

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 26, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Vice 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 Brian Cihacek; Vice Chair Joe Wozniak; and Members Martin Kors, Nancy Misra, and Thomas Trainor

Absent: Member Michael Joyce, Michael Kruse (Excused)

Staff Present: Public Works Director Marc Culver; and City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer.

2. Public Comments

Sylvia Morton, 2593 Western, noted she was at the meeting as a member of the League of Women Voters. She stated she was at the meeting in November and talked about her concern with climate change and making specific plans to meet the goals listed in the Comprehensive Plan for 2040. She would like to reiterate that an eighty percent reduction in greenhouse gases is important and 2050 is a long way off and the City may not be meeting that goal in any way that will be recognized unless there are interim goals and benchmarks and ways of tracking the progress. She stated reducing to zero at some point is a major task. Being realistic about how the City gets there is important.

Ms. Morton asked whether there is a department or person in the City responsible for this task and if there is a timeline being worked on with interim goals. She also stated in regard to green step cities, she did look on the City website and it is a part of the City's Comprehensive Plan and she saw Roseville is in step two but many other cities are at step five and there has not been any entry into the website in terms of steps taken. She stated maybe steps have been taken but there has not been any entry since 2016. She wanted to find out if the City is actually making progress on the green steps program and if so, maybe that website can be updated.

Chair Cihacek arrived at the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Acting Chair Wozniak thanked Ms. Morton and thought there was an item on the agenda regarding the Green Steps program. He stated the Public Works Environment and Transportation Commission is the Green Team that is probably most responsible for taking on the Comprehensive Plan strategies and action steps that would address climate change. He stated he shared Ms. Morton's concerns about the lack of evident progress and have been a little disappointed, not necessarily with the Commission, but with some attempts that some members of the public have made and in many cases, not made, to address some climate change issues and he would encourage the Commissioners to focus on this issue a little more going forward.

Ms. Morton stated there are about five major construction projects either very recently built or in progress that are within a mile of her house and four of them have taken down acreage of trees and her thought was even if these are totally green projects with completely green energy that is a net increase to the CO2 footprint. She did not know if it was policy to replant trees and she did not think that was necessarily a great solution but for any new development she wondered if the City was putting stringent energy requirements on them because within thirty years these may be mandated to be completely green on projects that have not gotten through their lifespan of usefulness. It does not seem to her that the City is doing anyone a favor allowing non-green energy to be constructed now and then in a decade or two mandating the Company to switch over to something green as the climate gets worse and the problem gets worse.

Chair Cihacek asked Ms. Morton what she meant by green energy.

Ms. Morton stated she meant non-fossil fuel.

Chair Cihacek noted solar or thermal energy or wind should be the only option then.

Ms. Morton indicated she was not sure, maybe nuclear energy was on the horizon but right now the City has solar or wind.

Chair Cihacek stated the mandate has to be feasible so it is hard at this point for a company to get to one hundred percent green energy. One percent is more feasible right now. He indicated the City could review the building code to a degree to see what the City can do to reduce or mandate other areas that improve the building climate and overall climate because it is hard to mandate something at this point in the private sector.

Ms. Morton noted people can opt to have one hundred percent clean energy on their electrical and when digging in the earth the companies can build in geothermal. She stated she was not saying this is what is imperative and does not have enough information to say this is what we should do but it is the direction she believed the City needed to go.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated the building code is under the purview of the Planning Commission and that Commission would be responsible for enforcing any requirements for tree replacement as part of a development.

Mr. Culver stated to address some of the questions. The City is at green step two and have been for a while. He believed the only time the website is updated is when there has been notable progress towards the next step. He stated a couple of the items on the agenda are directly related to the City's efforts to get to step three. Once at step three, to get to steps four and five there is a minimum amount of time to get from step three to step four and step five because it is a matter of benchmarking, reporting and monitoring the progress on the steps taken in steps one through three. He admitted it has taken the City some time to get to where the City is, but the City is certainly moving forward hard to get to step three in 2019 and then steps four and five will follow shortly after that.

Mr. Culver stated as far as reducing carbon footprint or environmental sustainability on a larger picture the City heard Ms. Morton in November 2018 and he thought Councilmembers heard Ms. Morton as well and he encouraged Ms. Morton to listen to the City Council meeting from February 25, 2019. There was a preliminary conversation about the City Council's updated priorities for the upcoming years and one of the suggestions was some sort of environmental sustainability.

