

CITY OF WAUSAU SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Time and Date: The Sustainability, Energy and Environment Committee met on Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Wausau City Hall

Members Present: John Kroll (C), Jay Coldwell, Mary Kluz, Carol Lukens

Others Present: Andrew Lynch, Brad Lenz, Scott Coenen, Joel Lewis, Nancy Stencil, Cathy Barth, Dan Barth, Brandt Barth, Zoe Barth

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 5:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Public Comment

Dan Barth: Want to reiterate the importance of this committee because of the Inflation Reduction Act and the Greenhouse Gas Resolution.

Joel Lewis: I echo Dan's comments on the IRA. I think this committee could do some important work.

Cathy Barth: Feels it is urgent to act regarding the climate crisis.

3. Approval of Minutes from previous meetings

Kluz/Coldwell made a motion/second to approve the minutes of July 14, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Presentation by Scott Coenen – Executive Director of Wisconsin Conservative Energy Forum

Scott Coenen presented that his group was trying to bridge the political divide with regards to future energy needs. He was not motivated by climate change or green house gas emissions but rather prices of energy and the need for stability and competition in those markets. He noted that the price of natural gas may double this winter due to geopolitical challenges. Would like to have energy markets deregulated to allow for more competition and vendors providing solar or other forms of energy. Framed the alternative energy options as disruptive technologies.

Committee members noted that an impactful idea was how to message to people that may not initially agree with your view. Coenen suggested that there were some definitive steps communities could take immediately to create a more alternative energy friendly community. Become a Solar-Ready community, focus on local institutions. Kluz noted a good argument is that fossil fuels for energy exports dollars outside of the state where solar would keep it local.

5. Discussion and possible action on draft City of Wausau Strategic Plan

Lynch explained the City strategic plan was derived from the the Comprehensive Plan and represented the priorities or focus areas. Within those focus areas are objectives and performance measures. Lynch noted that in 'Innovative Public Services' objective 4 mentions environmental sustainability and one of the measures was to produce a plan.

Also under 'Strong Regional Alliances' the objective is to support and lead the region in eco-friendly efforts. The Strategic Plan is still in draft form but would expect the final version to come before council in 1-2 months. Kroll noted that this plan fit in nicely with the request in the GHG resolution to create a plan.

6. Discuss possible resolution and presentation on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Kluz and Kroll discussed taking a different approach to the resolution given the ideas presented by the guest speaker. Kroll noted that the opportunity to bring this to Council would be the second September meeting. After discussing with Sid from Aspirus, Kroll suggested some changes to the wording of the resolution. This included removing buzz words or changing the focus away from GHG. Lenz suggested that doing a plan to establish a baseline should be non-controversial.

7. Updates and information

- Inflation Reduction Act
 - In the packet is a summary of the climate and energy portion of the Inflation Reduction Act. Lynch explained that this is a large bill with many different aspects that will take time to filter down to the local level. It is unknown at this time what programs will be available for municipalities to utilize but there are clear incentives for individuals regarding energy efficiency upgrades and electric vehicles. More information as it is available.
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program
 - Still waiting on Notice of Funding Opportunity. Hopefully that will clarify funding options beyond what is currently known. The committee is interested in this grant funding a Sustainability Plan for the City.

8. Next meeting date

The committee decided on September 22, 2022 at 5 p.m. for the next meeting.

9. Adjourn

Motion/Second by Coldwell/Lukens. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.