

MINUTES

August 8, 2024

Members Present: Jay Coldwell, Jean Abreu, Mary Kluz, Jesse Kearns, Carol Lukens, Christine Daniels

Others Present: Andrew Lynch, Dan Barth, Cathy Barth, Andrew Waupekenay, Brittany Reimer

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 5:00 pm

2. Public Comment

Dan Barth spoke in favor of the solar array project and the GHG resolution.

Cathy Barth spoke about the need to move quickly to avoid further climate disaster. There were only a few years before too much damage was done.

Brittanie Reimer knows the solar project is ready and there are many credits available. She is willing to provide information and help.

Andrew Waupekenay: Solar array is a good idea.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the July 11 Meeting

Coldwell/Kearns motion/second to approve. All vote in favor.

4. Discussion and Possible Action: Responding to Citizen Requests for Information

Lynch spoke about requests for information or action that have come to the committee and the need for some discussion and education about this would be necessary. Lynch discussed how to respond to requests to the committee or for information. He suggested talking with staff and the chair to help find the appropriate committee or person to respond. If there was a question about water, it might be more appropriate at the Waterworks Commission or Infrastructure and Facilities Committee. Kearns reiterated that this committee is advisory and can recommend but does not have regulatory powers.

5. Discussion and Possible Action: Sustainability Manager position description

Lynch provided in the packet three different manager positions from other communities. Daniels asked about the process. This committee would decide what job functions are important, that would be taken to the HR department and eventually the HR committee for discussion. Kearns suggested the idea of using a graduate student from UWSP to lower the cost of the entry for a position. Lynch suggested that given the cross departmental nature of this position it may be best to have a full employee in order to speak with authority to directors and peers. Kluz suggested focusing the duties on executing the GHG resolution and future Climate Action Plan, and Kearns noted this person could be the advocate for the solar array. Committee asked staff for a more refined description to consider at the next meeting.

6. Discussion and Possible Action: Committee Report to Council

Lynch showed the report that was drafted for the Council. The provided charts showed energy use of two buildings and street lights to illustrate the impact of the switch to LED lights and the need for a deeper look at the information. Committee suggested adding more of the sustainability awards and note the challenge of tracking the solar array progress and that a sustainability manager could coordinate that information. Also changing the last section to Challenges and Opportunities.

7. Discussion and Possible Action: Committee Endorsement of Waterworks Solar Array

This item was moved up to item #4. Coldwell provides a recap of the Solar Array Task Force, history, and process going forward. City Council needs to approve borrowing money to build the array. There is currently an ARPA application going before Council to provide extra funding that will decrease the payback period. Staff has drafted an endorsement of the project for the committee as it helps fulfill the goals of the GHG resolution. Lynch noted that even if the current ARPA application fails at Council that does not mean the project is dead but this is a good opportunity to discuss the project and the impact. Kearns suggested adding clarifying language about stabilizing the cost of Waterworks operations.

Daniels/Abreu motion/second To approve the endorsement as presented with suggested changes. Approved unanimously.

8. Update: FOCUS On Energy – HOMES (Home Efficiency Rebates) website

Lynch noted that the HOMES site is the first of it's kind in the nation.

9. Next meeting date: September 5

10. Adjourn

Motion/Second by Kearns/Abreu. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:50 pm