

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
Inver Grove Heights City Hall – Council Chambers
September 27, 2018

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Trenzeluk

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Chair Ted Trenzeluk, Adija Jime, Patricia Todd, Robert Heidenreich, Sarah Brass, Lauren DeGidio, Nichole Boehmke
Commissioners Absent: Joan Gabriel (resigned 9/27/18) and Ken Johnson (excused)
Staff Present: Ally Hillstrom, Environmental Specialist

4. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Heidenreich moved to approve the minutes from May 24, 2018 as submitted, Commissioner Brass seconded the motion. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

5. Applicant Requests

There were no applications to review on the agenda

6. Review of Greenstep Cities Program

Ms. Hillstrom presented about the Minnesota Greenstep Cities Program. Ms. Hillstrom stated the City of Inver Grove Heights joined the Greenstep Cities Program in 2016 through resolution by Council. The program guides energy, sustainability, and quality of life goals for city operation and community. The City has reached Step 2 of the 5-step program by documenting 40 completed actions publicly online.

The MPCA coordinates the Greenstep Cities and develops the program's best management practices with help from program partners and community input. Ms. Hillstrom stated the City is striving to reach Step 3 by June of 2019 by completing the following best practices:

Best Practice #13: Efficient City Fleets

- Right-size/down-size the city fleet with the most fuel-efficient vehicles that are of an optimal size and capacity for their intended functions.
- Phase-in no-idling practices, operational and fuel changes, and equipment changes including electric vehicles, for city or local transit fleets.

Best Practices #15: Sustainable Purchasing

- Adopt a sustainable purchasing policy or administrative guidelines/practices directing that the city purchase at least:
 - EnergyStar certified equipment and appliances and
 - Paper containing at least 30% post-consumer recycled content.

Best Practices #24: Benchmarks & Community Engagement

- Use a committee to lead, coordinate and report to community members on implementation of GreenStep best practices.
- Organize goals/outcome measures from all city plans and report to community members data that show progress toward meeting these goals.

Chair Trenzeluk asked what the role is for the Environmental Commission with the Environmental Specialist.

Ms. Hillstrom stated that the Environmental Commission can help decide. Her vision is for the Environmental Commission and Department Heads to be involved in sustainability planning. The Environmental Commission may also advise the City Council going on sustainability items while also receiving direction from the Council on sustainability work plans. Ms. Hillstrom plans to research how other cities are structuring sustainability committees but asks that the Environmental Commission provides input.

Chair Trenzeluk stated he is open to any of the ideas presented. He stated that the Environmental Commission does not currently meet on a frequent basis and requests that Ms. Hillstrom is creative in engaging and informing the Environmental Commission of these initiatives. Chair Trenzeluk suggests that the Environmental Commission be involved in decisions that require City Council approval such as fleet purchases so the Commission can provide the Council a recommendation.

Ms. Hillstrom added that the Environmental Commission can attend education opportunities through the Greenstep Cities Program as well to keep informed on these topics.

Commissioner Jime commented that he previously was a commissioner for another City that achieved Step 3 of the program. He stated that Step 3 can be achieved with administrative documentation and that Step 4 can require capital expenditure which can be difficult to align with the budget cycle. He asked if we can work to achieve Step 4 certification first and then work backwards. He stated that discussing all 175 actions with staff and a commission can be time-consuming. He suggests that staff decide which best practices are a priority and bring these individual items to the Environmental Commission so they are able to focus on select items.

Commissioner Boehmke asked for clarification if all 175 actions need to be completed.

Ms. Hillstrom responded there are 29 best practice which each have associated actions. She clarified that each step of the program requires specific best practices which is how we have prioritized our participation in the program this far. She stated that we can also consider completing non-required best practices as well. Ms. Hillstrom stated that Step 4 and Step 5 require a different administrative approach to the program. Step 4 requires the City to collect metrics and Step 5 requires the City to improve of those metrics. In some cases, Step 5 may require capital expenditure (purchasing energy efficient LED light bulbs) but not in all cases (changing behavior to shut off computers at night or turn off lights). Ms. Hillstrom agreed with Commissioner Jime that staff should review Step 4 requirements to be informed of our existing metrics and to show our improvements over time.

