

City of Decorah
Sustainability Commission
March 17, 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. As a result, the Decorah City Hall was partially closed to the public for the March 17, 2021 Sustainability Commission meeting. Seating was limited to ensure distancing. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

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

Members absent: None

Others present: Council Liaison Emily Neal, Mayor Lorraine Borowski, City Engineer Jeremy Bril, Nathan Thompson (Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Agency)

Agenda Items:

1. Call to Order

- Jim Martin-Schramm called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

2. Consider approval of minutes from the February 17, 2021 regular meeting

- Motion by McNicoll and second by Grimstad to approve the minutes of the Feb 17, 2021 regular meeting.
- Motion approved unanimously.

3. Identify volunteer to take minutes for this and future meetings

- Ann Mansfield volunteered to be the main minute taker
- McNicoll will assist when needed and offered to take minutes for this (March) meeting.

4. Review of Alliant Energy proposal regarding the installation of two EV charging stations

- An attachment was provided and referenced in the discussion (EV Charging Locations)
- Martin-Schramm gave an overview of Alliant's offer to pay the hardware costs for two, dual-port Level 2 charging stations and to pay the related software expenses for the first two years. Decorah Bank and Trust has offered to pay up to half of the installation costs (max of \$5,000).
- Bril displayed the proposed locations and provided an overview of other relevant information: Accessibility, power availability/transformers, lighting. Two locations: see map. Total estimated cost of installation is \$10,000 (not including some city labor). Bril requested \$5,000 for the remaining installation costs. City will own the chargers, and after two years the City would be responsible for software (GreenLots), maintenance, and any upkeep fees.
- Discussion:
 - Neal: Can we make these solar-powered and so remove the necessity to purchase electricity? Discussion ensued about related pros/cons: Expensive

upfront for an individual dedicated solar array. It may be better to offset electricity purchases via a larger array that the City may construct later.

- Neal: the charging station needs to pay for itself, so need to think about fees that can be assessed. Martin-Schramm clarified that the City determines how much to charge those who utilize the public charging stations and that the City has flexibility in this regard.

- Action

- Grimstad moved to approve the request with the understanding that Brill and Martin-Schramm, will write a letter to the Council recommending that the \$5,000 comes from the electricity franchise fee. Barnes seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. Discussion and possible action on Rural Innovation Grant (RIG) opportunity

- Related Attachments:

- DSC Housing Grant Opp, Email from Nathan Thompson
- DSC Housing Decorah RIG, Draft 1
- DSC Housing Grant Writing Contract RIG 2021

- Mansfield gave background on conversations/presentations leading up to this RIG opportunity. Could apply for \$30,000 through the RIG. Application due Apr 16, 2021.

- Thompson gave an outline of what the proposal might address: How the City could redevelop lots, with affordable housing as a goal and to incorporate Sustainability goals into new development. He noted the specific connections to the action items in the sustainability plan.

- Discussion:

- Martin-Schramm mentioned this is a fast turnaround.
- Borowski/Neal also said this is rushed, but great *future* potential.
- Borowski/Neal said the Maple avenue project is not a common problem that the City will encounter. City needs to figure out how to incentivize investment (via abatement) in affordable housing in Decorah.
- The group consensus was this was too quick of a turnaround to put a solid application together this round. If the grant will be offered next year, the City and others could plan to be ready at that point.
- New group moving forward: Ann, Jim, Jeremy, Ben, and Michelle. Ann willing to coordinate.

6. Review draft RFP for Communications and Outreach Plan

- Related attachment: DSC RFP Draft Communications Outreach Plan
- Leitz provided an overview: (Description, Purpose, Objectives, Target, Scope).
- Given the scale beyond the Commission and possible budgetary/staffing implications, the next steps would be to move the discussion to council work session, as well as discuss again at a future Commission meeting.

7. Debrief Community Stakeholder Meeting on Childcare

- Related attachment: Childcare Community Stakeholder Mtg Note, 02-25-21
- Brief discussion

8. Other business

- No other business

9. Adjournment

- Leitz moved, Grimstad seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:17 pm

Respectfully submitted, Molly McNicoll

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	February 17, 2021	March 17, 2021
April 21, 2021	May 19, 2021	June 16, 2021
July 21, 2021	August 18, 2021	September 15, 2021
October 20, 2021	November 17, 2021	December 15, 2021