to talk with the manager or owner in the morning. John asked about the reception of businesses to her outreach. Sadie replied that maybe 1 in 4 or 1 in 5 are doing audits or taking a meaningful look into doing an audit. Almost without fail she has had positive interactions with businesses – no one has been rude.

In addition, Sadie has done some residential outreach, including a few events where she tagged along with the WSU seed library. She targeted students by going to WSU events, and pitching the Home Energy Squad since even renters can use it. City staff have also gone to the Winona Rental Housing Association Open house and events like Earth Day. City staff are also doing outreach via talks at places like the Friendship Center and History Center, and recently gave a talk at Nerd Nite in June. The City will be doing a talk at the usual time of Science Night at Island City Brewery on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Sadie provided a summary of the Home Energy Squad (HES) that works on residential homes. The HES replaces old light bulbs with LEDs, checks furnace combustion, installs low flow shower and faucets – all for only \$70. For an additional \$30, the HES will do a building envelope thermal scan and blower door test. At the end of the visit, the HES talks with the homeowner about what they found. Sadie was impressed that the HES also looks at health of home, such as ventilation. Sadie noted that the HES is periodically in Winona on specific blocks of time. Dan asked who someone should call to schedule a visit? Sadie said to call Xcel and the HES, and they will coordinate a time. Fran wondered if there were choices among the LEDs being offered, as some LEDs have a harsh light. Dan said many LEDs now come in all ranges of light intensity, so they look almost the same, or better, than the warm glow of incandescent bulbs. Sadie will get information on HES visits to Fran.

Sadie next gave a brief description of the Mayoral Green Ribbon Commission that will share best practices among businesses and ideally inspire energy actions for more businesses. Sadie said one business in downtown has solar panels. Sadie then discussed future plans for outreach including having a social media presence, working with congregations, doing additional talks (such as filling in for Science Night), and writing up case studies.

Fran asked what will happen when Sadie leaves for grad school in a month? John said there is no immediate plan to have another intern, but that he would try to continue the work Sadie is doing.

4. Review of City Council decision to postpone Commission conversion, and next steps: The CEQC was surprised by the City Council vote to postpone the CEQC becoming a commission as there seemed to be little opposition or concern at the precouncil meeting a few weeks before. However, Dan noted that Michelle Alexander was the main Councilmember who raised objections and made the motion to postpone the vote, and she was not at the precouncil meeting. No CEQC member, nor John, received any indication that residents or area businesses were concerned about the CEQC. Fran talked with Chris Meyer, who was contacted by someone requesting she resign since her husband Paul Schollmeier is on the City Council. This was after she already resigned to work on her political campaign. Dan sent a correction to the Winona Post notifying them that Chris had already resigned, and they ran a retraction/correction. However the correction is a small piece that is rarely read, and is after the fact.

It seems the Winona Post article in the week before the Council meeting conjured up fears in businesses about the CEQC meddling in their affairs. This is unfortunate as the CEQC does not intend, or desire, to be a regulatory body that adds regulation to businesses. Fran understands how businesses would be concerned or frustrated by additional regulations. John intended to be clear in the Planning Commission and Council materials he prepared that the CEQC intends to continue to serve only in an advisory capacity. Nonetheless, this seemed to be the major objection. Fran wondered who specifically had concerns. John noted that some heads of industry, including the City's Port Authority, expressed concerns.

Councilwoman Alexander requested the CEQC change their goals, notably dropping the last three which are water quality, air quality and supporting active transport. Dan is opposed to changing goals, Fran is as well. John reminded the CEQC that Council is the final authority, so if they are not interested in a topic, then it won't move forward.

Councilwoman Alexander also requested a flow chart showing the reporting structure and process. John put together a flow chart and shared with the CEQC.

John suggested that the next step would be to have discussions with the business community, including meeting with the local chamber of Commerce. This is a step multiple Councilmembers suggested. John explained rationale for allowing non-residents to the CEQC.

5. New CEQC Membership Recruiting: The CEQC has two open spots. Upon discussion, two names for potential new members arose: David Schmidt and Alison Bettin. John heard from Alison earlier in the year about interest in joining the CEQC and will follow up to see if she is still interested. David works for the Nature Conservancy and has a strong habitat/ecology background. One person applied earlier this spring, but was rejected because they are not a City resident.
6. Other business: John noted that the City is doing an electric vehicle suitability assessment. Received some positive publicity in the Winona Daily News.

A GreenCorps member will be joining the City in October, and should be a big help with GreenStep City implementation.

7. Other Business: County is attacking Oriental bittersweet in town, and seeking volunteers. Fran expressed interest.
8. Adjournment: Bruno moved, Fran seconded. All in favor. Adjourned at 5:56 pm.

# Environmental Commission (EC) Decision Flowchart

