

Inver Grove Heights Environmental Advisory Commission
8150 Barbara Avenue
Thursday, June 22, 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, June 22, 2023. Chair Boehmke called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Sara Goodman, Nick Ruiz, George Fell, Marjorie Savage, Kevin Sethre
Absent: Brian Barner, Ted Trenzeluk (excused); Chair Nichole Boehmke (unexcused), One vacancy

3. Presentations

A. New Commissioner Introductions and Oath of Office

Ally Sutherland swore in Commissioners Marjorie Savage and George Fell.

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of Thursday, May 18, 2023, Environmental Advisory Commission Meeting

The Commission requested to table this item due to number of absent commissioners.

5. Regular Agenda

A. Sustainability Recognition Program

Ally Sutherland, Environmental Specialist, presented the following PowerPoint slides on the Sustainability Recognition Program to the Commission:

2023 EAC Work Plan

- 2023 EAC Work Plan approved by City Council in February 2023.
- EAC city code duties and how they relate to the work plan.
- Creating a sustainability recognition program for residents and businesses was one of the work plan goals.

Research

- List of 12 other local cities who have created similar programs.

Purpose

- Recognize residents and businesses for taking action.
- Share success with others (environmental and/or cost savings).
- Foster sustainability and environmental friendliness as a community norm.

Sustainability

- Variety of applications and definitions
- Balance of "Three E's"

Next Steps

- Thurs, 5/18: Gather initial EAC feedback.
- Thurs, 6/15: Collect all comments from staff and partner organizations.
- Thurs, 6/22: EAC final review and consideration of the program.
- ~July/Aug: City Council review and consideration.

DRAFT Program Parameters

- Program Name: Sustainable IGH
- Eligible Recipients: IGH residents, businesses, and organizations
- Recognition Award Process: Earth Day deadline, June Recognition
- Recognition: Bronze (5), Silver (10), Gold (15)
- Recognition awards: certificate, window poster, digital, city wall, donation from partner/sponsor, recognition (council and online)
- Recognized actions:
 - Energy (renewable energy, energy efficiency, EVs)
 - Landscape (pollinators, natives, invasives, local food, wildlife)
 - Water (conservation, quality, invasives)
 - Waste (organics, recycling, reduction, HHW, litter)

EAC Feedback

- Requested EAC feedback.

Chair Goodman suggested people without space could have the tree planted at a city site in honor of the recipient.

Commissioner Sethre is in favor of the including required actions and requesting quantified results for proof of completion.

Commissioner Ruiz suggested contacting other cities to see how they request proof of completion.

Commissioner Savage suggested updating actions annually to highlight City priorities.

Patty Mikulski, 3397 67th Street E, stated that she likes the yard sign idea and that the signs do last for a long time. Ms. Sutherland said that she has heard the metal parts of the sign wear out easily. The cost of yard signs is high and more than the city's program budget allows for. She posed the idea that eligible participants could purchase their own sign, as a way to go above displaying the low-cost items the city provides. The Commission was in favor of this idea. Commissioner Goodman suggested researching the small metal signs the SWCD provides for rain gardens.

Commissioner Fell feels the program is too broad and that the program should start with institutions. He asked if the Chamber of Commerce has weighed in. Starting with businesses will help educate residents. The city should focus on waste and stormwater topics as the city has multiple landfills and future needs for stormwater treatment. Start small with the commercial institutions then add residents. He asked if the purpose of the program is to collect data on what is being accomplished. Ms. Sutherland stated the program is not intended to be a survey process. It is intended to be a way for both residents and businesses to showcase which sustainability actions they are taking and help foster environmental friendliness as a community norm.

Commissioner Fell gave an example that he would like to see the city pay for resident participation in the water stewards program. Ms. Sutherland stated the purpose of the program is to simply recognize those already taking actions to spread awareness of environmental best practices.

Commissioner Ruiz stated he saw this program as a more global approach to try to encourage as many community members to participate as possible.

Mrs. Sutherland stated that the commission can strike actions items as it would like. She noted the Commission also has suggested providing special recognition to businesses and residents that go above and beyond the standard.

