

## Decorah Sustainability Commission

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 5:00 - 6:15 pm via Zoom

Members present (Zoom call): Michelle Barness, Ben Grimstad, Jeremy Leitz, Jim Martin-Schramm, Molly McNicoll, Ann Mansfield,

Others: John Nielson, Travis Goedken, Lorraine Borrowski, Aaron Detter, Emily Neal

1. Call to order.
  - a. Meeting called to order by Jim Martin-Schramm at 5:03pm
2. Approval of Minutes for September meeting. See attachment.
  - a. September 15, 2021 minutes reviewed and approved. Motion by Ben Grimstad, second by Molly McNicoll)
3. Review solar PV projects proposed by Novak Electric. Presentation by John Nielsen, VP Novak Electric. See attachment. (E4).
  - a. Perry Novak Electric proposes to install two solar PV systems at two project locations: one at the City of Decorah Campground/Pulpit Rock (2 locations within); and at the City Street Department. Both locations would producer 100% of usage. The 450w bifacial panels would be 3rd party financed. The city saves monies by purchasing power from investor. Perry Novak Electric will assist in finding local investor, as well as help secure any grants.
  - b. Molly McNicoll will meet with Andy Nimrod and John Nielson prior to November meeting to review proposed site locations at campground to identify any possible issues (habitat, land use). Also discuss any possible relationship or conflict with the city parks master plan.
  - c. City Street Department building's roof integrity would be analyzed by Novak Electric to ensure safety of placing the solar PVs on roof. John Nielsen will confer with Jeremy Brill and the City Manager about the city's long-term plan regarding the use of this building prior to next meeting.
  - d. Information will be presented at November meeting.
4. Update and feedback on transportation action (T5) to evaluate speed limits in town and consider speed reductions in areas where appropriate. UERPC Senior Transportation Planner Aaron Detter will be in attendance for this discussion. See attachment.
  - a. Michelle Barness met with chief of police, city engineer, and UERPC Aaron Detter. Action related to walkability, bike ability and access. Communities are allowed to adjust speed limits as appropriate. Process for setting limits; staff observing and recommending. Not a defined process. Consideration of blanket reduction in speed limits to meet transportation goals.
  - b. Aaron Detter, transportation planner with UERPC - background focused re walkability/bike ability in communities. Involved in helping develop the Sustainability plan and goals re transportation. Discussion with Chief of Police and City Engineer – led to a concept called "Vision Zero," which regards ANY death or injury as too much. Best practices – examples in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Aaron shared two weblinks: Examples include Madison, WI. and Twin Cities – both have adopted city-wide speed limits. Graphic – Traffic speed greatly

impacts the # of pedestrian deaths, the higher the speed, the more likely a fatal outcome for the pedestrian. In addition, the more we get people walking and biking, the more we are achieving many of the goals in the Sustainability Plan. How do we get more people walking? Do we feel safe when we're walking? Speed is a big factor. How do we study this? Data, best practices, etc.

- c. Discussion: Michelle – need guidance from DSC about how to proceed with this Action. The City Manager, Travis Goedken, asked if there had been any discussion regarding traffic calming measures/features? Yes, it's been discussed. Travis: The wider we build streets, the faster people drive. It's good to look at some options with design that impact behavior of drivers. Agree – we need to think more broadly than just affecting the speed limit. Emily Neal said the council has been looking at “Strong Towns” and the narrowing of streets, design, etc. Council will be receptive to best practice ideas. Michelle will look at transportation plan from several years ago with the City Engineer to see if some additional measures of traffic calming, etc. were included. City has adopted SUDAS (Statewide Urban Design and Specifications) which is not aligned with Strong Towns.
  - d. Summary comments – 1. Potential topic for Michelle and Aaron in a council work session 2. Can we modify the transportation Action items to be broader than only addressing speed limits? 3. Can Mayor Borowski and Emily take this to City Council for conversation and feedback? 4. Michelle will follow up with Emily and come back to DSC.
5. Resignation of Brent Parker to pursue Master's degree. Process to fill vacancy on the Sustainability Commission.
    - a. Public needs to be informed that we have a vacancy on the Commission. DSC members need to be thinking about potential replacements. Mayor Borowski – interested applicants should fill out [an application form](#) (on city website main page) and then the Mayor brings the applications to the City Council. The mayor appoints and the Council approves. Travis will issue a press release. Word of mouth is also good. Encourage interested people to go to the website. Goal: Have a new person appointed before the end of this year.
  6. Offer of \$150 donation from Northeast Iowa Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby.
    - a. Want to support a project of the DSC focused on Climate Change, perhaps the EV charging station or other projects. Will discuss further at next meeting.
  7. Other Business.
    - a. Travis will reach out to the local paper and decorahnews.com to explore improved communication of city activities and updates including DSC. Will consider a posting process on the city website as well.
    - b. November agenda– request to add Communication Plan update by Jeremy, Ann and Emily
  8. Adjourn
    - a. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm. Motion by Michelle Barness, seconded by Molly McNicoll.
    - b. Next meeting is November 17, 2021.
    - c. Minutes submitted by Jeremy Leitz, Ann Mansfield