What the City wants to do is to try to bring in an expert to talk to this Commission about what other cities have done to meet the goals and targets and what can Roseville do itself for City operations and what could the City look at to do beyond that. Those would be recommendations the Commission could make to the City Council but ultimately the City Council is the governing body that makes the final decision on what is and is not done towards those efforts.

Ms. Morton noted she did want to go through the proper channels. The PWETC Commission making a recommendation to the Council is more meaningful than just her making the recommendation.

Acting Chair Wozniak passed the meeting over to Chair Cihacek.

3. Approval of January 22, 2019 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.

Motion

Member Wozniak moved, Member Trainor seconded, approval of the January 22, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Communication Items

City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Freihammer provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated February 26, 2019.

Mr. Culver wanted to commend the Public Works staff for all their hard work in February with the snow falls and cold weather.

Mr. Culver updated the Commission on City Council meeting items. First item the City Council discussed was environmental sustainability. The second item was stormwater infrastructure and water quality. The third item was pedestrian safety. He noted there is a priority out there for the pedestrian or non-motorized network and what the City can do to enhance that. He noted for him, he thought the first step is creating a criteria for where the City marks crosswalks, where enhanced crosswalks are placed and coming up with some specific thresholds.

Member Wozniak asked as part of the pedestrian crossing discussion has there been anything discussed about addressing actually traffic calming strategies, not just visual markings.

Mr. Culver stated the City does have a pretty good traffic management program, which is a procedure by which a neighborhood can petition for traffic calming improvements and things like that. It is up to staff to determine if there is a problem and then to come up with strategies on how to address that specific problem and what happens if something is done to fix the issue, would a problem somewhere else arise because of the fix and what are some of the disadvantages to it.

Mr. Culver reviewed a few traffic calming projects the City has worked on in the past year.

Member Wozniak asked if there were any other effects of all of the effort staff has put into as far as the snow. He wondered how the City is doing with salt and is this going to impact any Public Works operations going forward.

Mr. Culver stated the City is way ahead on overtime and fuel usage is way over budget for this period and the City has been building up a surplus of salt over the past couple of years. He noted the City is still within budget on the salt purchase. He stated at the end of March staff will generate a report to show where the City is at from a budget perspective based on overtime and fuel costs in particular and whatever else has been purchased.

5. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

Public Works Director Culver provided a brief review on the Purchasing Policy listed in the staff report dated February 26, 2019.

Chair Cihacek stated the Statute of reference for this item should be 16C.073, Purchase and use of Paper Stock; Printing. He stated Mr. Culver could also include in the ten percent threshold because that is part of the Statute for paper products. He stated he did not really like the wording “as per Minnesota Statute and the EPA” because the City is not under the jurisdiction of either. The City has the option to be placed under the jurisdiction. He would probably word the sentence to read “In accordance with” or “under the advisement of” to make it clear that this is not a mandate to the organization but something the City is choosing to accept as a standard.

Chair Cihacek asked staff if the City buys off of State CPV contracts, he noted Mr. Culver may not know that answer. He reviewed what the State CPV program is.

Mr. Culver stated the City does use State contracting for a lot of items already, but he was not sure if the City was using it for office products. He noted it is something staff can look into.

Member Misra asked if there is anybody on staff that is going to be keeping an eye on this Citywide. Encouraging, training, that type of thing.

Mr. Culver stated Ryan Johnson is the City’s sustainability officer within his job title. That is something the Department heads need to work through. The heads of the different departments need to figure out how to report this. He will ask staff that whenever a decision is made to go with a friendlier environmental product to let him know what the cost implications are and what the product was in order to record and track the product. Hopefully some actual cost savings can be seen by doing this. He noted staff will try to work with the EPA on this.

Member Misra thought those are all good ideas but wondered if there should be some attention to the implementation and to how this might be coordinated.

Chair Cihacek stated he did not disagree but thought if the implementation was too specific it will start restraining the nature of the policy. Given the way the City is going it might make more sense to pass this policy and also ask to increase the resources.

Member Misra thought to pass a policy without any sort of attention being paid to who is overseeing it is not wise.

Chair Cihacek thought maybe the responsible party for this policy is the Department of Public Works who can come up with a program for training, education, auditing and compliance of the policy.

