

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 25, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Chair Cihacek 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 Stephanie Hammer, Karen Huiett, Michael Joyce, Nancy Misra, and Shane Spencer

Absent: None

Staff Present: City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer; Environmental Specialist Ryan Johnson

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of May 28, 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 Spencer moved, Member Hammer seconded, approval of the May 28, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Communication Items

City Engineer Jesse Freihammer provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated June 25, 2019.

Environmental Specialist Ryan Johnson provided a brief update on solar in the City.

Member Wozniak inquired if staff tracks any EAB tree branches that fall.

Mr. Freihammer indicated staff is working with Parks and is tracking it to prioritize which trees to remove rather than continually doing maintenance. He thought there was going to be some discussion on the budget specifically with EAB and how to address the problem in the future.

Member Spencer noticed the raingardens around McCarrons with a portion of the gutter carved out and he wondered what that was all about.

Mr. Freihammer stated last year there were eighteen to twenty rain gardens were put in with Capital Region that residents signed up for. The City contribution is putting the curb cut for the rain gardens in and some was supposed to be done last year but did not happen so that is just starting. The Watershed will do everything behind the curb cut.

5. Eureka Recycling Annual Report

Mr. Johnson stated Eureka Recycling has recently produces the annual recycling report. He introduced Ms. Kate Davenport, Co-CEO and Mr. David Widenfellow, Director of Operations from Eureka Recycling.

Ms. Davenport and Mr. Widenfellow, Eureka Recycling reviewed the highlights of the report and future recycling efforts.

Chair Cihacek asked if people are recycling more because more items are recyclable or is it that people are more knowledgeable about what can be recycled.

Ms. Davenport thought it was more the latter. The less that there are more products that are recyclable. The composition of what is being seen is also changing.

Member Huiett asked what some of the worst offenders Eureka Recycling are is finding.

Ms. Davenport thought the number one offender is plastic bags and either people are putting plastic bags in to recycle or are bagging the recycling in plastic bags. Plastic bags cause real challenges in the facility. The plastic bags wrap around the equipment shafts in the facility. She noted public tours of the facility are offered every Wednesday and she suggested the Commission come to the facility to tour it as well.

Ms. Davenport noted another problem item that people recycle are called tanglers such as extension cords, garden hose, Christmas lights, etc. that also wrap around the equipment. She noted Christmas lights are recyclable but need to go into an electronics recycler. Scrap metals such as pots and pans, gutters, pipes, etc. also come through to be recycled. Another thing that has come through to the recycling

facility has been propane tanks which are a safety risk. The last thing being seen is lithium batteries and are a major fire hazard and hard to see.

Ms. Davenport noted the facility did install some additional fire prevention system that scan the pile of material to notice infra-red or hot spots before a fire starts.

Chair Cihacek asked for the specific items mentioned such as plastic bags, does Eureka Recycling have a specific rate of how much of that is coming from Roseville or is it tough because it ends up in aggregate.

Ms. Davenport stated it is hard to determine because it ends up in aggregate. She stated the total residual for Roseville is 7.65 percent and is all non-recyclables.

Chair Cihacek asked staff if there was a spot in Roseville that residents could bring those types of non-residual items.

Mr. Johnson stated the City does have the big push to get rid of things that cannot go curbside. All of those things are the target for clean up day.

Member Misra wondered what types of injuries occurred from the items placed in plastic bags.

Ms. Davenport stated the injuries are puncture types of injuries. The sorters wear Kevlar gloves to try to alleviate the puncture injuries. One of the most unique things about Eureka Recycling is it has one of the best safety records in the Country and she thought that reflected their values. Their turn-over rate is much less than other facilities.

Member Misra asked if the recycling facility ever able to find a different home for the residuals.

Ms. Davenport explained for scrap metal the facility can find a home for it but may need to pay for it to be recycled. The facility also works with an organization called Techdom, which is a non-profit recycler in the Twin Cities and the electronics go to them as well.

Ms. Davenport gave the Commission an overview of what has been happening in the recycling market.

Member Huiett asked if a homeowner is wondering if it would be better to take some boxes of paper to be recycled or shredded, which would Eureka Recycling recommend.