Ms. Hillstrom continues to state the best practices the City will focus on to achieve Step 3:

Best Practices #25: Green Business Development (Any Two Actions Required)

- Grow new/emerging green businesses and green jobs through targeted assistance and new workforce development.
- Create or participate in a marketing/outreach program to connect businesses with assistance providers, including utilities, who provide personalized energy, waste or sustainability audits and assistance.
- Promote sustainable tourism in your city, and green tourism resources to tourism and hospitality businesses in/around the city.
- Strengthen value-added businesses utilizing local "waste" products and renting products/services.
- Lower the environmental and health risk footprint of a brownfield remediation/redevelopment project.
- Promote green businesses that are recognized under a local, regional or national program.
- Conduct or participate in a buy local campaign for community members and local businesses.

Ms. Hillstrom concluded that the final page of the agenda packet includes a table summary of all 29 best practices, which have been achieved by the City, and which will be focused on in the near future.

Chair Trenzeluk asked what happens once the City achieves Step 5 of the program aside from having implemented the best practices. He asked if grant opportunities are still available for participating cities.

Ms. Hillstrom responded that grant opportunities are available throughout all levels of the program. The City has recently received a grant from Xcel Energy to complete a telematics data collection and analysis for 20 fleet vehicles. The report will review if replacing any of these fleet vehicles to electric vehicles at the end of their life will save the City money and inform how efficient City vehicles currently are.

Commissioner DiGidio asked what vehicles are currently in the fleet.

Ms. Hillstrom responded that the City has about 80 light duty vehicles.

Chair Trenzeluk asked what is the status of the ethanol plant that may locate to the City.

Ms. Hillstrom stated that she has heard of no major updates regarding the business.

Commissioner DiGidio asked if any progress has been made towards best practice 25; benchmarking and community engagement.

Ms. Hillstrom stated that the City is currently working on this item to meet Step 3 requirements.

6. Review of Dakota County Community Funding Grant

Ms. Hillstrom stated she administers the Dakota County Community Funding Solid Waste Grant. This grant funds items such as the annual Clean Up Day, trash and recycling bins, and salary and benefits for implementing administrative grant tasks. The 2018 grant requires the City begin collecting organics at the City Hall building based on the results of a 2017 waste sort.

Commissioner DiGidio asked if residents will be receiving a third waste stream bin to collect organics.

Ms. Hillstrom responded that no hauler in Dakota County currently collect curbside residential organics. She responded that residents have other ways to divert organics such as to enroll in the Dakota County organics drop-off program.

Commissioner Boehmke stated that this is a free program.

Ms. Hillstrom stated a few residents have contacted the city to request an organics dropsite be developed in Inver Grove Heights. Ms. Hillstrom stated that residents are also able to create a backyard compost bin.

Ms. Hillstrom stated that the City will be updating recycling and trash bins at City facilities to meet Dakota County's solid waste best practices. She added that recycling at events, community shredding events, and recycling opportunities at multi unit properties will be of priority in the near future. Ms. Hillstrom stated the 2019 grant application is being submitted soon. She also stated she will be taking the Dakota County Master Recycler/Composter class and that spots are still open.

Chair Trenzuluk asked what the current recycling rate is at in Dakota County.

Ms Hillstrom responded that Dakota County needs to increase their recycling rate by about 25% to meet the state's 75% recycling rate goal.

Commissioner Boehmke asked if Dakota County will review neighboring counties' master plans while they update their Master Plan. Ms. Hillstrom responded that all counties in the metropolitan area need to update their plans every six years and she believes that all counties meet throughout this process.

Commissioner Boehmke commented that she has taken the Master Recycler/Composter class in Hennepin County. She stated that she thought it was extremely beneficial and would encourage anyone to take the Dakota County class. Ms. Hillstrom added that the volunteer help the City receives from the Master Recyclers/Composters is very beneficial.

Commissioner Heidenreich moved to adjourn at 7:43 pm. Commissioner Todd seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.