

City of Decorah
Sustainability Commission
June 17, 2021 – 5:00pm
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jim Martin-Schramm, Ben Grimstad, Jeremy Leitz, Molly McNichols, Michelle Barnes, Ann Mansfield

Members Absent: Brent Parker

Others Present: Emily Neal, Stephanie Fromm, Lora Friest, Mayor Borrowski, Harlan Satrom

AGENDA

1. Call to order
 - Jim Martin-Schramm called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm
2. Approval of minutes from the April 21, 2021 regular meeting will be moved to July 21, 2021
3. Consideration of Day Care Facility budget request for Sunflower Child Development and Discovery Center project. (S5) Presentation by StephanieFromm and Lora Friest, Winneshiek County Economic Development
 - Presentation overview:
 - Need for childcare in our community has been reviewed before with this group
 - In addition to the need for this project, it's important to note how the project is being developed as a "model" project for sustainability; aligned with the city's Sustainability Plan. It will demonstrate the DSC goals and go above and beyond and offer the opportunity to educate many, many children.
 - Collaboration over the last year with local, regional and state partners to create a sustainable model with children's "museum" concept to enhance the business model. It's unique. Worked on feasibility study to offer a liveable wage, expand current childcare capacity and greatly enhance the offerings for learning while offering an attraction for families. Growing interest across the state about this model.
 - Goal: draw young families to NEIowa
 - Iowa has recognized it as a model of "this is the way to go". Potential for other communities to look at it; getting inquiries now.
 - Overview of center layout
 - Sustainability features:
 - Reach 220 children/year in care, 5-15,000 children visitors - Great opportunity to educate multiple dimensions of sustainability through play opportunities

- This childcare/discovery center plan is linked to many aspects of the DSC plan. The goal is to build it to be sustainable and show that it is actually the affordable way to do it.
 - Request from DSC at this time: FY 2023: \$25K and then \$25K every year for 5 years (Each year this would be about 15% of total DSC annual budget)
 - Discussion re DSC financial contribution to this project:
 - Impressive planning! Pandemic has shown that childcare is even more needed. This is a timely project.
 - City commitment discussions: Need to be consistent with other requests. How we do this in an equitable way with public dollars is important.
 - Previously DSC pledged \$10K to offer support and potential match for grants (DSC FY 2021 and FY 2022 estimated plan-related expenditures sent to City Council)
 - Example: Humboldt community partnered with city, school, hospital to build the childcare center with public funds
 - This project hits on most segments of the DSC plan
 - Currently working on a grant application that's due in early August; need to prove community financial support.
 - DSC request to Fromm and Friest at this time – Submit a request for funding to DSC in writing. Include the example from Humboldt. Include the other sources of funding that make up the total and the business model for the Discovery Center.
4. Discussion about downtown recycling bins (W3). Led by Jeremy Lietz and Brent Parker
- Purchase of bins is not the issue, support from SMID and D Betterment
 - The issue is getting them picked up
 - Jeremy met with IRP; they can build bins quickly – single or double
 - Pick up – propose a couple of times/week for Memorial Day to Labor Day
 - Request to Jeremy/Brent – prepare a map of bin locations and expectations for pickup to present to the commission and then the city
 - This should be basic city operations.
5. Economic Development:
- Report by Mayor Borowski about new City/County Economic Development and Tourism Committee (ED 8)
 - Goal: Met and shared updates; was beneficial
 - Discuss intent and plans for “City-hosted, quarterly community visioning sessions with City, Luther, Banks, Museums, Hospital, and Industry leaders to share needs and opportunities.” (ED 1)
6. Discuss recommendations for the development of a community vision that includes action step S.1. (S1-4). Led by Ann Mansfield
- Mayor Borrowski - Value for having the community group meet; need to continue with quarterly meetings

- Context for “Decorah 2030” meeting in February 2020 reviewed. Plan was to continue quarterly meetings with stakeholder updates and explore potential for a visioning process re what we want the Decorah community to be in 2030?
 - We have the DSC plan and city comprehensive plan... eventually “marry” these two.
 - Can we use the quarterly meetings to continue the sharing and leverage collaboration?
 - City comprehensive plan should include a vision and land use plan – does it need to be updated?
 - Continue discussion at next meeting.
7. Report on USDA grant approval by Kristine Jepsen (E3)
- \$9,900 received from USDA to support work by the Municipal Electric Utility Task Force to do community engagement/presentations, to acquire needed data, to pursue a feasibility study, etc.
8. Updates by Jim Martin-Schramm:
- Alliant – per capita report for 52101 zip code- will depend on census data – perhaps available in August
 - Charging Stations – Alliant contract is being reviewed by Jeremy Brill and the City Attorney
 - Air sensors have been purchased – LC Laura Peterson’s students are already collecting data!
9. Adjourn
- Moved by Ben Grimstad to adjourn. Seconded by Molly McNichols. Motion approved unanimously.
 - Meeting adjourned at 6:34pm.

Minutes drafted by Ann Mansfield