Ms. Davenport recommended not shredding it and place it in the recycle bin. That is something that needs more education on. When the paper is shredded, it goes everywhere. She did not know if Eureka Recycling would advise taking it to the

shredder or not. The office paper is actually high-quality material and if it is going to the shredder there is the security of having it shredded and also going to a higher and better use. If it comes through a facility like theirs there is no way to separate the office paper from the junk mail and is getting recycled back into cereal boxes, but the shredded paper will more likely get turned back into a higher quality material and have a more environmental use.

Member Spencer asked if there was any push from the industry standard to migrate away from plastics and put more into aluminum and glass.

Ms. Davenport explained there really has not been that kind of a push. The push being seen is brands and packagers committing to recycled content in the plastic. Plastic is lighter and cheaper to ship. There is also another dynamic going on right now as well which is natural gas is really cheap right now in the US and plastic comes from natural gas and oil and that is the cheaper product to package in and the dynamic does not appear to be changing anytime soon.

Ms. Davenport thought another dynamic that is happening is the passage of extended producer responsibility, which is if you produce it, you are responsible for the management of the end of its life. Canada and Europe use this as well. The people that are burdened with the cost of recycling are the communities, the cities and their partners. The people that are making the packaging have no responsibility for investing in that and the people at Eureka does believe that there needs to be some responsibility on the producer's side. She noted it will be very interesting to see what happens in the next few years around policy mechanisms to address some of these challenges.

Member Misra asked if there was any possibility of returning to consumer separation of the recyclables.

Ms. Davenport indicated she did not. Some communities have gone back to dual stream, which is where Roseville was at before the conversion to single stream. She thought there were some challenges there in terms of the major investments that have been made in single stream to go back to source separation.

Member Misra was curious about how much of the cardboard boxing that arrives at consumers homes are being recycled.

Ms. Davenport did not know that number off the top of her head. The thing that gets recycled the most is metals, but paper and cardboard is close behind that.

Member Wozniak noted the recycling and energy board in Ramsey County is close to deciding to invest in additional processing equipment to remove plastics 1 and 2 and cardboard because there is enough of it in the way stream to recover and market.

Ms. Davenport noted forty to fifty percent of what is seen in the trash is recyclable.

Member Misra asked if there was any recommendations or suggestions to the City of what could be done to help clean up the stream, increase more separation.

Ms. Davenport thought there were some campaigns the City could do around what the benefit of recycling is and really promoting it. She thought some of the stuff that is already happening in Roseville such as multi-family recycling and recycling in the parks, the community is leaps and bounds ahead of other communities in terms of providing access to recycling across the board. She indicated there are opportunities for education of recycling as well.

Member Hammer asked if Eureka has seen any impacts in communities that have banned plastic or Styrofoam and things like that. Has it impacted the Styrofoam and plastic industry.

Ms. Davenport explained from the research Eureka has done there has been a decrease in plastic bag usage when banned. She noted the City of Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Louis Park all passed an Ordinance called "To Go Packaging" which is anything that is take out needs to be recyclable or compostable and Eureka thought that has a positive impact in terms of what is seen in the stream. She noted she did not have numbers as to what the impacts have been yet.

Member Joyce stated in the past there were recyclable bottles and he wondered what shifted to stop that. He understood that glass was heavy and does not last as long including reuse. He wondered if there could be a return to that in terms of reuse.

Ms. Davenport indicated there are conversations about that going on, even at the circularity conference. There is a joint partnership between a company called Terracycle and Unilever that was announced at announced this year at the World Economic Forum, those two companies are launching a ship call Loop which is piloting in Paris, New York and Washington D.C. right now reusable packing through home delivery. There is some interesting reuse for reusables for the past twenty years that have been pushed aside because it is not convenient and only a small percentage of people will go to the grocery store with their container or whatever. With the advent of home delivery, it creates a unique opportunity to rethink that. She noted the Loop Partnership was a billion-dollar investment. There were advocates across the Country for reduction and reuse.

The Commission thanked Eureka Recycling for coming to the meeting to present their annual report and answer questions.

