

Inver Grove Heights Environmental Advisory Commission
8150 Barbara Avenue
Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Environmental Advisory Commission of Inver Grove Heights met in City Council Chambers on Thursday, January 26, 2023. Vice Chair Sarah Brass called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Sarah Brass; Commissioners: Nick Ruiz, Ted Trenzeluk, Larry Moehring, Kevin Sethre, Brian Barner

Absent: Nichole Boehmke, Sara Goodman, Todd Kruse (excused)

3. Presentations

A. 2022 Community Development Environmental Initiatives Update

Ally Sutherland, Environmental Specialist, presented an update on 2022 Community Development Department Environmental Initiatives. The PowerPoint presentation reviewed the following topics:

- Programming Guidance
- Dakota County Community Waste Abatement Grant
- Special Collection Events
- Multifamily Recycling Education
- IGH Energy Action Plan, Xcel Energy Partners In Energy
- In-Person Education
- City Environmental E-News
- GreenStep Cities Reporting
- Pine Bend Landfill RNG Project

Commissioner Sethre asked what paper should be shredded. Mrs. Sutherland stated only documents with confidential information should be shredded. All other paper should be recycled in home recycling collections, as paper in its original form is most valuable in the market.

Commissioner Trenzeluk asked what is the most valuable recyclable. Mrs. Sutherland stated she is not aware of the dollar value of each recyclable at this time. However, she noted the County has conducted research with the local material recovery facilities to create a list of what is recyclable locally. This list is referred to as the "designated recyclables list" and is available on the city's website at www.ighmn.gov/recycle. All items on this list have the highest local recycling value due to having a strong local recycling market.

Commissioner Trenzeluk asked if the energy education events have been well attended. Mrs. Sutherland yes and noted she has learned over the past year that joining existing in-person community events has been more successful in reaching a wider audience than hosting standalone in-person and virtual events.

Commissioner Barner asked if the city has partnered on other items with the Inver Hills Community College (IHCC) outside of the LED light bulb initiatives. Mrs. Sutherland stated she

is not aware if other city staff are collaborating with IHCC but knows that the college recently participated in the Dakota County Business Recycling grant.

Commissioner Sethre asked how residents received the free LED bulbs. Mrs. Sutherland noted that the city was eligible to request the LED light bulb kits through Partners In Energy. Residents received these by signing up for the city environmental e-news, or by winning them at community events.

Commissioner Brass asked if the free Home Energy Squad visits are only available to Xcel Energy customers. Mrs. Sutherland noted that any Xcel Energy Gas or Electric customer can sign up for a paid Home Energy Squad visit. The free visit promotion is only available to Xcel Electric customers because Xcel Energy is funding this free opportunity. Dakota Electric customers are not eligible but can still purchase a Home Energy Squad visit to receive energy saving materials. Commissioner Sethre asked how to sign up for the Home Energy Squad visit. Mrs. Sutherland stated residents can sign up on the Xcel Energy website or CEE's website. CEE implements Home Energy Squad visits.

Commissioner Sethre asked what the Grow Solar group-buy opportunity is. Mrs. Sutherland stated Grow Solar's mission is to make solar more affordable. Grow Solar contracts a solar installer then promotes the solar purchasing opportunity to twin cities metro residents. The cost per installation decreases as more residents commit to installing solar through the program.

Commissioner Barner asked if there are any updates on electric vehicle chargers. Mrs. Sutherland stated there are lot of upcoming funding opportunities, and the city is researching all opportunities.

Commissioner Sethre asked about the differences in electric vehicle charging. Mrs. Sutherland stated there are three charging station levels. Level 1 is 120 volts and is a slow charge. On average, it takes 8 hours for a vehicle to fully charge. Level 2 is 240 volts and is a bit faster. On average it takes 4 hours to fully charge. Level 3 is DC fast charging, which provides the fastest charge in about 30 minutes. The equipment costs increase significantly as the charging level increases.

Commissioner Trenzeluk asked when the EAC Work Plan will go to the city council. Mrs. Sutherland noted she will provide a summary of this same presentation to City Council on February 6. She will also review the 2023 EAC Work Plan at that time. If City Council is in favor of the work plan, City Council will review this at a regular meeting for final approval. After that, Mrs. Sutherland will bring the work plan back to the EAC to discuss next steps.

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of Thursday, November 17, 2022, Environmental Advisory Commission Meeting

Motion by Vice Chair Brass to approve the minutes from Thursday, January 26 as submitted. All responded in favor, none opposed.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

5. Regular Agenda

A. Xcel Energy Partners In Energy MOU Phase 2 - 2023 Implementation Extension

Mrs. Sutherland presented the staff report as included in the meeting packet. Mrs. Sutherland requested the Commission consider recommending City Council approval of the draft Xcel Energy Partners In Energy MOU extension included in the packet. Extending the MOU would allow the city to continue receiving direct technical assistance from Xcel Energy Partners In Energy facilitators to accomplish the city's Energy Action Plan goals. This would be no cost to the city. The draft 2023 MOU details how Xcel Energy will support the city in achieving the goals of the EAP. The strategies and support are aligned with the energy related goals included in the draft 2023 EAC Work Plan, including supporting SolSmart participation, electric vehicle readiness, and the business and residential sustainable recognition program. Staff recommends the EAC recommend City Council approval of the attached draft Xcel Energy Partners In Energy MOU Phase 2 - 2023 Implementation Extension.

Commissioner Brass noted she is impressed with what the city has accomplished so far with this partnership.

Commissioner Trenzeluk noted there is no financial obligation to participate in this program and this is solely to formalize the no-cost partnership.

Commissioner Moehring noted the program is a win-win opportunity.

Motion by Vice Chair Brass to recommend City Council approval of the attached draft Xcel Energy Partners In Energy MOU Phase 2 - 2023 Implementation Extension. All Commissioners responded in favor, none opposed.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

6. Public Comment

7. Commissioner and Staff Comments

Commissioner Trenzeluk thanked Mrs. Sutherland for her work on environmental initiatives.

Commissioner Brass commended the police officer who was the first responder to the bald eagle incident in Inver Grove Heights and that she would like to know how Pine Bend Landfill will mitigate this situation from happening in the future. Mrs. Sutherland noted that there will be a related IGH Landfill Overview on the February 6 City Council Work Session agenda and encourages the EAC and those interested in learning about landfill matters to listen to that presentation. Mrs. Sutherland also noted the city is following the bald eagle incident closely and is aware the MPCA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have an active and ongoing investigation on the incident. Commissioner Sethre asked for an update on bald eagles' status. Commissioner Brass responded 13 were injured and as of today 3 did not survive, others have been released. The bald eagles allegedly scavenged on a dead carcass that was euthanized and improperly disposed of.

Commissioner Sethre highlighted the latest Insights residential newsletter, which included articles on smart salting and pet waste.

Commissioner Moerhring highlighted he has heard of different electric vehicle goals, one being 75% of vehicles will be electric by 2035. He stated in order to meet this goal, higher level charging is needed to quickly charge vehicles. Commissioner Sethre agreed.

8. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Barner, seconded by Commissioner Trenzeluk to adjourn at 7:57 p.m.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.