

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

*Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13.D.021, Public Works, Environment
and Transportation Commission members, City Staff, and members of the
public participated in this meeting electronically due to the
COVID-19 pandemic.*

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Chair Wozniak called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. and at his request, Public Works Director Marc Culver called the roll.

Present: Chair Joe Wozniak; Vice Chair Bryant Ficek; and Members Michael Joyce, Jarrod Cicha, Nancy Misra, Mike Collins and Shane Spencer

Absent: Youth Member Rose Gasongo (Excused)

Staff Present: Public Works Director Marc Culver; City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer; Civil Engineer Stephanie Smith, and Environmental Specialist Ryan Johnson

Commissioner Collins arrived at 6:34 p.m.

2. Public Comments

Ms. Priscilla Morton, 2593 Western, wanted to comment about the discussion in November regarding climate emergency. She hoped that of any body in Roseville who would support the words “climate emergency” would be the PWETC. If this group is the Sustainability and the Green Team and they know they are in climate emergency, she would urge the Commission to go ahead and use those terms. She indicated she did not see the memo or all the wording in the resolution so she does not know what the hesitation was but she would urge the City to support that terminology. The second thing about that was it concerned her that this Commission was willing to take on all of the sustainability efforts, all the stuff that has been done and all that needs to be done, to have only one quarter of a Commission working on this, seems like it is under staffed and a low level of attention for the

level of action that is on the City's plate for reducing greenhouse gases and all the other environmental issues. It is an enormous topic so both for staff and the Commission work itself, her feedback is that they should be asking for more.

Chair Wozniak thanked Ms. Morton for her comments. He stated the breadth of sustainability issues before this Commission that they have been involved with is daunting and for the last several years now the Commission has had discussions with the City Council about perhaps branching off Commissions solely devoted to environmental issues but the City Council is not there yet and he thought that day may come and he hoped it does. He thought if they get more active in promoting what they are doing and what they would like to do and engaging citizens in learning more about what they want from this Commission or one aimed at environmental and sustainability issues that they may see a separate commission dedicated solely to sustainability and its relatives. He thought the City was on the way. With respect to the City Council's discussion about the climate emergency at last night's meeting, he did watch that online and his summary is that it was divided. There were a couple of Councilmembers in support of it but the majority were not so much in support of a resolution as they were wanting to point to the fact that the City has taken many steps towards sustainability and is doing things in a sustainable way and there was some sentiment that they would rather do things than discuss a proposal saying that they are committed to doing things.

Chair Wozniak noted personally he was a little disappointed in that but this was a vote to say whether or not they were going to discuss it at some future point and the decision was no but it has not gone away and will still be out there. He thought as the Commission talked about this more and do more things and recommend more actions in sustainability, he thought this will come up again.

Mr. Culver appreciated Chair Wozniak's summary of the City Council meeting on this topic. As stated, the question of the resolution that the PWETC reviewed in November was brought to the Council as a part of the Council's process of Councilmember initiated items. There was a quick conversation and he would encourage Ms. Morton and others online, if interested, to watch that portion of the meeting in order to understand what the Council is saying and they are certainly supportive of taking steps to address and mitigate for climate change and such. The Mayor brought up a really good point and how he addressed it. He stated when a City declares an emergency, it is not just a random statement, it is not just declaring it is really important to them and an emergency to them. The City actually has the power to declare an emergency which then gives it emergency powers and authority to do certain things. The Mayor indicated that people cannot confuse this with a real emergency such as the Pandemic. He indicated maybe that is what people think the City should do for this for the climate, declare a state of emergency for the climate but it is not necessarily the same things because they are not trying to circumvent normal processes in order to address the climate. The City is doing a lot of things within the law and the normal way the City does things as far as adopting the Energy Action Plan and being a Green Step City and also talking about

some serious momentum toward sustainability. The City also has an intern to work on these things which hopefully will be a full-time position in the City in 2023. He did not think that there is the thought, at the City of Roseville level, they need to declare an emergency state to take other actions at this time. There are things they would like to see the State do and the Legislature and are pushing for those things whether the City signs the resolution or not. He thought that was kind of the tone from the Council last night. The Council supports this stuff and know the local Legislative representatives support this but the Council did not feel it would make a difference if their name was on a list or not.

Mr. Culver indicated he talked to Chair Wozniak and one thing that they need to do a better job of is advocating, promoting and talking to their constituents and residents in Roseville about what the City is already doing. The City is doing some things to prepare themselves to make changes in the City to reduce its impact on the climate within the City of Roseville and the City is also advocating for even more aggressive things that cannot be done right now because of State law. He did not want the residents to feel like this is not important to the City or be too disappointed that the resolution did not get adopted because the work is still happening in Roseville and the City is still a strong advocate for those things. If there is a bill introduced that has something very specific to it then there is an opportunity for the City Council to come out in favor of that specific bill or action in the Legislature, which speaks more than a general resolution.

