

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Chair Ficek 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 Bryant Ficek; and Members Jarrod Cicha, Mike Collins and Edwin Hodder

Absent: Members Michael Joyce and Nancy Misra (Excused)

Staff Present: Public Works Director Marc Culver; Environmental Manager Ryan Johnson and Sustainability Intern Noelle Bakken

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of July 26, 2022 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 Ficek indicated staff members present was not correct. Assistant City Engineer Stephanie Smith and Environmental Manager Ryan Johnson were not at the meeting.

Motion

Member Collins moved, Member Cicha seconded, approval of the July 26, 2022 meeting minutes as amended.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Communication Items

Public Works Director Culver provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated August 23, 2022.

Mr. Culver updated the Commission on the Commission vacancy and interview/appointment process coming up.

Chair Ficek indicated the student Commission Member is on a separate timeline from the Commission appointment. He thought the Council changed the requirements.

Mr. Culver explained the Council discussed changes but there were no changes made. The Youth Commissioner still needs to be a Roseville resident to apply to be a Youth Commission Member.

Chair Ficek asked if most of the projects, with the exception of B2, are expected to wrap up by the start of the State Fair.

Mr. Culver explained some projects will be taking a pause or will be far enough away from the park and ride areas to not be an issue.

Member Cicha asked if the City had any policy about wearing life preservers for their employees or contractors that are out on a boat.

Mr. Culver explained there is not too much of that in the City. He asked Mr. Johnson if the City requires contractors to wear life jackets.

Mr. Johnson believed the City at least has the contractors have life preservers in their boats.

Mr. Culver thought the City would defer to OSHA in that regard. He thought if the City was hiring someone to be on a boat, there would be OSHA regulations for that type of activity and he imagined life preservers would be mentioned to be at least on the boat, but he was not familiar with that.

Chair Ficek noticed the City sent out fifteen hundred mailings and wondered if there was any response or updates to provide.

Ms. Bakken indicated staff has had a handful of responses but compared to the last mailing sent out, at least for businesses, staff has had more people call in with questions about environmental things.

Chair Ficek noticed the tree sale was going on and he asked how that was working out.

Ms. Bakken explained the tree sale is almost done and extremely popular.

5. Zero Waste Packaging Ordinance Consideration

Environmental Manager Johnson and Sustainability Intern Bakken made a presentation on a Zero Waste Packaging Ordinance and asked the Commission to discuss options for an ordinance in order to provide a recommendation to the City Council.

Member Hodder asked what are the options for materials of a Chinese restaurant for recyclable to go containers.

Ms. Bakken indicated there are plastic pails that are not plastic lined that would probably be the best alternative option or moving to some sort of recyclable clamshell type of a material would probably work out as well.

Member Hodder asked if there are any supply chain issues.

Ms. Bakken explained that has been an issue, especially with paper products from what she has heard. She did speak with one of the city's restaurants and he has had some problems with getting his materials sourced which is why she would definitely recommend a gradual approach.

Member Cicha indicated he had a question about compostable boxes and if the City had a facility to handle those or where would those end up going.

Ms. Bakken explained there is one drop site in Roseville right now and was a part of the discussion in March as well. There is not a really good pick-up option in Roseville, and Ramsey County is rolling out their curbside blue bag system next year so those things should be able to directly in the garbage but she thought if the City were to take this on, there would need to be a system of how to put it in place.

Member Collins was interested to know if current disposable coffee cups were compostable or not.

Ms. Bakken indicated most are not, most have the plastic liner in them but the cuff and some of the tops are compostable. She noted a new coffee shop in Roseville that does use compostable cups.

Chair Ficek invited public comment.

Mr. Dale Howey indicated he is running for the City Council and this is a topic that is near and dear to his heart. He explained when talking about the clamshell, plastic number 5, he has been to restaurants that have that type of container and he wondered what percentage of plastics that are being put in the recycling actually are being utilized. He heard it is only nine percent and hoped this is a part of the recommendation to the City Council for to-go containers.

Ms. Bakken explained she did not know exactly what Eureka's market is for their recycling. She noted she was just going off of what they will accept. She thought that would be a good question for Eureka and if they have had issues with plastic number 5.

Mr. Johnson explained the City gets updates from Eureka quarterly and since they are keeping a lot of the City's material as local as they can, they have not had an issue recycling most if not all of it. The City does not see the same flood of plastics that a lot of the coasts have just because they are trying to ship it out. Eureka has been really good about utilizing all of the City's materials. He noted the City has had good success with it and did not think the City was in that nine percent range, but he could check with Eureka again to see if they have a specific number for it.