6. Water Rate Discussion

Mr. Freihammer stated over the past two years the Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission (PWETC) has discussed the water rate structure of

both residential and commercial properties. He summarized the discussion to date with the Commission.

Chair Cihacek indicated the Commissioners that have been through the residential discussion feel pretty good about the recommendation.

Member Spencer indicated he read through the information and felt there was a lot there and that due diligence was done and was comfortable with the recommendation.

Mr. Freihammer reviewed the Commercial Water rate structure with the Commission.

Chair Cihacek noted if commercial rates are raised the business does not bear the cost of that rate exclusively, it will be shared in the cost of the product, service and is not as clean of a cost increase as a residential rate. To really be impactful rates must be raised dramatically. There is not the same incentivization to conserve water because the costs are passed on. He noted the Commission did talk about meter separation in order to determine how much is irrigation rather than hypothesis.

Mr. Freihammer stated staff looked at Richfield and that is the route that city went with. Richfield required commercial accounts to separate the two and is one way to at least have irrigation charged at the highest tiered rate as a way to incentivize the business to use less irrigation and one way to go. There are not a ton of commercial properties that have extensive irrigation in the City, but there are some and could potentially impact them. That would address irrigation. There are some issues. As new buildings are built with redevelopment and new things installed it is pretty easy to accommodate it right then and not much for additional costs up front. If it is mandated within a year of being built there is more expense to retrofit some buildings and will be more difficult to separate the water line, etc. That is an option to look at moving forward.

Member Hammer asked if there has been any discussion about incentivizing new toilets or more efficient equipment in redeveloped family housing.

Mr. Freihammer indicated that has not been discussed too much. He thought that is one of the reasons why there has been a downward trend. Anytime anyone upgrades anything and certainly with all of the redevelopment going on in Roseville, those items have been put in and kind of where the market has gone. As buildings get upgraded that change occurs. That is certainly something that can be incentivized but was not sure if there was a need on the appliances.

Mr. Freihammer noted one thing that has been talked about, especially on the residential side but could be done on the commercial side, is incentivizing people who do have irrigation to do a smart meter. He noted the City is also looking at its

water use and do have some irrigation spots that are not metered and trying to get it all metered so the City irrigates responsibly like it is trying to get everyone else to do.

Member Wozniak explained there has been talk about the City being a leader in this area and he wondered what happened with that.

Mr. Freihammer stated in terms of what the City is trying to do is looking at putting smart meters on the City irrigations. The City will be replacing a fair amount of irrigation at City Hall and will meter.

Chair Cihacek thought the question is if there is incentivization for reuse of some water resources. Instead of using irrigation to water there could be a reuse facility as a part of the infrastructure and pulling water out of that. He wondered if there were any programs for reuse of water irrigation. He knew for residential homes there are rain barrels that can be used but he did not know what the equivalent of that would be for multi-family dwellings or an apartment building or commercial property. He thought if there was a way to get onsite storage for useable grey water then that seems to solve part of the problem in a cleaner way than other solution sets, but he did not know what exists for that sort of incentivization structure for commercial properties.

Mr. Freihammer stated in terms of reuse, he was not aware of any other cities or anyone providing it. The only ones installing for reuse is Watershed Districts or cities. There is a lot of cost going from storm water storage and retention to a reuse. It does not reduce the need for irrigation. There would be two systems. He indicated it is a significant cost and did not know if the incentive was there and that there are probably more cost-effective ways.

Chair Cihacek asked how golf courses irrigate when there are storage ponds, do those courses not reusing the storage pond for irrigation.

Mr. Freihammer thought it could be considered a reuse. He thought at Cederholm City water is used and are not pumping out of Zimmerman.

Chair Cihacek thought the Commission was not at a point of making any decisions, this is a much more complex topic then residential and he would be in favor of trying to examine things like plantings, other source of coding which he did not know how it exists currently in the City for new construction and redevelopment. He would be fine with trying to install irrigation meters in new or redevelopment situations so the City can start getting data on how much is going towards irrigation.

Mr. Freihammer noted a lot of the new developments coming through the City is doing that already. It might pick up a few that are not doing it. If the irrigation rate is set higher that might have even more of an impact, but the benefit now is not getting charged for the sewer on the separations.

