

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

DATE: Thursday, May 2, 2019

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

PRESENT: David Schmidt, Lynette Power and Bruno Borsari

GUESTS: Janel Dean and Emilie Falc of the Winona Climate Action Network

STAFF: Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator John Howard

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1. **Call to Order:** CEQC members in attendance nominated David Schmidt to be interim chair, which he accepted. Call to order made by interim chair Schmidt at 4:42 pm.

John stated that the CEQC had guests that would like to speak to the committee, and inquired if the CEQC would like to discuss with them as the first order of business. The CEQC welcomed the guests to present to them.

2. **Guest comment – Electric Vehicles:** Janel Dean shared that she is a member of the Winona Area Climate Action Network (WCAN), and has a petition to encourage the City to install a downtown EV charger and get an electric bus. WCAN collected a total of 188 signatures in eight days. WCAN sees value in the City providing a charger so that people can visit Winona, and because Winona owns the vast majority of downtown parking lots.

So far they have pledges of \$70 to help with getting a charger, and will continue looking at options of funding a charger. Emilie has a list of suggested locations for a charger:

- Boat house restaurant parking lot – near levee, and not near bars where drunken people might damage the unit.
- County lot by courthouse – seems to have space and centrally located.
- Latsch building – owner may have interest in charger.
- Merchant’s bank – extensive downtown parking area.

Bruno asked about where electricity is coming from currently, and whether it is clean. John replied that Xcel’s energy mix is about 40 percent nuclear, 30 percent renewable, and 30 percent fossil fuel. Bruno suggests solar panels or clean energy with the charging unit, so carbon footprint is obviously lowered. Bruno stated that no vehicle has zero impact energy. Emilie made the point that this a step forward, and may not be perfect, but still improvement. Their proposal is not asking or requiring people to go electric, more about allowing it possible for those with electric vehicle to travel to or through Winona.

David said there is an economic development angle to getting an electric vehicle charger. David asked if there were cost estimates on adding solar. WCAN does not have these figures yet. Bruno

clarified that he supports EVs, but doesn't want to lock in the personal vehicle culture over transit or other sustainable options.

Bruno expressed dismay at environmental and sustainability gaps at WSU, and mixed progress being made with student education in regards to sustainability. Emilie believes WSU students are learning about sustainability and making strides to be more sustainable.

David wondered if WCAN had a request for the CEQC or how the CEQC could help? Janel asked if the CEQC supports the idea? CEQC is supportive of the concept.

John shared about staff discussion about electric vehicles earlier in the week. The City is finalizing a study of adding electric vehicles to the City's fleet, and also discussing where a charger may be suitable. City staff prefer idea of a private business offering a charger to draw in new customers.

Janel had question of who would go to the businesses to seek their support or willingness to host a charger? John said WCAN and/or City could approach businesses. WCAN is wondering about how they can work with the City? John suggests the more specific the proposal, and fully developed, the more likely it will be well received.

Emilie asked about the City's ability to pay for a charger. John was not sure, but said he could see 25% city share. Bruno was surprised by the relatively low cost of a charger; he believed they were a hundred thousand dollars or more. Emilie reiterated the point of having an EV charger adds to a vibrant downtown.

David suggests the new Fastenal project could include electric vehicles, and broker an agreement for public use.

Janel stated that a conclusion is that business outreach is important, and welcomes CEQC to help.

Lynette shared about the blue heron project, and how funding was cobbled together. Bruno shared that CERTs, Xcel Energy, and universities should be able to provide funds.

Emilie asked about schedule and how soon commitments need to be shared with the City? John said that if a more complete proposal is presented to the CEQC at their June meeting, it would likely be added to the second June meeting of the Planning Commission.

Bruno made a motion: CEQC supports the idea of WCAN pursuing an EV station in town. Second by Lynette. Passed unanimously.

Bruno shared his experience about fundraising.

- 3. Review and approval of April. 4, 2019 meeting notes:** Motion by Lynette to approve minutes, second by Bruno. All in favor of adopting minutes as written.

**4. Preliminary Electric Vehicle Fleet (EV) Vehicle Report:**

John gave a brief summary of the FleetCarma report included in the agenda packet. Starting last summer, the City installed data loggers in 20 city vehicles to evaluate the suitability of replacing the vehicle with an electric vehicle. The results of the analysis were compiled in early April, and a total of 14 vehicles were determined to be cost effective for electric vehicle replacement. This number is larger than other cities that did a similar FleetCarma analysis. The most common replacement suggestion is the Prius Prime, which is a plug in hybrid capable of about 25 miles on a charge with a full gasoline engine as back up. Our fleet manager has some skepticism of the total cost savings.

Lynette sees this as a positive development, but she wonders if the City is really serious about moving in the direction of EVs. David likes moving toward EVs, but doing so as part of the regular replacement cycle. Building a car has a lot of embedded energy, which is lost if the car is discarded earlier than needed. Lynette asked about gasoline price and whether it is accurate? Yes, City gets gas well below standard pricing (\$1.67 in the report), which makes it harder to justify switching to electric vehicles.

David wondered if the report would be taken to the Planning commission? John said it could, but may just go to the City Council as fleet operations are not something the Planning Commission tends to focus on. CEQC supports efforts to electrify the city's fleet of vehicles.

**5. Unified Development Code Review – Article 6:** Tabled by unanimous consent for the next meeting.

**6. Lake Winona Goose Management Update:**

John shared that he and volunteers found six goose nests around Lake Winona, and treated a total of 34 eggs with corn oil to stop their development. Bruno wondered about harvesting eggs for food consumption rather than leaving in the nest. John communicated that the permit to treat or destroy nests does not readily allow for harvesting the eggs, and they would need to put dummy eggs in the nest to keep the goose from relaying.

**7. Other Business:**

Lynette asked about the demolition by Bay State, and if it was finalized? John was unsure of the status, and recommends contacting Luke Sims about the status.

John shared that the Planning Commission is updating the UDC, and is offering a list of text amendments for public review. Staff thought the CEQC would like to know that one of these amendments is a proposal to substitute bike parking for vehicle parking. John asked if the CEQC would like to add input regarding this proposal. The CEQC sees environmental benefit in allowing the bike parking substitution, but concerned about parking being pushed into the street. Lynette noted that many student renters grew up outside Winona, and so are likely to still have a car with them even if they bike regularly.

**8. Adjournment:** Adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:03 PM.

Minutes prepared by John Howard.