

CITY OF WAUSAU SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Time and Date: The Sustainability, Energy and Environment Committee met on Wednesday, September 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Wausau City Hall and virtually via WebEx

Members Present: John Kroll (C), Tom Kilian, Ashley Lange, Paul Zouski, Mary Kluz

Members Absent: Paul Kage, Leah Van De Loo

Others Present: Sam Wessel, Brad Lenz, , Liz Brodek, Dan Barth (WebEx), Joel Lewis (WebEx)

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Kroll called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes from previous meetings

M/S Kilian/Lange to approve the May 26th, 2021 meeting minutes including small revisions by Kilian; unanimous

M/S Lange/Zouski to approve the August 8th, 2021 meeting minutes; unanimous

4. Discussion and possible action for Green House Gas Emission Reduction Resolution

Kroll switched agenda items 3 and 4 on the agenda to facilitate public comment from remote meeting participants.

Joel Lewis, 807 Turner Street, encouraged the City to adopt a Climate Action Plan and supports a Green House Gas Resolution, which typically leads to a plan.

Dan Barth mentioned the Renew Wisconsin program which is under review as Senate Bill SB-490 and Assembly Bill AB-527 and could provide funding for solar at 1300 S Cleveland Ave if passed. Barth also supports a Climate Action Plan.

Kroll started discussion by describing approaches SEEC could take: should the resolution stand by itself or be part of a strategic plan? Lange supports tying it to a plan and cited Eau Claire and Menomonie's Climate Action Plans, which contain good "whereas" connections between resolutions and a plan. Eau Claire's resolution is much more thorough, Menomonie's is vague. Kroll said a standalone resolution could be a backup if a climate action plan and/or green house gas resolution don't make it into the City's strategic plan. Kroll asked about process. Lenz said that a resolution would have to go through probably the Economic Development Committee and then council. Wessel mentioned that a report should accompany a resolution, and this is where details can go if the resolution gets too long. Kilian agreed on the process. Lenz said work sessions should take place first to get the resolution drafted, and a recommendation for a climate action plan could be in the resolution.

Kluz joined at 5:19 p.m.

Kroll mentioned that things like target dates, percent reduction by a target date, and data tracking methods should be included in the research, and that SEEC members should look at other cities and sources to find ideas.

3. Discussion and possible recommendation for 1300 S Cleveland Ave (Environmental Justice / Land Use)

Kroll asked what SEEC can and cannot recommend. Kilian said that he hoped to see a letter reflecting SEEC's recommendations but there seems to be some hesitancy. He cited SEEC's duties and mentioned that perhaps more clarity is needed for other committees. Lenz recommends that City staff sticks to zoning/land use for now, and that typically another committee should direct SEEC to make a recommendation before working on one. Kilian asked if SEEC could draft a letter without staff. Lenz said staff can help get it into the meeting packet, but it could be seen as a conflict of interest if staff is perceived to be taking a stance on the issue. Kilian proposed that SEEC draft an advisory letter and would like to include a statement recommending against burning biomass based on neighborhood feedback. Lange would like to include what the community does and does not want to see on the site.

Kroll recommended compiling a list of concerns and ideas from past discussions and then bringing it to SEEC for review. Lenz said that once that list is finalized, staff can help SEEC get the list through the process. Kilian referred to the last council meeting involving DPW's feasibility study for 1300 S Cleveland Ave and that funding to study the site was pulled because of concern over unknown Phase 2 test results. Lenz pointed out that this meeting packet has links to the Committee of the Whole meeting and Environmental Justice Resolution that is on its way to council. Kroll directed SEEC members to bring a list of recommendations for next month's discussion. Staff is able to put all the lists together in the packet. Kluz asked if rationale/narratives should also be included with the recommendations, and SEEC members agreed. Brodek asked if input has already been generated or if it is to be conducted. Zouski said it would reference past meetings and Lange said it would include past feedback from Kilian's constituents.

5. Discussion on SEEC involvement with the City's strategic plan

Lenz had anticipated more information about the strategic plan when including this in the agenda but there isn't much to update SEEC about at this time. The greenhouse gas resolution would be a good project to include in that plan. Kroll asked about the strategic plan's public input and timeline. Brodek said there would be input. Lenz is unsure of the latest project timeline but ideally it will be complete before next budget. Kroll asked if there were any thoughts on items for the strategic plan. Kluz found out that years ago, Wausau declared itself an eco-municipality, but this needs to be reviewed and updated to see what that means today. What has changed since then? Lenz thinks it was around 2010 when that was adopted. Kilian said that perhaps a climate resolution can inform the strategic plan. Kluz thinks it was about carbon pricing back then. Kroll said that modifying the TIF application is a good idea. Lange said that UW-Stevens Point has a resource toolkit for local governments in Central Wisconsin that are sustainable communities, and will send the link out (Center for Land Use Education).

6. Discussion on possible City Newsletter content

Kluz was pleased with no-mow May and is wondering if SEEC could sponsor something in the newsletter that shows what impact a community can have. It would be good to also have pieces that educate the public on why greenhouse gasses are an important topic. Kluz isn't sure who should write it but SEEC can check the UWSP toolkit for ideas. Kroll would like to see a way for people to give SEEC feedback on things like a greenhouse gas resolution with a link or contact information. Lenz cautioned to not get too technical but put into layperson terms what the impacts of greenhouse gasses are. Lange said that regarding the climate action plan, the main discussion is how much, by whom, and how to reduce greenhouse gasses, similar to Lewi's public comment, which could be useful for feedback. Kluz asked what procedures typically are for public comment at meetings, and Lenz said it varies by group. Kluz said it would be good to let people suggest SEEC agenda item ideas via public comment. Kroll said that comments can be before agenda, during the agenda item, or at the end when SEEC discusses future agenda items, for flexibility. Kilian affirmed the chair can make the call who speaks when.

7. Future items for consideration and future meeting date

Kroll said that for next time, SEEC will discuss the greenhouse gas resolution, 1300 S Cleveland Ave with the compiled list of notes and recommendations, and the strategic plan. Kluz would like to review the UWSP toolkit next time also and include the City's former resolutions to discuss.

Wessel mentioned Jay Dishnow, who works with WESCO Corporation, is interested in if the City would like an energy audit program that is paid for by funding sources. Kluz asked if he was selling anything, and Wessel said he hasn't gotten many details. Kroll works in the same field so he requested contact information for Dishnow, so he can talk to him before he makes a SEEC appearance. Some corporations don't always do thorough work. Wessel will pass on Dishnow's contact information to Kroll.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 27th, 2021, at 5:00 p.m..

8. Adjourn

M/S Kilian/Lange to adjourn at 5:58 p.m.

DRAFT