Chair Wozniak indicated another thing that struck him at the Council meeting was the very strong support for sustainability components to a possible future maintenance facility for the City. He thought the Council really hit a home run there in his view. He noted almost every Councilmember was advocating for sustainable elements, the possible budget increase of about \$5 million dollars to account for being able to incorporate some of those elements into the final design plan. He also added that the PWETC can still take action on that proposal if it wishes at a future meeting. He encouraged members to consider that.

Member Misra thought the fact that the Commission is taking action is more significant and important. She indicated she did not have the language in front of her but she would like the Commission to leave that as a possibility, that the Commission would take up language at some future date. She did not know that they are trying to state the City is in a state of emergency but maybe that there is an ongoing climate emergency, which she thought was two different things. She thought there is some significance in this group taking up some sort of a statement about that but she thought it was much more important that the Commission is doing actions. She encouraged residents of Roseville who have concerns about this to continue to voice those concerns and keep the pressure on because she thought that it matters and a significant enough matter that the City should be welcoming of those voices.

Vice Chair Ficek agreed. The one things he thought of as he was listening to the conversation from the Council meeting last night as well as reviewing the discussion from the meeting in November, he did not know that the City does a good job of letting people know what has been done, what is being done and he wondered, for the City newsletter if there could be a section completely devoted to it such as Climate Awareness or Climate Emergency, just specifically devoted to what the City is doing. He thought that was one idea of how to bring that awareness forward to the residents.

Mr. Culver thought those were some really good suggestions and wanted to have a conversation with the City's communications staff about this and how to provide a more regular update on what the City is doing.

3. Approval of November 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Comments and corrections to draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC commissioners prior to tonight's meeting and those revisions incorporated into the draft presented in meeting materials.

Chair Wozniak indicated he noticed a couple of typos but did not think it was worthwhile commenting on them. He thought the secretary captured the PWETC conversation, which was rather circuitous at times, about the climate proposal pretty well.

Mr. Culver explained he needed to make one little addition where the secretary asked him to fill in a spot but otherwise he commended those who are interpreting these meetings and putting them into minutes on a job well done.

Motion

Member Misra moved, Member Spencer seconded, approval of the November 23, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Abstain: 1 (Ficek)

Motion carried.

4. Communication Items

Mr. Culver provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated January 25, 2022.

5. Annual Green Team Update

Mr. Johnson provided a brief update on the Green Team and what has been done over the past year.

6. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Overview

Ms. Rebecca Heisel, Great Plains Institute, made a presentation on electric charging stations.

Chair Wozniak thanked Ms. Heisel for the presentation. He indicated there was so much information in the presentation.

Member Misra indicated it was mentioned that a big part of the expense has to do with the distance from the electrical source and she wondered what defined the electrical source.

Ms. Heisel explained it is the transformer, where the electricity is coming from.

Chair Wozniak explained he was really interested in the EV Ready for Communities pilot program and he looked forward to that being unveiled. He hoped they can continue that conversation as the date gets closer.

Vice Chair Ficek indicated Ms. Heisel talked about the three different levels of charging and then there are the different levels of fast charging, he wondered if the cost difference that much between them. He asked why someone would go with a level two versus a DC fast charger.

Ms. Heisel indicated the DC fast chargers are significantly more expensive to install. Part of that is the upgrading of the electric infrastructure to be able to handle pulling that much energy from the grid at one time. People do go with level two chargers just because it is much less expensive than a fast charger.

Vice Chair Ficek asked how much does a level two cost versus a level three.

Ms. Heisel indicated it is hard to say, a level two charger can cost in the ballpark of \$400 but then there is the installation costs as well, which depending on where it is, can increase or decrease that price. A DC fast charger can range from \$1,500 to upwards of \$40,000 just because of the installation and the electrical grid upgraded needed to be done.

Mr. Culver asked if the public chargers that have been installed by other cities, are there subscriptions or pay by use for the users or does the city generally provide electricity to those.

Ms. Heisel explained it is whatever the city prefers. Typically right now money is not being made back on these and is why she prefers smart charging because if a dumb charger is purchased it can never be charged for use of that charger. With a smart charger there is that option. She thought this was a personal preference by cities.

Member Spencer asked with the other cities that have implemented these charging stations, have they ever thought about doing a public/private partnership with businesses.

Ms. Heisel thought some cities have done this such as the city of Redwing where the city and businesses shared the cost of the charger and the electricity. It is beneficial to the cities and businesses and is a good idea to work in partnership.

Member Misra indicated the Ramsey County Library in Roseville has had charging since the library was built but she did not see it on the list.

Ms. Heisel indicated she did not know that. She noted the library can submit their charger to be shown on the list if they would like to do that.

Member Misra thought this seemed complicated unlike gas stations that are privately owned, this gets into public utilities, city planning and there are a lot of different factors that come into this. She asked if there was any sort of a master plan for how there might be charging stations set up and what would meet the needs for ten to fifteen years from now.

Ms. Heisel indicated this is being worked on to make sure the standards are the same at the State and Federal level. Cities are working together to make sure all charging stations are the same.

