

Energy Plan Commission

Meeting Minutes 19 July 2023

Regular Meeting (City Hall Room 430, Lakeside Conference Room)

Attendance: Commissioners: Alison Hoxie, Brian Hinderliter, Cassandra Theisen, Robert Reichert, Tari Rayala. **Absent excused:** Scott Wishart, Gary Olson

City Staff: Mindy Granley, Sustainability Officer; Mike LeBeau, Construction Project Supervisor; Jennifer Ondrik, Administrative Specialist; Lydia Peterson, Lead for America Fellow; Brett Crecelius, Community Resilience Project Coordinator; Jim Filby-Williams, Property, Parks, and Libraries Director

Call to Order:

The meeting started at 4:03pm.

Approval of May 17th 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Approved by Commissioner Rayala and seconded by Commissioner Reichert.

Approval of July 17th 2023 Agenda.

Approved by Commissioner Rayala and seconded by Commissioner Reichert.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

2023 MN Legislative Session: Climate and Energy Policy Updates – Sheri Hansen, JD, ARP (Director of Communications, Advocacy, and Public Outreach; AIA Minnesota)

- AIA Minnesota Overview: American Institute of Architects
 - 2,300 design professionals from around the state
 - Climate action is primary focus; built environment can produce as much as 40% of carbon emissions; low-hanging fruit
 - Contract lobbyist, staff, member volunteers (education for legislators), coalitions
- 2023 Advocacy Environment
 - Unique opportunities: DFL control of all 3 arms, \$17bn surplus, IRA and IJIA funding, extraordinary legislative activity
- Key Bills Passed in 2023
 - 100% carbon-free energy by 2040

- GHG reduction goals: many substitutes/off-ramps for utilities to make goals attainable
 - 50% by 2030
 - Zero by 2050
- Climate action grants to cities- run through MPCA, can address climate (mitigation) or resilience (adaptation) or both; 50% match
- Increased funding for Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) to assist cities
- Infrastructure Resilience Advisory Task Force
 - State agency leadership, members from both House and Senate, municipal organization representatives, trades, Tribal representatives
 - Must meet by October 2023, present strategic recommendations by February 2024
- Federal climate/energy response (staffing) at MBB to administer new State programs as well as IRA and IIJA
- Commercial building energy benchmarking
 - Question – who maintains the program? Commissioner of Commerce
 - Bill 216C.331
 - Buildings over 50k sq. ft. must report beginning in 2025
- Added resilience and weather trend considerations to sustainability programs
- Residential heat pump grant program
- Green bank established: \$20M, onetime allocation
 - Loans for clean and renewable energy jobs, in areas with establish environmental justice concerns
- Building Codes
 - AIA position: current building codes process works by considering cost, taking national and international programs and applying a Minnesota lens, a non-politicized code that is driven by expertise, should preserve
 - Accelerated commercial energy code: can now be done in 3 years rather than 6; energy codes are moving, and at a faster rate
 - Technical Advisory Group working on EV charging infrastructure policy/mandate recommendations for large multifamily, commercial, and public buildings having more
 - Refrigerants allowed for use: MN now to follow EPA guidelines rather than specific MN list
 - Question – just focusing on electrification, or getting away from fossil fuels? AIA will be promoting getting away from fossil fuels, mechanical systems analysis/evaluation may focus on fossil fuels
- Municipal utilities included in carbon-free/renewable standards
- \$115M state fund for energy competitiveness grants
- MN Climate Innovation Finance Authority
- Additional Resources

- Rep. Liz Olson: Chair of Ways and Means Committee, authored/co-authored many bills for Duluth area, authority of GHG emissions reduction goal amendment and utility renewable energy obligations modification
 - Center for Sustainable Building Research has more information on the utility renewable energy obligations modification
- Rep. Alicia Kozlowski: on Capital Investment, Labor, and Economic Development Committees, authored bill to fund support for tribes on energy policy, co-authored green infrastructure program
- Sen. Jennifer McEwen: Chair of Labor committee, Vice-Chair of Environment, Climate Legacy, member of Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate committee, authored local government climate action grants, CERTs teams additional funding, etc.
- Question – newsletter/website on energy-related legislative changes? Session Daily newsletter during the session (put together by the House), can get on mailing lists for committees, agencies also produce newsletters (less frequent)

Sustainability Office Updates – Mindy Granley (Sustainability Officer), Lydia Peterson (Lead for America Fellow)

- New team members: Brett Crecelius (Community Resilience Project Coordinator), Violet Forster (new UMD Intern, working on office timeline)
- C-SAT: Now has 18 members from 11 departments
- Carbon Disclosure Project reporting completed; public-facing way to report emissions, score pending, part of Race to Zero
- Housing Trust Fund Review Committee voted to incorporate incentives to participate in MN Power Conversation Programs (following recommendations from the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy)
- E-Bikes: DPD received 6 e-bikes with gap funding from the Sustainability Fund (increases reach, community policing benefits, decreases municipal vehicle emissions)

RACER Grant Updates – Brett Crecelius (Community Resilience Project Coordinator)

- Federal grant from the Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)
- Duluth the only municipality awarded funds
- Community Research: UMN independent contracts and Ecolibrium3
 - Determine emergency response needs and resilience requirements
- Site Analysis: City of Duluth
 - Evaluate and prioritize sites for multiple criteria
- Goals and Objectives
 - Development of a replicable model for other cold-climate communities
 - Address functional resilience needs via solar and storage deployment

City Energy Updates – Mike LeBeau

- Biggest project: City Hall HVAC project, replacement of old systems
 - Ahead of schedule
- Working to add resilience and energy efficiency in all projects

Future Meeting Topics

- N/A

Public Comment:

N/A

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 5:17pm.