



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Meeting Minutes - Final Environmental Quality Commission

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

7:00 PM

GoToMeeting

Roll Call

Also Present: Beth Kallestad - Program Coordinator, Lucy Menssen and Nick Boehning - Youth Board Members, Cindy Stock - Recording Secretary.

Present: 7 - Janet Petri, Mika Turner, Bruce Anderson, Daniel Jones, Evan Pak, Mateo Trujillo and Michael Zenner

I. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM.

Chair Anderson moved to approve the Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Petri, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to approve the February 17, 2021 Agenda. The motion carried by the following votes below.

Chair Anderson moved to have a standard meeting time of 7:00-9:00 PM versus 90 minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Jones to approve, seconded by Commissioner Pak. The motion carried by the following votes below:

Yes: 7 - Board Member Petri, Board Member Turner, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jones, Board Member Pak, Board Member Trujillo and Board Member Zenner

1. [21-036](#)

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome and introduction of all 2021 EQC members, each sharing background information about themselves and their "why" interest in being on the EQC Board.

Chair Anderson stated an EQC Vice Chair will be selected at the February 17, 2021 Meeting.

Beth Kallestad shared that one goal this year of the City Administrator, Ben Martig, is to get the advisory boards and commissions to have a more standardized set of by-laws. This is the current idea, it may change.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chair Anderson moved to approve the amended December 16, 2020 Minutes to include in Roll Call Commissioner Kim Smith who was not previously listed as present. Commissioner Petri made a motion to approve the amended Minutes to show the corrected attendance with Kim Smith, seconded by Commissioner Pak. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Board Member Petri, Board Member Turner, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jones, Board Member Pak, Board Member Trujillo and Board Member Zenner

2. [21-037](#) December 16, 2020 EQC Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [EQC MeetingMinutes December 16 2020](#)

III. Unfinished/Old Business

Beth Kallestad shared background information on the IRP Local Government Coalition letter, and the Better Building's State Legislation.

3. [21-038](#) State level climate action items to support

Attachments: [1 - MN Local Government IRP Engagement Coalition summary 121620](#)
[2 - MN Local Government Coalition IRP Letter Final Draft](#)
[3 - BetterBuildings 2-Pager 100820](#)
[4 - Joint Letter to the legislature Jan 2021 DRAFT](#)

Beth Kallestad shared information regarding the MN Local Government Coalition IRP letter. At the December 16, 2020 EQC Meeting, a presentation was given on Xcel Energy's Integrated Resource Plan process, and also a short presentation was given to City Council the week of January 11th.

Xcel Energy is putting forward a proposal of how they are going to do their generation mix over the next 14 years. There is a coalition of 14 cities that have come together and drafted a shared letter both supporting aspects of this and asking Xcel to go a little further in some areas.

Is EQC willing to ask City Council for a resolution of support to sign on to this IRP letter? EQC will not meet a lot of the Climate Action Plan goals without Xcel meeting the goals that they are setting out, so EQC needs to help encourage Xcel to do that.

Commissioner Trujillo posed a question to the board of, have any of you had any conversations with Xcel about their claims that they need to make modifications to the distribution lines or to involve transformers as you get an initial increase in distributed energy resources in the city? He has done a lot comparative studies comparing different IRP's throughout the US to see what sort of tactics utilities use in order to try to strong arm cities and customers potentially into doing and conducting business the way they want.

Discussion around whether Xcel may be potentially trying to stall or stunt the growth of independently owned or operated distributed energy solar roof top generators in the city/Xcel claiming the need to make massive or expensive modifications to the grid. Have there been any sort of conversations with Xcel or has there been any kind of push back or to see whether this is something Xcel is currently trying to do with the City? Chair Anderson and Commissioner Turner shared their experiences with solar panels/multiple occurrences with an approximate figure of \$8,000.

EQC willing to recommend to City Council to sign local coalition letter. Cities need to sign on by March 15, 2021.

Chair Anderson motioned support for this MN Local Government Coalition letter recommending that the City Council signs. A motion was made by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Pak.

Commissioner Trujillo motioned to recommend amending this resolution and holding off on voting until the next February meeting pending questions regarding the IRP and relation to Distributed Energy Resource (DER) issues. He requested the item to be tabled until the February meeting so questions could be explored further. Commissioner Turner seconded this motion.

Commissioner Turner tabled resolution of signing coalition letter until February 17, 2021 meeting.

BETTER BUILDING LEGISLATION

More time sensitive - sign on by February 11, 2021.

Building energy use is the biggest generator of greenhouse gas emissions in Northfield or at least in our boundaries, and it's a huge one for the State. Currently the State building code and the energy code within that dictate building energy usage limitations and ways we can build. City's are more restrictive than the State building code.

On February 4, 2020 the Northfield City Council adopted a resolution supporting state legislative action which would allow municipalities to enact more restrictive codes if they so chose. This legislation was not adopted by the 2020 legislature. Departments of Labor and Commerce have researched and developed reports and recommendations working with builders and are recommending more of a state-wide approach.

As the 2021 legislative session get underway, cities are asked to support this soon-to-be drafted legislation by signing on to a letter of support. Change specifics of language of bill but move ahead to get this much through/such an advantage to have this happen for bigger buildings.

EQC asking City Council to support the concept of a stronger energy code. Presentation was given to City Council also the week of February 11th.

Commissioner Pak motioned that the Northfield City Council adopt a resolution supporting this coalition letter to the State legislature regarding enhancements to the Building Energy Code and become a signer of the letter, Commissioner Turner seconded.

Yes: 7 - Board Member Petri, Board Member Turner, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jones, Board Member Pak, Board Member Trujillo and Board Member Zenner

4. [21-039](#) Climate Action Plan Updates

Attachments: [1 - 3 year implementation and targets](#)
[2 - Climate Action Plan Accomplishments 2020](#)
[CAP Work Group updates _Oct 2020](#)

EQC reviewed the 3-year targets from the Climate Action Plan and discussed work groups.

To help provide assistance with Climate Action Plan implementation, accountability and oversight, previously the EQC assigned members to connect with community/city staff working on various topic area aspects of the CAP - energy, transportation, land use/urban forest, materials and waste, food and water. The EQC reviewed these items to help bring new members up to speed and to inform work for 2021. In 2020, one EQC

member of each group acted as liaison to community groups working on each of the sub areas. EQC will take the same approach in 2021.

Climate Action Plans 2 Big Goals: (2021 starting 2nd year of implementing this plan)

- 1. 100% carbon free electricity by 2030 for entire community
- 2. 100% carbon free by 2040

EQC commissioners chose/assigned groups:

- Energy – Zenner and Trujillo
- Transportation - Anderson
- Urban Forest/Land Use – Jones
- Materials & Waste - Pak
- Food – Petri
- Water - Turner

IV. New Business Items

- 5. [21-040](#) EQC Calendar for 2021

Attachments: [1 - EQC Work Plan 2021](#)

Discussed 2021 EQC calendar - certain items that need to happen at couple points in the year, some are more time sensitive. Other items occur as time allows/workload balance.

EQC needs to start discussions regarding the topic of climate justice and equity.

V. Reports and Discussion Items

Discussion regarding previous EQC Board Member Brian Novak, if he will be the Planning Commission Liaison for EQC. Community Development Department to decide if this position will continue.

a) Commissioner Comments and Reports

- 6. [21-041](#) Staff Update

VI. Adjournment

Chair Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 PM. A motion was made by Commissioner Petri, seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion carried by the following votes:

- Yes:** 7 - Board Member Petri, Board Member Turner, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jones, Board Member Pak, Board Member Trujillo and Board Member Zenner