

City of Decorah
Sustainability Commission
December 2, 2020 – 6:00pm
Special Meeting Minutes

Electronic meeting pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8 – In circumstances where such a meeting is impossible or impractical due to concerns about COVID-19 and social distancing for the safety of commission members and the public.

In support of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation declaring a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency in Iowa, the current COVID-19 situation makes it "impossible and impractical" to meet in one location. Due to this the Decorah City Hall was partially closed to the public for the December 2, 2020 Sustainability Commission special meeting. Seating was limited to ensure distancing. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

Members present included: Ben Grimstad, Molly McNicoll, Ann Mansfield, Jeremy Leitz, and Jim Martin-Schramm. Brent Parker arrived after the meeting started.

Absent: Michelle Barness.

Others present: Council Liaison Emily Neal, Mayor Lorraine Borowski, and City Manager Chad Bird.

There were 17 guests on the Zoom link.

E.3 ACTION: *Establish a Municipal Electric Utility (MEU) task force and commission a MEU Feasibility Study to be completed by fall 2021*

Martin-Schramm opened the meeting by reviewing the intent and actionable steps and process in action item E3.

Mayor Borowski asked about the key goals of the task force and what their main objectives would be. Martin-Schramm reviewed the proposed commission resolution and outlined some of the document's objectives.

McNicoll asked about the definition of "large stakeholders". Martin-Schramm responded that they included large industry and manufacturing in Decorah and Luther College.

McNicoll engaged the commission in discussion about community and stakeholder engagement and how that might work.

Mayor Borowski asked about the names she submitted for task force consideration. Martin-Schramm respond the team is recommending the names presented as best for the task force and did not select those names submitted by the Mayor.

There was general discussion on the slate of names. Grimstad added that several people contacted declined to serve.

There was general discussion on the optimal size of the task force and most believed nine is a good number.

Motion to adopt and recommend resolution as presented, moved by Jim Martin-Schramm and seconded by Brent Parker.

Roll call: unanimous

Michelle Barness – absent

Motion carried.

CO.1 ACTION: *Develop a comprehensive communication plan for the City of Decorah: Evaluate and coordinate social media, website, and app-based communication, and print notifications*

Mansfield and Parker led a conversation about the communications plan. Neal noted she believed the City's website needed improvements and she thought the City's of Facebook was too unorganized and did not give residents a clear path for City communications.

There was concern expressed about the lack of information available from other communities, not many cities had a plan or even an RFP seeking creation of a plan.

Martin-Schramm asked if Bird and Mayor Borowski might be able to tap their networks for more information.

Other business

In other business, Parker updated the commission on his and Leitz's conversations with SSMID and DDBA regarding recycle bins in the Downtown.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm by Grimstad / Leitz.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager

Future meetings

August 19

September 23

October 24

November 18

December 16

Purpose

The purpose of the Sustainability Commission shall be to advise the City Council and recommend action on policies and practices that relate to the sustainable use and management of our collective resources, including both human and environmental, as well as our economic resources. The Sustainability Commission will help to ensure that such resources will be sustained and continue to provide for a high quality of life for present and future generations of Decorah doing so by following the processes outlined in the Decorah Sustainability Plan and updating the plan accordingly every 5 years.