Chair Cihacek thought there were a couple of options available, one being an expansive education campaign on irrigation or probably lawn management generally. One is looking at leaks and the third is the concept of an Ordinance regarding irrigation on new or redeveloped buildings. He asked the Commission if all of those options were worth exploring or none or some.

Member Wozniak asked if that included the separation of irrigation on new and redevelopment for business.

Chair Cihacek thought the recommendation from staff, which was new irrigation systems as opposed to the actual structural redevelopment.

Member Wozniak asked about the City sustainability and water audit.

Chair Cihacek thought that could be moved to look at items and separate from this.

Mr. Freihammer explained staff could give an update to the Commission on what has been done to date and what is planned to do this year for the City and based on that the Commission could offer more suggestions.

Chair Cihacek thought staff should think about citizen communication because the City has numerous ways to connect with the citizens. For the irrigation meters the Commission may want to look at revising the Ordinance or look at a new Ordinance to get that done and thought staff could prepare that for a future meeting.

Mr. Freihammer noted staff will need to look at where the best place to put that would be.

7. City Council Joint Meeting

Mr. Freihammer stated the PWETC is scheduled for its annual joint meeting with the City Council on July 8, 2019. He asked that the Commission create a list of the topics to discuss with the City Council.

Chair Cihacek pointed out that the City completed its solar process to the extent that the City has available structurally. He noted this was a multi-year effort and have been able to develop organic drop site because of a multi-year effort the City has been able to address sewer laterals through Tenagle Assistance Program and the vendor community list, which was a request from the City Council.

Member Misra indicated the City has advanced in green steps.

Chair Cihacek thought those items have been pretty significant that the Commission has worked on for multiple years and that the City Council requested. Things to look ahead is he would like to ask Council's guidance on the creation of

a separate environment commission or subcommittee to this committee of separate individuals to serve to work on environmental policy.

Member Wozniak noted another accomplishment was the Comp. Plan was approved and there are a number of sustainability components in the Comp. Plan that would seem to be something the Commission or subcommittee would be tasked with trying to flesh those out and look how the City starts to work toward meeting some of those goals for energy and City energy use and City audit or energy use, not just City buildings but the entire City. Tree diversity.

Chair Cihacek indicated he would prefer a separate body to work on the environmental issues because a subcommittee would require some of this Commission would need to attend those meetings and report back to the Commission. He would like to have this discussion with the Council. He suggested mentioning water rates briefly to the Council. He would like to have a conversation about solar expansion to the OVAL plus other facilities in the City.

Member Joyce asked if the Commission needed to look at any storage or the maintenance facilities.

Mr. Freihammer stated staff will be doing an additional facility study to look at the overall campus and what the long-term plan is. He noted that is already in the works and will be completed by the end of 2019. That could tie into the solar discussion.

Member Misra indicated she would like the Commission to think about a couple of things, one being an engaged education program for residents and possibly commercial as well. Dealing with things like resource use and irrigation, whatever these topics have been previously discussed. There could be something comprehensive that could be looked at by the entire City. She stated she would also be interested in having the Commission take a look at packaging. She thought some action could be taken with recycling.

Chair Cihacek thought the Commission could think about how to integrate the newsletter and communication activities into some sort of approach that helps get out what the Commission is doing and ways to expand communication.

Mr. Freihammer thought the Commission should come up with some direct questions for the Council to discuss with the Commission.

Member Hammer thought the question regarding the transit roads and transit accessibilities would be good to discuss with the Council.

Chair Cihacek indicated he would like to push the Council to connect with the Met Council representative, which he is new but push him to be more present at the Commission level in hearing some of the concerns.

Mr. Freihammer stated staff will put together a request for Council action and will distribute that out ahead of time to the Commission to make sure everything was covered.

Chair Cihacek noted all of the Commission is invited to meet with the Council around the table.

8. Items for Next Meeting – July 23, 2019

Discussion ensued regarding the May PWETC agenda:

- Review of Joint Meeting with City Council
- Short Public Works Review

Future Meeting Items

- Irrigation Technology discussion and presentation
- City water audit process

9. Adjourn

Motion

Member Misra moved, Member Joyce seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.