Commissioner Fell asked if recognition will encourage sustainability. Mrs. Sutherland reviewed the program purpose slides.

Commissioner Goodman asked if bringing awareness of sustainability can be added as a purpose. Mrs. Sutherland stated yes. Commissioner Goodman stated she would like to keep the program broad to increase awareness of sustainability. The more places you can spread awareness, the better.

Commissioner Sethre stated he would like some of these actions refined. Mrs. Sutherland stated this would be a time for the Commission to recommend refined actions. She stated the Commission could make a recommendation to refine the actions but she would need more direction. If the Commission wishes, it could be a future commission agenda to refine each action individually. This program should be viewed as the EAC's program.

Commissioner Fell shared a PDF presentation of EV chargers shared with City Council at a previous meeting. He discussed an example of what the city could install at a city park.

Motion by Commissioner Sethre, seconded by Commissioner Ruiz, to recommend City Council approval of the Sustainable IGH recognition program with the ability for the EAC to review and update actions annually. Commissioner Fell abstained from voting.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

B. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)

Ally Sutherland, Environmental Specialist, presented the following PowerPoint slides on the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) to the Commission:

EECBG

- Reviewed EECBG Grant Program

EECBG

- IGH: Non-Competitive Grant of \$76,160.
- No match required
- Apply by Jan 2024
- Spend funds within 2 years

Eligible Project Categories

- Variety of eligible activities
- Reviewed internally to discuss project ideas
- Staff created 3 project ideas for the city to choose from which fall into the 2 red categories

Project Options

1. Lighting Upgrade to LED in city facilities (planned project)
2. EV for City Fleet (new project)
3. EV Charger at VMCC (new project)

Project Option #1: Lighting Upgrade

- LED lighting upgrade in 4 facilities (~\$105,000)
- Project led by Operations and Maintenance Supervisor
- Transition to Sustainable Operations (TSO) Plan developed by McKinstry (2019)
 - 5-year CIP for city facilities
 - Preventative maintenance schedule
 - Optimize building performance, decrease energy use and costs by 5-10%
 - Improve vendor contracts to reduce maintenance costs by 10%

Project Option #1: Lighting Upgrade

- Review project costs
- Replace existing older lighting (fluorescents, incandescent, high pressure sodium) with LEDs
- This is currently a planned expense from the City Facilities Capital Fund (605)

Project Option #1: Benefits & Considerations

- Funds part of approved 5-year CIP
- Increases lighting and building efficiency
- Decreases energy use and costs
- Increases illumination with less wattage usage
- Planned upgrade, will occur with or without funding

Project Option #2: EV for Fleet:

- Replace existing vehicle with an EV (~\$60,000)
- Trend for Government Fleets, Business Fleets, Residential Vehicles, Automakers
- Reasons for change:
 - Low to zero tailpipe emissions
 - Growing EV market
 - Reduces health risks for workers and communities
 - working conditions & safety
 - reducing exposure to noise, chemicals, air pollution
 - Save money over time by reducing fuel and maintenance costs
 - Carbon reduction from utility grid

Table Comparing Vehicle Types

List of ~17 Participating Cities

City Uses for EVs

- Highest utilization. More miles driven = more savings.
- Most common
 - Building Inspections
 - Police Patrol
- Others (less common)
 - Pool vehicle
 - Parks
 - Utilities
 - Engineering Inspections
 - Public transportation

Example Municipal EV Pictures

IGH Fleet - Overview and Considerations

- Fleet vehicles
 - 15 light-duty vehicles
 - 11 police vehicles
 - Heavy duty, plowing
- 10-15 year replacement schedule
 - Vehicle, fuel, maintenance costs are budgeted
- Replacements are staggered annually
- Highest utilization: Police, Building Inspections, Fire
 - Police: Leased
 - Building Inspections & Fire: Large vehicle (F-150 & Ford Expeditions)