Mr. Culver stated this policy goes into beyond what the City is necessarily buying as well as some of the practices on how the City does some things so maybe it helps avoid buying something.

Member Wozniak agreed. There is a lot of discussion on buying things but maybe there should be discussion on avoiding buying things. By changing the way, the City does things, such as more electronic communication rather than paper would be an improvement.

Mr. Culver thought staff could state that the Public Works Department shall meet efforts of implementation of this policy and report annually to the City's "Green Team" on the status. He did think education will be a pretty big component and staff will need some help with that.

Motion

Member Trainor moved, Member Kors seconded, to recommend the City Council approve the amended Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

6. Commercial Rate Analysis

City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Freihammer provided a brief review on the Commercial Rate Analysis listed in the staff report dated February 26, 2019.

Mr. Freihammer noted the majority of the commercial water users are in the lowest bracket, less than 50,000 gallons, the equivalent to a single-family resident.

Member Misra asked when staff talks about commercial water accounts are those essentially meters with a lot of variability on how the meters are used and would be hard to draw a conclusion.

Mr. Freihammer stated that was correct. Some places have multiple meters which are combined into one account.

Member Wozniak asked what is the purpose is of the graphic shown separating by accounts.

Mr. Freihammer stated the purpose is to show that half of the users are low water users and only a handful are high water users. It shows the distribution of the accounts and that not all commercial accounts use a lot of water.

Mr. Culver stated ultimately the goal of this conversation is to talk about rates. He asked if the Commission wanted to hit all of the commercial users with a higher rate or did the Commission want different thresholds for commercial properties.

Member Misra stated if the bulk, or some substantial chunk of what is being added as commercial is actually residential but are multi-unit residential, that would affect the data.

Chair Cihacek stated an apartment building is considered a commercial building even if people live in it. The use is commercial not residential.

Member Misra stated it is classified as commercial, but the use falls under the sort of drivers that drive residential use.

Mr. Culver stated for a traditional market rate or affordable housing, apartment complex, the answer is yes. A lot of the senior housing that the City has added recently actually falls outside of a normal residential use because the senior housing has its own cafeteria in the building, and some are assisted living which gives a commercial element to those buildings and outside of pure residential.

Member Misra stated if the condos or apartments or residential multi-unit housing were only looked at, that is where she thought the City would see some savings in water usage with what is being discussed and given there is only one landscaping feature around the entire building she thought it would be a more efficient use of that water use as opposed to individual houses. She wondered if staff did look at a different rate for users' staff might want to separate out the multi-housing units.

Mr. Freihammer reviewed commercial water rate analysis with the Commission.

Chair Cihacek asked if the City mandated irrigation meters.

Mr. Freihammer did not think the City mandated them. He stated a lot of times the building wants to track it for themselves but every building site tracks water usage differently.

Member Wozniak asked who decides whether or not a meter is required.

Mr. Culver stated the City currently does not have any requirements regarding irrigation meters, but the City could make it a requirement if approved through the City Council.

Member Trainor thought this would be financially advantageous to companies and kind of depends on the company's own financial choices.

Mr. Freihammer stated that was correct. A company could have two smaller meters if irrigating instead of one larger meter because the two smaller meters might be

cheaper than the one larger meter and that alone might be a savings. The sewer charge would be the biggest reason because if a company is not tracking irrigation the company can save on that as well.

Member Wozniak stated by including infrastructure costs in the base fee are residential users in a way subsidizing commercial users.

Mr. Culver stated the commercial users have a much higher base rate than residential users. He noted based on the meter size the base rate is \$55.80 for a 5/8-inch meter, \$69.75 for a 1 inch, \$111.00 for a 1 ½ inch, \$209.00 for a 2 inch and it goes all the way up to 6 inches which is \$1,600 a quarter. The commercial user is paying a lot more into the infrastructure costs than residential.

Mr. Freihammer stated residential takes more infrastructure in some ways because there are more lots spread out and more pipe is put into the ground, it might not be as large of a pipe though.

Member Misra stated she was concerned about the fact that the City is incorporating residential into the commercial because she did think the multi-unit dwellings are an efficiency for the water system because the extensive water supply systems are not being built into each residence. There is a lot of piping being concentrated for the sewer system as well and there are a number of things where those users are the same as other residential users in terms of what is being used internally in the units but probably increasing efficiency for water use in the other areas. She thought there was a reason to look at commercial differently when it is a manufacturing system or a commercial system that is able to bill their customer but when a customer is a resident that feels different and she felt like that should be classified very similar to a residential unit.

