

City of Decorah
Sustainability Commission
December 16, 2020 – 5:00pm
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 16, 2020 Sustainability Commission meeting. Seating was limited to ensure distancing. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

Members present included: Michelle Barness, Ben Grimstad, Molly McNicoll, Ann Mansfield, Jeremy Leitz, and Jim Martin-Schramm.

Absent: Brent Parker

Others present: Council Liaison Emily Neal and Mayor Lorraine Borowski.

There were 2 guests on the Zoom link.

Consider approval of minutes from the November 18, 2020 regular meeting and the December 2, 2020 special meeting

Motion by Grimstad and second by Barness to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020 regular meeting and the December 2, 2020 special meeting

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

2020 year in review

[link to a Google worksheet](#)

Martin-Schramm reviewed the prioritization of 2020 action document and led the commission through a discussion and review of the items on the Plan and action document.

There were updates from Grimstad regarding C-PACE and R-PACE (property assessed clean energy) programs and lobbying the State Legislature to consider new state legislation. The program would allow for energy assessments on property.

Martin-Schramm provided an update on City and Alliant conversations regarding installations in North Alley. Conversations are ongoing.

Details on costs to users and financing are still under discussion.

Borowski and Neal provided a brief review of City Department work on sustainable initiatives and Dept reporting.

Barness reported on conversations regarding transportation and suggested discussion center on ridership.

Leitz discussed the recycling initiatives in the Downtown. He shared conversations he has had with local business-oriented organizations. Actual trash and recycling collections is a challenge.

There was general discussion on economic development issues and concerns. All agreed more conversation is necessary.

Mansfield updated the commission on Communication task discussions. Some examples of communication plans from other communities were received and will be reviewed.

McNicoll and Mansfield updated the commission on social issues, especially housing programs. The subcommittee discussed programs with Northeast Iowa Housing Trust Fund / Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission.

Neal expressed concern regarding promotion and recruitment of board and commission applicants.

Barness reported much conversation on air and water issues. A stormwater ordinance is being developed and presented to the Council's utility committee.

She noted there is interest in revisiting the anti-idling ordinance. She also reported on stormwater issues and programming including rezoning options in floodplain areas.

McNicol concluded discussions regarding floodplain development and asked about restrictions on development.

Discussion of subgroups

- a. Keep the same groups or reorganize in 2021
No report.

Updated and review of work of subgroups

No report.

Discussion about charging stations; locations, types

Martin-Schramm provided an update on City and Alliant conversations regarding installations in North Alley. Conversations are ongoing.

Details on costs to users and financing are still under discussion.

Discussion and possible action on meeting dates through 2021

Martin-Schramm discussed meeting dates and times for 2021. The commission agreed to keep the same meeting dates and times.

Other business

In other business, Martin-Schramm mentioned he would generate a press release about the new MEU task force.

There was general discussion regarding the pending P&Z Commission action on a rezoning application.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26pm by Grimstad / Leitz.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager

2021 meeting dates

Third Wednesday of each month.

January 20, 2021
April 21, 2021
July 21, 2021
October 20, 2021

February 17, 2021
May 19, 2021
August 18, 2021
November 17, 2021

March 17, 2021
June 16, 2021
September 15, 2021
December 15, 2021

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.