

Minutes
Sustainability & Natural Resources
Committee Meeting
August 8, 2022

Members Present: Mike Flaherty, Ed Wreh (joined 6:02 PM), Kitty Brussock (joined at 6:04 PM), Angela Freedman, Bruce Fischer, Judy Taber (joined at 6:03 PM), Darrel Waldera, David Wilson

Staff Present: Kong Thao, Sayer Larson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Flaherty called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

2. PUBLIC APPEARANCES.

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

- a. Wreh motioned to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2022, Sustainability & Natural Resource Committee meeting. Seconded by Fischer. Motion carried 7-0.

4. BUSINESS.

- a. Discussion regarding potential future community solar installation for property located at or around 3454 Siggelkow Road (Parcel 0710-654-8341-1).

Andrew Bremer, Community & Economic Development Director for the Village of McFarland, presented the committee an update on the progress of potential future community solar installation for the property located at 3454 Siggelkow Road (Parcel 0710-654-8341-1). The energy generated from the site is projected to generate 5 MW, enough to offset the School District's and the Village's electricity use through renewable resources. Waldera inquired more on the negotiation and discussion with Aliant Energy. Bremer clarified by stating the contract would include installation and maintenance of equipment for the next 20 years. Fischer stated this will not include the Waubesa Intermediate Middle School as it falls within the MGE purview while also providing statements in support of the project.

Wilson inquired on the surrounding properties and future development that may impede on the production of energy at this location. Bremer commented on the Eastside Neighborhood Plan update and inspections by Alliant Energy that this would not be a concern, while also considering setback and bulk standards. Fischer pointed out the surrounding properties, such as the Hope Rod & Gun Club located to the south and the existing substation make this an ideal location. Flaherty asked what the next step is. Bremer answered more work to be done on the leasing agreement between the School District, Village and Alliant along with site layouts. Further discussion and action on this would be for a later date and agenda.

b. Discussion regarding the Village's Sustainability Plan

Thao led the discussion with a brief background on activity of the agenda item then directed the discussion toward the feedback received from the committee members. Thao highlighted several of the items, such as the Community-Scale Solar Energy Installation, which was previous agenda item. Thao commented on the items within the Staff marked copy of Sustainability Plan that would require a budget, ongoing items and items already included in upcoming capital improvement plan budgets.

Brussock raised a concern on low heat emission from LED lighting which may be covered by ice and snow during a snowstorm weather event. Other discussion and comments to this concern acknowledged this as a concern but unlikely to be an issue based on the design of streetlights. Brussock added a comment to expand on the importance of leaf control management relating to stormwater runoff as this is a leading cause of phosphorus emission. Flaherty commented on the efficiency of the Village's street sweeper and leaf removal. Sayer commented on the ease of McFarland's Transfer site and how it is always an option for residents of McFarland to drop-off debris or other yard waste.

c. Update regarding tree inventory completed by Wachtel Tree Science

Larson led the discussion on the agenda item for tree inventory. Larson highlights several points brought forward from the tree inventory such as 106 trees identified for removal, 2845 deciduous trees identified for pruning to be scheduled out in a phased approach, and 425 vacant spots identified. Larson provided further clarification on the capacity of what public works staff can do based on tree sizes and what might require a third party for tree removal. Larson comments on the impact of the situation and how it will reduce the Village tree planting program for 2022. Despite the describe setback, Larson clarifies that there are no worries for meeting the standards for Tree City USA.

For the 2023 the budget, the committee asked Larson if there needs to be a request for additional funds to meet the tree canopy program. Larson does not foresee there needing a budget adjustment but will look to speaking with his supervisor and the Village Administrator on further budget details. Wilson commented on the outlook towards future years and budgetary adjustments associated sudden situations. Flaherty and Wreh concurred on the comment and inquired on the budget Larson is currently working with. Larson stated a budget of \$25,000 per year is designated for contracting. This includes planting of trees, tree removal, and outsourcing costs required to complete the work. Waldera suggested a larger budget to offset the challenges derived from the inventory results and how they may overflow into the following years. Larson emphasized the importance on maintaining the existing tree canopy, diversity of trees, age structure and other costs.

Larson's tree inventory data revealed that there is a large concentration of Maple trees, at 28%, which can prove to be a problem with minimal diversity of plantings. Larson showed the example of the Spotted Lanternfly as an invasive species first observed on the east coast. Recent detections show they are in Iowa, a species that impacts Maples. A committee member raised the question on the frequency of the tree inventories and when they should be conducted. Larson stated that the one prior to the current was one was done 8 years ago. Larson recommended a similar approach of 8-10 years.

Larson presented a GIS mapping of the tree inventory most notably located on Village right-of-ways as it relates to pruning activity. Thao asked if there is a phased approach to the pruning process. Larson confirmed there was a phased approach to be incorporated as a planned schedule, and the GIS mapping layer includes that data for every tree inventoried. Larson continued on details related to vacant spots appropriate for tree plantings and the priorities of locations. Fischer commented on an incentivized program for diversity of tree species among private property owners. Wreh concurs with Fischer's comments but addresses the logistics of education. Larson and the committee continue discussion on educational opportunities on trees. Larson commented that to his knowledge, all future tree plantings on streets will be managed by Larson himself.

- d. Update regarding conservancy management plan being completed by RES.

Larson provided the summary on the activity of the Conservancy Management Plan and timeline, emphasizing education throughout this approach. Larson commented on the notable findings for the plan. Freedman asked for more information on the timeline of activities. Larson stated that the next task would be the "Guided Field Tours" in "Late August - Early September" to be completed at this time. Flaherty noted a typo in the last entry that the completion date for the last date be June 20, 2023.

5. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE.

- a. Monday, September 12, 2022, at 6:00 PM

6. ADJOURNMENT.

Wreh motioned to adjourn; Fischer seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.