City of Decorah Solar Site Summary

Address	Account #	Meter #	Size of Solar KW AC	Yearly Kwh	Current Bill	Current \$/kwh	Solar Production	Cost From Solar	Purchased from Grid	Cost from Grid	Total Estimated Savings
108 Railroad Ave	7665111000	502008883	22.8	29,085	\$4,397.83	\$0.151	29970	\$3,296.70	-885	-\$560.76	\$1,661.89
Main Campground	3444111000	500116003	90	156,560	\$22,576.14	\$0.144	162,973	\$19,556.76	-6,413	-\$3,059.34	\$6,078.72
Twin Springs	3444111000	500116004	45	77,973	\$11,650.00	\$0.149	79,380	\$9,525.60	-1,407	-\$231.86	\$2,356.26
400 Claiborne Dr	7665111000	500116001	0	224,580	\$30,939.64	\$0.138	0	\$0.00	224,580	\$0.00	\$0.00
210 Heivly St	7665111000	502033053	0	16,641	\$2,861.10	\$0.172	0	\$0.00	16,641	\$0.00	\$0.00
800 W Water St	7665111000	502033053	0	217,500	\$30,139.63	\$0.139	0	\$0.00	217,500	\$0.00	\$0.00
404 Goose Island Dr	103390000	502005539	0	7,449	\$630.29	\$0.085	0	\$0.00	7,449	\$0.00	\$0.00
1766 Old Stage Rd	7665111000	502004491	0	1,474,200	\$121,905.22	\$0.083	0	\$0.00	1,474,200	\$0.00	\$0.00
1755 Old Stage Rd	7665111000	500138518	0	23,819	\$3,834.50	\$0.161	0	\$0.00	23,819	\$0.00	\$0.00
			157.8	2,227,807	\$228,934.35	\$0.103	272,323	\$32,379.06	1,955,484	-\$3,851.96	\$10,096.87