Chair Cihacek asked if Member Misra's recommendation would be to create a separate section or tier for housing, whether it is condo's or apartments.

Member Misra thought for water use that made sense. She thought there would be more efficiency to have one kitchen, such as at Cherrywood rather than a kitchen in each residential unit.

Chair Cihacek asked staff if data could be examined to see if the places that have congregate dining are actually more efficient than those that don't.

Mr. Freihammer indicated he did not know if the City will have the data on what amenities every facility has. It could be broken out by types of units.

Member Wozniak asked if the base rate would stay commercial, but the variable would be something else.

Mr. Freihammer stated it would, otherwise there would need to be a residential multi-family base rate for each meter size, and he did not know how that would be determined.

Chair Cihacek wondered if they are treated as residential to the degree that the gap would be closed

Mr. Culver stated the way the City Finance Department recommends the rates, whether it is sewer or water and stormwater, the department calculates how much money is needed to fund staff and the planned CIP improvements. He explained the process to the Commission. He stated if a new category were to be created then ultimately that is going to be a percentage of the base residential rate.

Member Misra stated as the Commission looks at how to adjust whether there should be various rates, it seems to her that a big motivator is about water use and encouraging conservation. From the data staff is showing water use from the multi-tenant buildings is more efficient.

Mr. Culver stated on average the population of each of those units is probably smaller than a typical single-family home which is why the Commission is seeing it looks like it is more efficient.

Member Trainor stated thinking back to why the Commission started on residential review was to help to increase water conservation by penalizing heavy users. With Commercial it doesn't seem like that is what the Commission is trying to do, it is more a matter of fairness and is that reason sufficient to make the kind of changes being discussed.

Member Kors stated the condo's and apartments can have pools and recreational items as well just like a house could.

Chair Cihacek thought looking ahead he thought Member Misra brought up good points, but he did not know how to get to where it should be, but he thought the Commission could get to where the City wants to be focusing on conservation.

Member Misra thought one of the reasons why the Commission asked staff to look at commercial versus residential was to find out who the really big water users were that are not residential. One of the things she learned is the City is classifying a lot of residential as commercial and what she was trying to get at is if those were removed from commercial to try to figure out the original question of who the really big commercial water users are.

Member Trainor thought one of the outcomes of what Mr. Freihammer has presented is the irrigation use for the really big users is virtually insignificant in comparison. When talking about a homeowner and conservation, he thought there was a lot of ground to work with and an appropriate initiative but for the City to go

in and tell a manufacturing plant they have to manufacture different that is really fuzzy ground and not sure what is to be gained by that.

Chair Cihacek recommended as the next step to look at the irrigation use first because he thought it made sense to get everyone in the City to use less water, whether it is commercial or residential.

Mr. Culver stated the City is trying to get people to conserve water. He thought there are some things staff would like to do about trying to subsidize or provide rebates for smart irrigation controllers that will reduce the amount of water people are using for irrigation rather than a rate change. This is something the City is going to do eventually. He wondered if there was something more the Commission wants to do from a rate structure perspective to try to force conservation.

Member Misra stated the fact the Commission is considering different rates for the summer, addressing irrigation specifically is saying the City is providing an incentive for that conservation and without that incentive people might not make the changes that would be made with an incentive.

Chair Cihacek agreed. He did think the Commission should look specifically at an irrigation rate and mandating irrigation meters to start enforcing that rate with other incentives for conservation from a rate structure perspective.

7. Items for Next Meeting – March 26, 2019

Discussion ensued regarding the March PWETC agenda:

- Continue discussion on Commercial Rate Analysis – Irrigation
- Irrigation Technology Review

Mr. Culver commented Member Trainor will not be continuing on the PWET Commission and last meeting will be in March. Member Trainor was the Ethics Commission representative.

Chair Cihacek asked if any member on the PWET Commission would like to sit on the Ethics Commission.

Mr. Culver reviewed the responsibilities of the Ethics Commission.

No one volunteered at this time.

Chair Cihacek indicated he would be at the March Ethics Commission meeting. He suggested forming a sub-committee for the “Green Team”.

8. Adjourn

Motion

Member Trainor moved, Member Misra seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 7:41 p.m.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion carried.