Member Hodder asked if black plastics would be included in compostable materials.

Ms. Bakken indicated the black plastic is not recyclable.

Member Ficek asked the Commission if the City needed something like this. He thought the Commission could discuss the need and details.

The Commission agreed the City should move forward with something like this.

Member Hodder thought it was important to educate businesses and the general public about what their options are.

Chair Ficek agreed and thought this was the correct way to move forward with the phasing of it. He indicated by looking at the table in the packet if staff could focus on whichever ordinance staff thought was closest to what they wanted to emulate, the Commission could go down the list.

Ms. Bakken indicated staff does like St. Louis Park's approach to this. She thought all of the ordinances are similar with the types of materials required and the types of businesses that are exempt. She explained staff liked that St. Louis Park has been easing their businesses in and liked that they did the educational piece with a vendor fair. She explained that would be her recommendation. She indicated St. Louis Park does have a solid waste staff that manages it, but this could fall under Public Works for complaint-based enforcement.

Mr. Johnson agreed with Ms. Bakken.

Ms. Bakken recommended to keep the recommendation in that materials with lids have the same type of material throughout so it is easier for the consumer to know what to do. She noted St. Louis Park and Edina does that as well.

Chair Ficek stated that at the top of the list, affected businesses, he noticed a couple of differences from St. Louis Park that they included food trucks and gas stations. He wondered if there was any reason to include or not include them.

Ms. Bakken thought gas stations could probably fall under, if the City wanted to include, some of the exemptions like foods prepackaged by the manufacturer. There will probably not be a lot of freshly prepared take away foods from gas stations besides hot dogs. The city does have a handful of food trucks that station in various parts around the city and would be something that would come up occasionally. A lot of food trucks, because they are mobile and working among some of the different cities, have probably encountered this in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Louis Park already so a lot of the food trucks are probably already using materials that are pretty compliant. She would not see any issues with that personally.

Member Hodder thought some of the food trucks may need to have some education because a few he has encountered still use the Styrofoam containers.

Mr. Culver thought it was important to keep in mind that staff all agree and the Commission understands, just based on Member Hodder's last comment, whatever is recommended for an ordinance is going to be a really slow roll on the actual enforcement of it. It might be a year or more and he was not sure what the Council would want to do.

Chair Ficek asked when they talk about phased, does that mean it is a long time until full implementation with a lot of education with a set date where everything goes into effect or do they start with one thing being in effect and other things are added along the way until there is a full implementation.

Ms. Bakken explained her thought on that is because the City is not sure about the timing of Ramsey County's curbside pickup, roll out is going to be and could be as late as mid-year to late next year for Roseville. She indicated if she was going to implement this she would start with 2023 as being an educational period and, at the very earliest, start 2024 as starting to ban materials and starting to try to enforce it. She would start with banning plastic number six, banning Styrofoam, requiring maybe recyclable and compostable options. A very baby step approach. She talked to a restaurant that said compostable materials are twice as expensive as Styrofoam containers so the business does not intend to continue to use them once his grant recycling money goes away so making sure the restaurant owners know what the recyclable options are because those are probably going to be less of a cost burden, which is important.

Member Hodder thought as far as the restaurants are concerned, they are still struggling with the effects of the Pandemic and staffing and he thought a phased approach would be prudent.

Mr. Howey explained he went to some food trucks at an event and what he noticed was they were throwing the recyclable directly in the trash so he suggested to the vendor to call him to organize a pick up. He thought there needed to be that last step if containers are recyclable to get them to a recycling bin.

Chair Ficek asked if there was any reason, in looking at the St. Louis Park Ordinance, to change the effected businesses.

Member Collins thought prepacked foods at a gas station might be something to exempt.

Chair Ficek asked if there should be any other exemptions made. He thought the only real difference in Minneapolis was the flatware and straws and he did not think there was a reason to include those in the exemptions.

Member Hodder thought all the listed exemptions are reasonable.

Ms. Bakken thought a business could also offer straws on demand. She explained she saw a business that had a dispenser for straws where the customer could take one if they wanted one, which was a good implementation.

Chair Ficek reviewed the acceptable packaging and did not think there was much difference between the ordinances.

The Commission agreed.

Chair Ficek reviewed banned materials and did not think the differences were great. He also reviewed other requirements.

Ms. Bakken thought banning all colored plastics should be included and an important determination.

Chair Ficek did not think the Commission would have much say in enforcement but the penalties, St. Louis Park does have the \$100 administrative penalty so a business could just budget this into their costs and pay that fee when it comes up. He asked what that meant, would it mean every incident is \$100 penalty.

