



City of Northfield

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

Meeting Minutes - Final Environmental Quality Commission

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

7:00 PM

City Hall 2nd Floor Training Room

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Zenner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and took Roll Call.

Also Present: Youth Representative, Lucy Menssen; City of Northfield Program Coordinator, Beth Kallestad; Ecolibrium3 AmeriCorps VISTA-Sustainability Associate, Stephanie Bramwell; Recording Secretary, Cindy Stock; Northfield High School Environmental Club member, Calvin Weis; Carleton College Professor, Kim Smith; Carleton College Student, Zak Sather.

Present: 5 - Commissioner Janet Petri, Commissioner Mika Turner, Commissioner Daniel Jones, Commissioner Evan Pak and Commissioner Michael Zenner

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bruce Anderson

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Pak, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to approve the Meeting Agenda for October 20, 2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Pak, seconded by Commissioner Petri, to approve the September 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner

1. [21-576](#) September 15, 2021 EQC Meeting Minutes.

Attachments: [9-15-21 Minutes](#)

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

V. PRESENTATION

2. [21-577](#) Presentation on Invasive Plant Management.

Attachments: [Invasive Plant Management_Carleton Class Project](#)

Carleton College Professor Kim Smith and Student Zak Sather shared with EQC an Invasive Plant Management presentation, a 20-year vision for developing a program to manage invasive plants to protect the natural land in Northfield. This research was developed by students: Zak Sather, Alli Palmbach, Reed Ebbinghaus, Sarah Shapiro and Chloe Truebenbach. The City doesn't currently have many resources or policies dedicated to invasive plant management, nor within the Working Groups of the Climate Action Plan. Kim Smith would like to see movement towards developing a city level program.

City of Northfield's approach has been reactive not proactive. It does not have a formal program to control these plants which is a problem because Northfield has a lot of high quality natural lands. Research, grant opportunities and policy approaches do exist for the City to draw upon.

There are successful initiatives nearby:

Cannon Valley Noxious Weed Collaborative Group (Northfield Twp, Bridgewater, Greenvale & Waterford)

Statewide Invasive Species Program (focuses primarily on aquatic)

MN Invasive Species Advisory Council (partnership between state agencies)

Midwest Invasive Plant Network (database in controlling invasive plants)

Early Detection and Distribution Map System (EDD Maps).

Timeline

Years 1-3: Partnerships

Years 3-5: Prioritize plants & areas

Years 5-10: Public engagement

Years 10-20: Proactive re-vegetation, monitoring, EBIPM (use Ecologically Based Invasive Plant Management to implement policies and make zoning decisions)

Proactive Policies / Grants

Huron Pines - located in Michigan

US Forest Service

EPA

Commissioner Jones can share mapping of wild parsnip within City of Northfield (mapping he completed June 2020)/part of grant with city and townships. He also will share the Organic Pest Management Policy which was approved in 2007 by the City of Northfield.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

3. [21-578](#) Draft Sustainable Building Policy.

During the month of September, Beth Kallestad and Katie Jones, from the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE), presented the concepts of the draft sustainable building policy to a stakeholder group of architects, developers and builders, the Planning Commission, Environmental Quality Commission, Housing & Redevelopment Authority and the Economic Development Authority. A public meeting was held at City Hall on October 7. They are now working to take input received and draft the proposal in policy form to share with City Council for approval. If a version is ready prior to the EQC meeting on October 20, it will be sent to EQC members as a supplemental document or provided at the meeting itself.

Summary of meeting input:

Planning Commission - overall generally supportive. Some thought maybe the NGR requirement add-on could be stronger for renewable's, and some interest in incorporating Passive House concept.

Housing & Redevelopment Authority - questions around St. Louis Park and St. Paul and how they are implementing things. Concerns about low income affordable housing and how this could effect that. How the efficient building collaborative piece is working.

Developers - had concerns about increased cost and complexity. Does City have authority to actually do this? Questions about LEED - high enough standard - too little/much? Interested in an educational program for builders and developers to help understand how to make this work.

Staff recommendation is going to be not to add Passive House to the list right now. It does a great job around energy and/or air quality, but it misses a lot of the other sustainability pieces.

- November 2 presentation to City Council - asking for feedback re: LEED and Park Smart - set a minimum*
- November 16 policy to City Council*

4. [21-579](#) Carbon Reduction Fund Update.

Attachments: [1- Carbon Reduction Fund Policy_090721](#)
[2 - Nfld Climate Champions_for Businesses_100721_DRAFT](#)
[3 - ClimateChampionsSLP EXAMPLE](#)
[4 - Northfield Residential EE rebates](#)
[5 - Residential Energy Efficiency Rebate Program](#)
[6 - Carbon Reduction Fund 2022](#)

The City of Northfield has created a fund, called the Carbon Reduction Fund (CRF), from a portion of the income (up to \$100,000/year) from Xcel Energy Franchise Fees, to be used for expenses related to implementing the Climate Action Plan. The past few years the City has also budgeted \$20,000 per year for CAP implementation through the Administration Department budget. This funding will now be included in the CRF budget. Staff anticipate being able to apply for some funds in November 2021 from the McKnight Foundation to offset consultant expenses for some projects. It is uncertain at this time if that grant will be funded. Franchise fee income has been coming in over 2021 and staff have been developing some programming to begin in 2022. The Northfield City Council adopted a policy to guide staff on use of the funds and programming on September 7, 2021 (included in Meeting Agenda Packet).

