

MINUTES

October 5, 2023

Members Present: John Kroll, Mary Kluz, Jesse Kearns, Carol Lukens, Jay Coldwell, Jean Abreu

Others Present: Tom Kilian, Andrew Lynch

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

Meeting started at 5:00pm

2. Public Comment

N/A

3. Approve minutes of September 7, 2023 meeting

Motion/second by Lukens/Kluz to approve minutes as amended. Passed unanimously.

4. Updates: GHG Baseline, Slow Mow information, WLGCC update

Lynch provided updates. There was no additional data gathered for the GHG baseline. Still waiting on some fleet info from Metroride and will have to re-request everything in January which will allow for a 2 year look at energy use and emissions. There are calculators from the EPA that will convert fuel and energy to carbon emissions. Kearns noted that it would be valuable to eventually look at the COVID years as a marker for improvement.

Article provided in the packet about the Now Mow movement and the next steps including Slow Mow. Good information as the committee considers options for 2024.

Lynch virtually attended the recent monthly meeting of WLGCC. There will be a resource page on the website that outlines various grants to apply for and how they can be used. This will be very helpful. There was also a good conversation about integrating EV charging infrastructure into building design and parking lot repaving. This may be something Wausau could do in the future.

Coldwell noted he is attending the Midwest Climate Resilience Conference in Duluth and will report back on what he learns. The demonstration gardens program is Oct 9 and the UW Extension will look to expand the program through the winter and get it ready for 2024 sessions.

5. Discussion and Possible Action: Environmental Justice resolution

Kroll recapped that two years ago this resolution was passed by City Council. This committee was in the preliminary discussions of the resolution. Kilian is encouraged by the positive discussions previously. He noted the large amount of data available on EJ Screen that could be used to fulfill the requirements of the resolution. He felt the limited English, poverty, and other demographics were immediately useful and those were available at the almost neighborhood level to help public participation. This local data can also be compared to national and state levels. He recommends comparing data from local to state and recognized

that some data would have levels that need to be explained. The DNR is using Wausau's southwest side and an area in Madison to use as a test for their state wide resolution. He recommended including maps in the alders mailboxes that show various indicators. The EPA also has a Model Plan for Public Participation that has EJ recommendations for local government. Kroll noted that the Strategic Plan has an item for communication that could include EJ initiatives. Lynch noted that this model could be used to make sure the various processes used now are fulfilling best practices. Kluz asked how the EJ process is triggered. Lynch explained that the City process could be examined for best practices to make sure information is accessible. Also to make sure that resources are distributed equitably. Lukens noted that the EJ Screen could be used to decide which areas are in need of additional resources. Kearns asked how information is distributed and who would be in charge of making sure this is done. Lynch did not have an answer on which person is or could be responsible. Kluz asked about the current City processes and that to her understanding, EJ needs would be on top of current requirements. Lynch noted that the recent public meetings regarding the Thomas St properties earlier this year. The meeting was noticed with flyers on the doors, translators were available in multiple languages, refreshments and child care were available and a follow up meeting is in the near future. Lukens sees the role of this committee to track the EJ efforts of the City government. Kearns noted that a good place to start is with the EJ Screen and presenting information to Council. Kroll spoke to the need for cohesive communications and a sustainability manager which could be the same position that this committee could prioritize. He also spoke to the need for orientation for new alders every 2 years regarding the EJ data. Lynch asked that the committee members dig through the EJ Screen information for the next meeting and decide which 10 or more metrics to include for the alder update.

6. Discussion and Possible Action: Sustainability Items for the City website

Kroll examined Eau Claire, Madison, Milwaukee, and LaCrosse websites for sustainability items. He enjoyed the listing of initiatives, plans, and touched on areas such as energy and transportation. He suggested putting the work of the Committee on the website so citizens have a method to reach out and stay informed. Kearns noted that recognition is important and the reward program or other stories should be included. Also local producers of food even if they are outside the City limits. Kluz noted that the Farmers Markets and garden programs could be highlighted and listed as a resource for people. Lynch noted common items in the packet material. Kroll agreed that that list is a good start. Kluz suggested asking the WLGCC for tactics on how to get information to the residents. There could be a redirect to specific websites that help people determine what they qualify for. Lukens suggested using the newsletter to inform people about the website. Kroll wants to include a link for the GHG resolution.

7. Discussion: Chair Kroll presentation to Stevens Point Council

Chair Kroll will hold this item until the next meeting. Stevens Point is looking to start a similar committee and asking Kroll for advice.

8. Next meeting date: November 2

9. Adjourn

Motion/Second by Kluz/Kearns. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:25pm