

MINUTES

January 11, 2024

Members Present: John Kroll, Jay Coldwell, Jean Abreu, Carol Lukens

Others Present: Andrew Lynch, Brad Lenz, Nancy Stencil

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 December 7, 2023 meeting

Motion/second by Kluz/Abreu to approve minutes with change noting that Kluz was not present. Passed unanimously.

4. Updates: GHG Baseline, WLGCC, GTLC

Staff is still waiting on 2023 energy data from WPS to continue working on the GHG baseline. Staff is waiting for more information on the DOE voucher to use on technical assistance on best steps for GHG reduction. Abreu asked what steps could be done now so the committee is not waiting to act. Lukens noted that some departments, like Streets, are suggesting equipment that is more GHG friendly. Lenz suggested getting buy-in from department heads. Lenz recently submitted the GTLC scoresheet to the DNR. This comprised of data pulled from multiple sources in multiple departments. It is anticipated this will continue every year to track progress. Lynch provided an email summary of the WLGCC activities for 2023 which included advocacy, organizing testimony at the Public Service Commission and Assembly, and hiring an executive director.

5. Discussion and Possible Action: 'No Mow May' alternative program selection

Lynch recapped that the discussion of the committee had steered towards not doing the No Mow May program this year and to find a better initiative. Due to timing of elections in April, Lynch asked that the committee decide in either January or February so there would be time to create and promote the initiative before May/summer. Lukens noted that economics of this initiative is important as mowing less and watering less is a cost savings to the residents. Kluz felt the education of what to plant and also where to get it was important. Lynch reminded that the timeline was important for making a decision. February would be ideal due to needing time to develop materials, the elections, and launching the program in May. Coldwell suggested providing alternatives to grass, like clover. Abreu asked if there were funds available to provide seeds or plants. Staff was not aware of any. Lynch suggested that the group needs to decide a slogan, and then a few points to emphasize. This could be refined in the future as needed. Kluz suggested

finding other groups to help educate residents. Lukens suggested a demonstration lawn or garden section at City Hall. Kroll suggested a different slogan for each season. No Mow May, Slow Mow Summer, Leave the Leaves, etc.

6. Discussion: Draft website review

Lynch showed the committee the draft version of the Sustainability section on the City website. It was not yet complete but did highlight the main areas the committee had discussed previously: City Info which contains the GHG baseline info and resolution, as well as Awards; Resources for Residents which contains info on local food, events and IRA funding opportunities; Get Involved which has information about the committee and contact information. Lynch did express frustration with the writing of the pages but will have more time going ahead. Kluz asked about adding a local food directory to add. She will send along the link and Lynch will take a look at it.

7. Discussion: Supporting Local Food Systems

Coldwell discussed data that warns of a more rapidly changing climate than expected. Areas that could not support themselves with local food would be especially vulnerable. He feels that Central Wisconsin should pay attention to this. He talked with Kat Becker about ideas on creating a local food system. Suggestions included a central processing facility for farmers that supply to the metro area and a year-round farmers market. He has talked with a few people and discussed a wide range of ideas. Felt there was a lot of ideas and optimism around this topic. Coldwell suggested creating a task force on local food. Lenz noted that the Council and/or Mayor would create the task force. Most recent examples are the Affordable Housing and Solar Array groups. Kluz suggested that this committee explore the need for a task force and make a recommendation to Council. She knows there is a lot of frustration around the farmers market and felt there could be improvements for that service. Kroll asked Coldwell to pick two items to focus on, Coldwell rejected that notion and provided his two points of putting someone in charge of the local food structure and also having local communities become active in protecting their watershed and local food options.

7. Discussion: UniverCity Year Program ByBlock report

This item was tabled to the next meeting due to time constraints.

8. Next meeting date: February 1

Committee decided to have the next meeting on Feb 1.

9. Adjourn

Motion/Second by Lukens/Kluz. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:17 pm