Ms. Culver explained some of the details staff would want to run by the City Attorney but he believed it could be \$100 penalty with every violation and that would be, generally how that would work, the City probably would not do compliance checks unless working with the health department because the City does not do any licensing of restaurants, at this level for most of these establishments. This would probably be on a complaint basis. It could be cumulative and in excess of that.

Ms. Howey wondered why a nursing home would be exempt. She indicated she works in a nursing home and there are piles of polystyrene and she did not know what the rationale is for that and if it was a finance thing.

Ms. Bakken assumed that it is because those nursing homes and hospitals contract with certain food service companies so there might be a mix of pre-packaged foods they are using and also whatever they are contractually obligated to use for certain dietary restrictions, that would make it a little more burdensome for those locations to try to comply.

Mr. Culver indicated they needed to figure out what is considered take-out. The food is prepared in a kitchen and taken out to the rooms at the nursing homes or hospital rooms so it is still kind of internal. He noted it is still not great to use polystyrene but he thought the intent was to try to keep this from going to people's homes and then being disposed of there.

Motion

Member Collins moved, Member Hodder seconded, to recommend the City Council follow the St. Louis Park Ordinance as a base with 2023 as an education year and 2024 to start enforcement of the Ordinance as well as some type of sliding scale for penalties and banning black plastic as well as tying this to Ramsey County roll out of curbside recycling.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Ms. Bakken made a presentation on Plastic Bag Ordinance.

Mr. Culver indicated this particular item was not driven by the Council. This was not something that the Council suggested talking about. This was something the previous chair of the PWETC, Joe Wozniak, brought up to research. He explained he was not sure if this would be ready to make a recommendation on to the City Council until more research is done. The question he thought was interesting was why Minneapolis exempted food take-out for the plastic bags in particular because that is kind of an interesting exemption. He thought it makes sense that if a City is trying to promote not using plastic bags at all why would the City not go all the way but there may be some reason why. He thought staff should research that a little more and come back with some more information on that.

Chair Ficek was curious about this too because these Cities had a lot more restrictions with the take-out containers than with the plastic bags which he wondered about as well.

Mr. Howey explained he uses his compost bags for a lot of things because these are plant-based resin bags and are strong. He wondered why more people are not using

these alternative type of bags for short term use when they are out there and available.

Chair Ficek thought a lot of that has to do with education and how many people know about it. He thought expense may be another part of this.

Chair Ficek indicated paper is better than plastic and if that is true, is there a way to encourage that as the default of choice rather than plastic. He did not know how that would come into an ordinance.

Ms. Bakken thought that was an interesting tactic. She would probably go back to staffing issues to figure how this could logistically be done. The other thing is how popular curbside grocery pickup has become and whenever she has done that she did not think she has ever received paper bags, it has always been plastic and part of that is because of perishable foods they need to keep but she thought that would be an interesting conversation to have with some of the bigger food stores and the Targets to see what they would have to say regarding that.

Councilmember Strahan joined online and explained she has had a lot of complaints recently about the trash on Snelling Avenue, especially around Burger King, KFC and along the back of those restaurants with paper bags so she did have some reservations. She noted she did bring this up before but has not done so recently. She thought in Minneapolis this ordinance has seemed to work very well and is changing the mind thought of many people regarding plastic and paper bags. She thought if the City could find a way to beautify the City in the process and a way to reduce trash. She also wanted to make sure with recyclable and compostable take-out containers the City needed a way to make sure the items are not going into the regular trash.

Chair Ficek indicated he was not sure if he would be ready to move forward at this time with any kind of recommendation. He thought there was more information needed.

Member Hodder explained he would like to see what Eureka is getting in that waste stream and where that stuff goes, as far as what is it and where does it go.

Mr. Culver thought Eureka would be happy to come back to the Commission to discuss these things.

6. Continue Discussion of Commission Scope, Duties, Function and Name

Mr. Culver explained the Commission had a discussion at their July meeting about the possibility of changing the name and scope, as outlined in City Code, for the PWETC. There was some talk of forming an informal subcommittee of PWETC Commission members to propose some new language for the scope of the Commission. He indicated the Commission should formalize and confirm participation in the subcommittee.

7. Items for Next Meeting

Discussion ensued regarding the May PWETC agenda:

- Initial discussion on speed limits for City streets
- Update on Civic Campus Pre-Design Project

8. Adjourn

Motion

Member Cicha moved, Member Collins seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:04 p.m.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.