Member Misra asked if the charging stations standardized or would adaptors be needed for different chargers.

Ms. Heisel explained for the Tesla chargers only Tesla vehicles could use those but the Tesla has an adaptor to use the other charging stations. As well as adaptors can be obtained to use different plugs standards. She indicated it is a little bit of a lifestyle change and takes a little more planning than the traditional vehicle but people who have EV's love them and do not mind that.

Member Misra liked the idea of the public/private partnership as well as the idea that maybe electrical sources such as solar on different business rooftops could be used to charge vehicles in that vicinity or using that service and if there is anyway that grants might be set up to enhance that as a source of energy rather than the old power grid.

Mr. Culver explained even at the City facility level, which will become more possible as the City expands its solar installations. He thought those could be some things that are looked at as the new City facilities are built and remodeled.

Ms. Priscilla Morton commented that she is an EV owner and has owned it for three years. She knew that even as one of these fairly passionate people about reducing greenhouse gases and all that she could not own one unless she was charging at

home. As she is charging on 110 volt in her home garage and does work for a fully electric car if not commuting a lot. She indicated she has a 150-mile range and on a level 2 charger it would take her 7.5 hours to charge from zero to 150. It is still several hours so there is no way she could do that everyday and no one could. This is not something that will cause someone to buy an EV if they are going to have to take their car to be charged for several hours every day. It is good for a traveler. On a fast charger though, if it is the superfast, a person could get that much in twenty minutes but really if they are not, and was already brought up, this is an equity issue for apartment dwellers and condo dwellers, if they cannot get that charging at home, she wondered how much public charging would encourage residents to own EV's. Not just traveling through, not because the charge is getting low and on a long errand but actually owning an EV without having a charging facility at home. She thought from a point of view and never disagreeing with having public charging, but in terms of actually moving the needle on people transitioning from fossil fuels to electric, making that shift requires that ability to charge conveniently, which to her, still remains at home. She wondered what public charging would do to move the needle and would the City need to have ordinances for multi-family dwellings or something like that to ensure that people in apartments, low-income housing, have charging facilities in which they would actually make that transition.

Chair Wozniak thought that should be continued discussion at another time because he thought they needed to move on in the agenda. He did believe these questions are important and should be discussed when the City is further along in EV progress.

Mr. Culver explained he was curious about what Dominion may have installed or maybe even made EV ready with their new apartment buildings. He indicated he will do some research on this and bring back to the Commission.

7. Microplastics

Mr. Culver introduced Ms. Mary Kosuth, RA Student at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, gave a presentation on Microplastics.

Chair Wozniak thought everyone could relate to plastic products in the world. He indicated the Commission has discussed a plastic bag ban before and he thought at some point they may want to relook at that as well as taking some action on recyclability of take-out containers.

Member Spencer explained the reason why he wanted Ms. Kosuth to give her presentation was because he knew they cannot fix all of the plastic that is there but one of the things, since talking about sustainability and the Commission being tasked with that, it is going forward, considering how plastic affects the environment. That was the point he wanted to drive home. They cannot make plastic disappear but they can start figuring out better ways to do things with different materials.

Chair Wozniak thanked Ms. Kosuth for the presentation.

8. Sustainability Update

Mr. Johnson provided a brief update on sustainability in Roseville.

Ms. Noelle Bakken, Sustainability Intern, introduced herself and made a presentation on Roseville sustainability efforts and the Energy Action Plan.

Chair Wozniak indicated this is a PWETC workplan for the upcoming year. He thought this gets back to the whole point of so much going on in the area of sustainability.

Member Spencer asked if the wind source information webinar up on the sustainability website for those who would like to watch it and get information.

Ms. Bakken was not sure if it was on the site yet but she would like to get the recording uploaded to the City website.

Chair Wozniak noted he was surprised to hear that the City is awaiting membership in the solar garden, Washington County site. He was trying to find a community solar garden he could subscribe to and everyone was booked or he could not get an answer or too far away from Ramsey County so he was glad to hear that there is some progress and he looked forward to seeing more openings and he hoped the City can help facilitate that when more openings arise.

Member Misra thought the presentation was terrific and points out to her the value of increasing some of the things talked about earlier such as outreach to the residents and she thought people would benefit from hearing about these things. She thought it would be nice to have an update more than once a year.

Mr. Culver indicated there will be opportunities for updates more than once per year.

Chair Wozniak thought during the monthly update maybe the Commission could get updated on sustainability efforts if there is an update to be had.

Chair Wozniak thanked Ms. Bakken and Mr. Johnson for the update.

9. Items for Next Meeting – February 22, 2022

Discussion ensued regarding the February PWETC agenda:

- Update on Civic Campus Predesign
- Update on Local Sales Tax
- Tour in March of the trail over Ramsey Ditch 4.

Member Misra indicated she would like to have an update on recyclable take out containers in the next month.

Chair Wozniak explained there is also the Climate Emergency topic for a possible discussion at the next meeting.

10. Adjourn

Motion

Member Spencer moved, Member Ficek seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 9:05 p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.