Program expenses for 2022:

- Supplies*
- Other Professional Services*
- Programs and Public Services*
- Media Communications*
- Tree Maintenance*

This proposal is tentatively scheduled to be shared with City Council on November 9, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pak, seconded by Commissioner Jones, in support of all the Carbon Reduction programs. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner

5. [21-580](#) Climate Action Plan (CAP) Work Group Updates.

Attachments: [1 - WaterRebateProgram](#)

EQC members shared updates on community efforts around CAP Work Group areas.

Water Group - Commissioner Turner:

Next month will discuss Water Rebate Program.

Water group would like to be involved in the educational aspects (pieces/artwork) of the Riverfront Enhancement Plan. What is the status of the plan? Kallestad advised the first 2 items on the overall timeline of this plan is Bridge Square and Ames Park concept plans. Do not know if the City is running plan through Park Board.

Energy Group - Commissioner Zenner:

Xcel IDP Workshop was disappointing as far as moving forward with DER integration. Commissioner Zenner got the sense that it is business as usual for Xcel Energy. They recognized that there is an issue with interconnect for DER lengthy delays and costs associated with it but offered no solutions.

- 1) Static vs Active interconnection control still a long way from Active control*
- 2) APT (Advanced Planning Tool) is LoadSeer program still models just static load not dynamic*
- 3) NWA (non-wire alternative) only focused on short term duration peak load shaving (not Voltage control issues like Northfield has) formulas for cost effectiveness slants toward larger conductors.*
- 4) PUC denied certification for Xcel's proposal for IVVO (integrated Volt Var optimization) control, which would help with voltage issues in Northfield with Smart Inverters running on DER to compensate power factor on Distribution lines.*
- 5) AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) new meters for all customers in the next four years as the old ones are becoming obsolete. New meters will be beneficial in measuring line voltage and power factor and be able to transmit data via cellular network without DI (distributed intelligence u-processor running in meter. Cost \$100/meter. downside DI could become big brother of power usage.*
- 6) Solar Rewards program and possibly net metering will be phased out in 2023 or 2024!*
- 7) Spoke about Federal Government Biden Build Back Better with tax incentives for Renewable energy both \$0.03/kwh PTC and 30% ITC for solar installations.*

(Kallestad) Public Utilities Commission eDockets website - the integrated distribution plan Docket number is 19-666 (to see workshop slides, notes, recording). The official plan is due out November 1, and then there will be a comment period. The EQC could assist with comment letter and ask Council to support. Kallestad will be contacting other cities to see if there is a joint letter.

Non Work Group - Commissioner Petri:

Shared how recently she has made more connections around the county. Volunteered at the Hispanic Heritage and spoke with Roger Steinkamp and Claudia Garcia who are on the Faribault Environmental Commission. We forget there are others working on issues/plans within the county. Faribault does have a Climate Adaptation Plan, "Climate Week", and a Business Micro Grid Plan. In the Northfield News - final actions on the county comprehensive plan, and Public Comment in Faribault on sustainability chapter. Workshop - county collaboration. Good to know what our neighbors are doing. Commissioner Pak shared there is a MN GreenCorp member working with the City of Faribault on a variety of sustainability work, Sarah Shapiro, whom Pak suggested having attend an EQC meeting. May be useful to get insight in understanding how other

communities nearby are working on these sort of things.

Urban Forest/Tree Work Group - Commissioner Jones

The group met October 5th and supplied 2nd draft of forest planting and maintenance plan. Beth Kallestad and Tim Behrendt reviewing. Group meeting again in November. Making progress on plan. Meanwhile, following up with George Kinney (Liberty Park planting).

Beth Kallestad stated still waiting on official contract from DNR for the emerald ash borer, which will be part of larger tree plan.

VII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

VIII. STAFF UPDATES

6. [21-581](#) Staff Update.

See Staff Updates in the Meeting Agenda Packet.

- Electric Vehicle Expo event on October 23, 2021.*
- One Stop Lighting Promotion - 13 businesses and multi-family housing complexes audits.*
- Air Source Heat Pumps on November 9, 2021.*
- City Board and Commission Training Event - October 27, 2021.*
- November EQC meeting, Cole Johnson, Northfield Water Quality Technician, will present stormwater ordinances and such.*
- EQC November-January meetings will be held at City Council Chambers due to City Hall construction.*
- Discussed changing EQC meeting start time to 6:30 p.m.*

At December EQC meeting, Beth Kallestad would like group to discuss work plan and priorities.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Pak, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner