



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Final Environmental Quality Commission

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Also Present: Risi Karim, Assistant to the City Administrator/Staff Liaison; Gabby Gingras, Ecolibrium3 AmeriCorps VISTA-Sustainability Associate; Mayor Rhonda Pownell; Luke Pegram, Non-Voting Youth Representative.

Chair Turner called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m.

Present: 7 - Vice Chair Evan Pak, Commissioner Bruce Anderson, Commissioner Daniel Jones, Commissioner Michael Zenner, Commissioner Janet Petri, Chair Mika Turner and Commissioner Lucy Menssen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Vice Chair Pak, to approve the agenda as is. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Vice Chair Pak, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Zenner, Commissioner Petri, Chair Turner and Commissioner Menssen

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [22-598](#) August 17, 2022 EQC Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to approve the minutes as is. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Zenner, Chair Turner and Commissioner Menssen

Abstained: 2 - Vice Chair Pak and Commissioner Petri

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Matthew Rohn commented on the reference to a full time sustainability coordinator in the Climate Action Plan.

PRESENTATIONS

2. [22-599](#) Presentation of the 2022 Green Step Cities Award

Chris Meyers from Clean Energy Resource Teams offered background on the organization and Minnesota GreenStep Program. She discussed the specifics of each step in the program from 1 to 5. In 2022, the City of Northfield maintained step 4 and step 5. Meyers laid out notable achievements in the City that resulted in those steps.

Meyers presented the award to Mayor Pownell and Commission members.

3. [22-600](#) GeoGrid in Northfield presentation

Christopher Ennis offered a presentation on GeoGrid. Ennis explained how GeoGrid can assist with eliminating Residential Natural Gas and Commercial & Industrial Natural Gas emission.

Ennis detailed Geothermal technology and the specifics of GeoGrid. He laid out the three components to GeoGrid: (1) ground source heat pumps, (2) utility scale pipeline to provide ground source energy and metering, and (3) networked energy management. Ennis discussed specifics and benefits of each of these components.

Ennis answered questions from the Commission.

REGULAR AGENDA

4. [22-601](#) Responding to Climate Change: Personal and Local Options

Commissioner Bruce Anderson discussed his proposal to partner with local organizations to host a community event focused on the energy efficiency and renewable energy options available for Xcel customers.

Assistant to the City Administrator/Staff Liaison Risi Karim and Commissioner Anderson discussed timing for the event, tentatively planning for January 2023.

Commission members discussed the proposal and plans for a working group. Chair Mika Turner, Commissioner Anderson, and Commissioner Janet Petri expressed interest in being part of that group. Members discussed the involvement of community partners and other City board/commission members.

Karim will schedule a meeting with Commissioners Turner, Anderson, and Petri in October.

5. [22-602](#) Northfield News Monthly Series Opinion Piece.

One correction was noted in the article. In paragraph five, sentence two the percentage should be 40% not 60%.

Next month's article will be written by the Northfield High School's Environmental Club, led by Youth Representative Lucy Menssen.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Vice Chair Pak, to approve the Motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Vice Chair Pak, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Zenner, Commissioner Petri, Chair Turner and Commissioner Menssen

6. [22-603](#) EQC Discusses Work Plan Updates and Progress.

Commissioner Daniel Jones discussed a meeting with Chair Mika Turner and will be restructuring the Urban Forest Project. He stated that the project is moving along but slower than anticipated.

Chair Turner discussed the Partners in Energy EV charging event that will be held at the Wilder Center in St. Paul on Monday October 17th.

Commissioner Bruce Anderson discussed the Northfield Alliance EV bus rebate.

Commissioner Michael Zenner discussed the Xcel update on Nokomis. Nokomis will present at the October 18th Council meeting.

Commission members discussed a potential recommendation to Council related to additional staff assistance for sustainability work. Assistant to the City Administrator/Staff Liaison Risi Karim clarified her role and the work she does related to sustainability. Mayor Rhonda Pownell commented on how not all sustainability work is tied to one role, but being done across the City. She also asked that the commission members consider a discussion(s) prior to a formal resolution. Karim will set up a meeting with Commission members and staff and/or Council members.

Chair Mika Turner added that it may be beneficial to not just provide year-end accomplishments to Council, but also point out areas that are not being addressed.

7. [22-604](#)

Staff Update.

Assistant to the City Administrator/Staff Liaison Risi Karim provided updates to EQC members. Upcoming events include:

Recharge Northfield being held October 15, 10:00AM - 1:00PM.

The Annual City-County Climate Action Conference (in-person and virtual) being held October 6.

Karim would like to see the Commission focus on eliminating single use plastic in the City, as tied to the Zero Waste Plan, by targeting this topic in 2023.

Karim also introduced Gabby Gingras as the new Ecolibrium3 AmeriCorps VISTA-Sustainability Associate. Gingras introduced herself and provided some background. Commission members introduced themselves and provided some information on the background and their areas of interest.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND CHAIR

A motion was made by Vice Chair Pak, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Vice Chair Pak, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Zenner, Commissioner Petri, Chair Turner and Commissioner Menssen

ADJOURNMENT