EV Market Review

Benefits & Considerations

- Benefits may include (further analysis needed)
 - Reduced GHG emissions
 - Reduced maintenance costs
 - Reduced fuel costs
 - Funds needed replacement
- Many considerations and further discussions needed:
 - Replacement schedule (2024 & 2025)
 - Vehicle size, range, and use needs
 - Leased vs. purchase
 - Adjustments to the replacement schedule
 - Costs (replacement, fuel and maintenance)
 - Replacement timing (vehicle longevity)
 - Standardized vehicle make/model (currently ford)
 - Mechanics training

Project Option #3: Public EV Station

- Install public electric vehicle charger at VMCC (~\$52,000)

- Level 2, Dual-port Charger, VMCC
- Publicly accessible

List of ~35 Participating Cities

PlugShare Maps

VMCC Proposed Location Map

ChargePoint Charger Images

Benefits & Considerations

- Responds to resident concerns for lack of EV charging in IGH and surrounding area
- Most highly utilized city owned facility and parking lot
- Located immediately off of Hwy 52 and Hwy 55
- Centrally located off of 80th St.
- Amenity for VMCC guests
- Collect usage fees
- Ability to complete project (unlikely to complete without grant funding)
- Other considerations:
 - City must fund recurring funding for software maintenance plan (~\$1,500/year)

Commissioner Sethre asked if the City LED project includes outdoor lighting that is dark sky compliant. Mrs. Sutherland stated she believes it's all interior lighting but will confirm with staff.

Commissioner Goodman asked if there is any way to estimate energy and cost savings associated with the LED lighting investment. She would like a way to compare the environmental impacts between projects. Mrs. Sutherland stated she will ask if the Operations and Maintenance Supervisor has this information available for the LED project. She will consider how this can be compared with the other projects.

Commissioner Ruiz asked how the money can be applied to the projects. Mrs. Sutherland stated that she believes the money could in theory be split between projects.

Commissioner Fell asked who makes the decision of which vehicle to replace. Mrs. Sutherland reviewed the city fleet replacement slide.

Commissioner Fell asked if the city still purchases through the state. Mrs. Sutherland stated yes so long as it is the best cost compared to other local vendors.

Commissioner Sethre stated he would like to see electric vehicle range data with cold weather conditions included and stated concerns about battery composition. Mrs. Sutherland stated that she is aware of electric vehicle range reductions due to cold weather however based on her preliminary analysis, city vehicles drive far less on a daily basis than the maximum electric vehicle battery range even when considering a 10-20% reduction in battery efficiency.

Commissioner Ruiz stated he attended the state capital and metropolitan environmental commission event recently and heard from several local communities who have purchased

electric vehicles. He suggested the city request information from those cities on their performance. Commissioner Sethre suggested the city request if they have an ROI as well.

Commissioner Fell asked if the city will research solar panel charging stations. Mrs. Sutherland stated that was not a part of her research yet but she will look into the costs.

Commissioner Ruiz asked why the city is considering installing their own instead of working with a private company who installs them. Mrs. Sutherland stated partnering with a private business is not as common as the companies can limit which vehicles can charge and often have higher fees but she will research this more.

Commissioner Goodman asked what cost increase is to install a Level 3 charger. Mrs. Sutherland stated this is upwards of \$80,000.

Commissioner Goodman asked if the VMCC is fully powered by solar power. Mrs. Sutherland stated although there are solar panels installed on the roof top of the VMCC, the city does not own this panels or the renewable energy credits (RECs) associated with the solar energy. The city purchases energy at a reduced rate from the panel owners which supports solar energy development, but cannot claim the building is powered by renewable energy.

Commissioner Fell asked why isn't the city using host community fees for these types of projects. Mrs. Sutherland stated she is not certain of the use of those funds but she's aware it's used more many other projects.

Commissioner Goodman asked how costs for charging is set and could this be used to offset the maintenance and software costs. Mrs. Sutherland stated she can research revenue structures.

The Commission requested to table this item due to number of absent commissioners and requested additional information from staff.

6. Public Comment

7. Commissioner and Staff Comments

Commissioner Ruiz stated he attend the MN Environmental Commission Conference and found it interesting.

Commissioner Sethre welcomed the new commissioners and thanked the resident for attending.

8. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Ruiz, seconded by Commissioner Goodman to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.