

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

DATE: Thursday August 2, 2018  
TIME: Scheduled for 4:30 pm at the City Hall Misato Room  
PRESENT: Dan Hall, Hans Madland, and Bruno Borsari  
GUESTS: Chris Rogers  
STAFF: Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator John Howard

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1. Call to order at 4:34 pm by chair Hall.
2. Motion to approve July 2018 meeting minutes made by Bruno, seconded by Dan. Approved unanimously.
3. **Review of City code update document and business outreach/contact**: Dan recalled the meeting he and John had with a subset of the Public Policy committee of the local chamber of commerce. The meeting proved very useful in understanding concerns of the business community. The Chamber is concerned about creep in the scope of an Environmental Commission (EC) and the impact of additional regulation on their members. In response, John made some text edits to the proposed code, which are included in the meeting packet.

Hans is curious why “Quality” is struck from the Commission name in the new code. John and Dan explained that “Quality” implied regulation and setting standards for pollution to some people, which was a sticking point. In John’s opinion, “Quality” does not denote or connote regulation, but is not essential to the name or purpose, so he removed “Quality” to reduce confusion and conflict. The CEQC did not voice opposition to this change in title.

At 4:58 pm, the meeting moved to the Wenonah room for the duration of the meeting.

Bruno believes that it is important to make the statement that the CEQC is not telling anyone what to do. Dan reiterated this point to the Chamber committee, but there is still concern by the Chamber’s members that a future group of Environmental Commissioners may not have this background or thought process, so the Chamber’s committee request that this be explicit in the code and charter.

Hans asked about change to City Code section 22.14 where Citizens Environmental Quality Committee is struck through. John explained that this strike through would end the CEQC so that there is not both a CEQC and an Environmental Commission. Presently the CEQC is listed as being part of the Community Development Department, but John advises against specifying a department for the Environmental Commission since departments and the personnel in departments can change.

Hans wished to discuss the changes to 22.33 (d) Duties and Responsibilities. Hans is concerned that change to (d)(2) would preclude enlisting resources from or working with state agencies like the MPCA. John and Dan did not intend for this change in text to have that meaning, and do not read it to mean as

Hans inferred. They are open to alternative text to better communicate that the Environmental Commission would still be able to coordinate and work with other organizations and entities.

Bruno was surprised that there were objections to the making the CEQC into the EC since no concerns rose up in previous meetings with the Planning Commission and City Council.

Hans believes that (d)(4) would limit CEQC to only do planning and limit the EC to the same role as the CEQC. John indicated that the goal of (d)(4) was to retain the planning advisory component that the CEQC currently has, and not limit the CEQC to only this.

Bruno believes the role of the CEQC is advising, educating - not acting as inquisitor.

Hans stated that he was concerned that the CEQC may not be able to sustain itself if its role is limited. He has talked with people about joining the CEQC who have held off applying because they are not sure the group can have an impact in the current form. Ultimately Hans would like the EC to be about the vision for healthier, cleaner environment.

Dan says the group is not an activist committee, and never has been. Hans believe the group can advocate though.

Hans believes it is the nature of the beast that at some point the EC will come into conflict with other entities, since government sets boundaries and limitations.

Dan recommends Hans work with John to revise text edits.

4. **Electric Vehicle Charging RFPs** – John described that grant funds are being provided for electrical vehicle charging infrastructure out of the VW diesel cheating settlement. About \$ 7 million in total will go towards grants run by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. There are two types of grants: one for fast chargers that will recharge a vehicle in less than 30 minutes and another for level 2 chargers that take 2-4 hours to charge vehicles. Unfortunately, the City has been precluded from the fast charging grants because only four highway corridors are allowed to submit applications. The City is eligible for level 2 chargers and John is hoping to get CEQC about applying for these funds.

Hans suggested talking with Fastenal to get support since they are building large new spaces in the downtown area. Bruno asked about whether electricity comes from clean sources, and whether this is a paradox to simply change gasoline for coal or natural gas. John replied that Xcel is increasingly supplying clean energy, and that the MPCA generally rates electric vehicles as having far higher MPGs than standard internal combustion engines.

Bruno is still concerned about promoting a car culture when many people could bike or walk rather than drive.

Hans moves that a letter of support be drafted stating that the CEQC supports an application for level 2 electric vehicle chargers. Dan seconded, and after deliberating, all voted in favor.

5. **CDP Annual Report Discussion** – CDP is an international organization that records and supports disclosing greenhouse gas emissions. They are more often utilized by businesses, but nearly 170 cities also participate. Winona was asked to join, and John requests input from the CEQC about whether the City should join. John relayed that Fran, who was unable to attend the meeting, supports joining CDP.

Bruno asked about the benefits of joining and John stated that CDP gives support to reach goals, may help the City find lower cost funding, and would raise Winona's prominence in the world of city sustainability. Most participating cities are much larger than Winona, so joining would put Winona into a bigger realm. Dan is not opposed. Hans is totally supportive. Dan made a motion: The CEQC supports joining the CDP program. Seconded by Bruno, and all in favor.

6. **Ongoing initiatives:**

6.1 Partners in Energy: Sadie, the intern for business energy efficiency, has completed her internship, and is moving to Indiana for grad school. She spoke with nearly all the businesses in town, and signed up nearly 100 businesses for energy audits. She started work with non-profits that John will continue.

In the next month, John hopes to formulate a Green Ribbon Commission of businesses to advance energy efficiency within the business community. This group would likely meet quarterly and not be an official City commission in the traditional sense.

6.2. Green Step Cities: The City will be getting a GreenCorps member to work on air quality and energy that will do much to move the City forward within the GreenStep framework over the next year. The CEQC discussed that the City is currently a step one within the GreenStep program and is likely to be moving up to step 2 or 3 in the next year.

7. **Other Business:** Hans – each member find one person to join the CEQC. Hans would like John to send out the application and create a powerful sales pitch. Follow up and make it easy to apply.

8. **Adjournment:** Bruno departed at 5:47 pm and quorum is lost. Meeting adjourned.