

City of Decorah
Sustainability Commission
January 20, 2021 – 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 December 16, 2020 regular 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.

Sustainability Plan Sub-Group Updates and 2021 Prioritization (goals) Discussions

a. Keep the same groups or reorganize in 2021

Martin-Schramm led a review of the work of each of the subgroups.

Mansfield reviewed example communication plans from other cities and noted her team is working on developing a Decorah specific model.

McNicoll updated the commission on housing discussions and noted the CDBG information from UERPC. She indicated she is working with Nathan Thompson on housing programs and education.

Parker reviewed equity training opportunities with city employees.

There was also some discussion about Mayor Borowski's community leaders' conversations.

In the air and water sections, Barness said there is discussion about possible cost share efforts for best practices. She said there has been conversation about AW 7 and where projects may occur, especially outside the levee system. What land is available for the city purchase?

Barness noted it would be ideal to set up a meeting with the Upper Iowa Watershed Management Authority and discuss best practices options.

She noted the team is looking into air quality sensors as part of the AW31 task.

Grimstad and Martin-Schramm reviewed the energy work. Martin-Schramm provided an overview of solar discussions with Alliant.

He also provided an update on local car charging stations discussions with local leaders and Alliant.

Grimstad raised the idea of a PACE (property assessed clean energy) program and noted it is an interesting topic and would be something to look into in the future.

Parker also noted his team continues to work on the recycling program for downtown and is continuing to explore funding and operational options.

Discussion on City staff report; E4 Sustainability Plan

Martin-Schramm received the report and deferred full discussion to another date.

Discussion and presentation on building codes

Bird introduced Greg Swanson as the City's new building official. He and Swanson noted they are hoping to have code introductions to the city council by April.

Swanson said he is recommending the IBC 2015 codes for adoption. This will align with the State of Iowa.

Discussion about charging stations; locations, types

No further report than what was mentioned above.

Discussion and possible action on meeting dates through 2021

Martin-Schramm reviewed the list of meeting dates for 2021.

Other business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:19pm by Barnes / Parker.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager

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.

Exhibit A

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