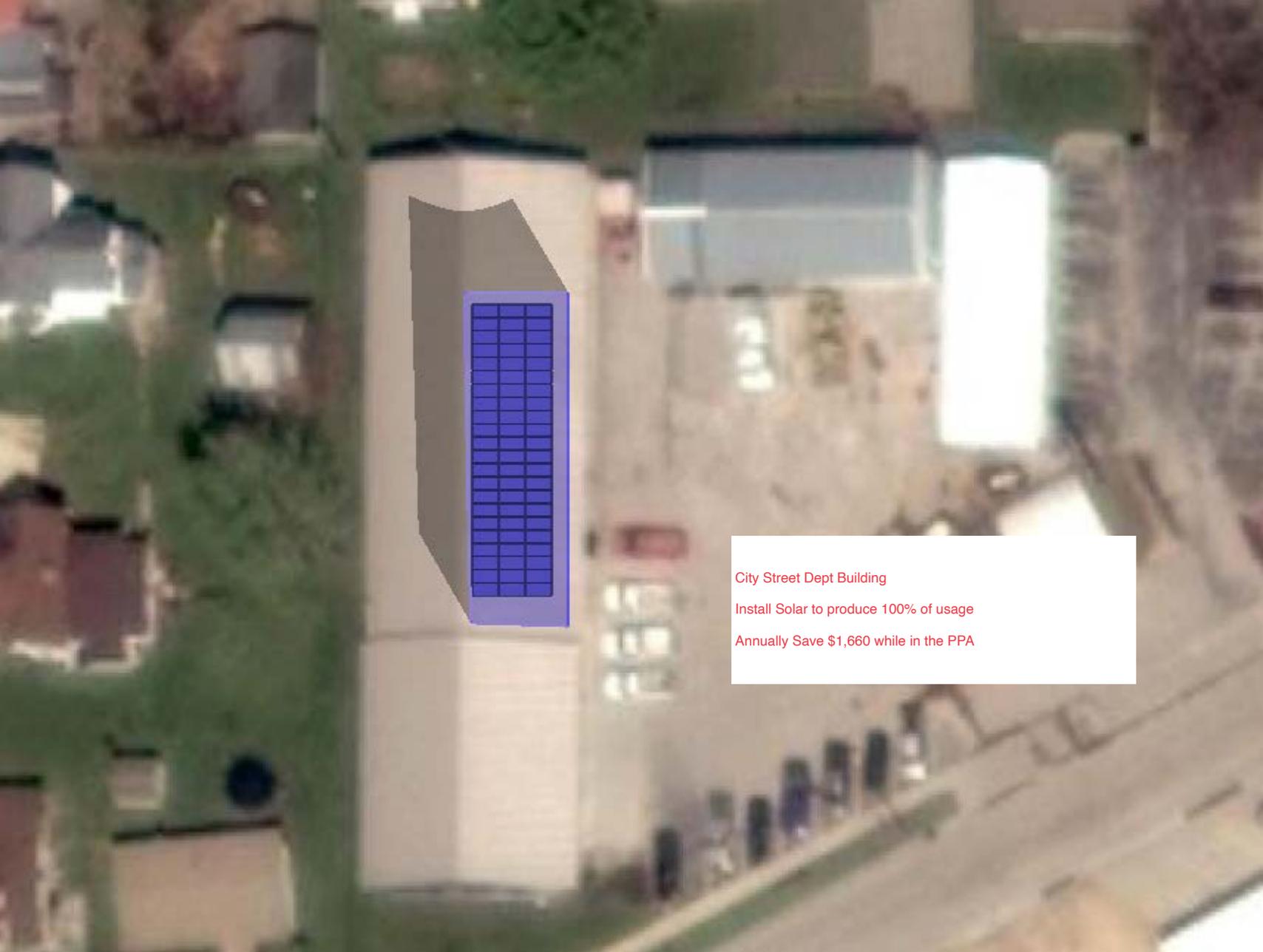
YOUR ENERGY SOLUTIONS PARTNER

\*\* 450w BiFacial Panels  
 \*\* 30 year warranty on panels

Perry Novak Electric would assist with:

- \* Securing any grants available
- \* Help find a "friend of the industry" investor to work with the city
- \* Bring years of experience of working with Cities, Counties, Schools, and other entities to work with investors on PPA's

John Nielsen  
 Vice President  
 Sales /  
 Operations  
 563-379-4754  
 john@pne.us



City Street Dept Building

Install Solar to produce 100% of usage

Annually Save \$1,660 while in the PPA



City of Decorah Campground  
Two Meters Main Campground and Twin Springs side  
Both side to produce 100% of annual kwh need  
Approx. \$8,400 annual savings while in the PPA

**Update on T.5 ACTION: Evaluate speed limits in town and consider speed reductions in areas where appropriate, especially at dangerous streets/intersections.**

**Transportation Goal Connections:**

- Increasing the amount of walking and biking in Decorah
- Increasing accessibility of our community

**Type of Action: Policy Change**

- The Decorah City Code currently adopts by reference the State of Iowa speed limits. This transportation action will look at options for reducing speed limits in Decorah below the current state limits, which would need to be reflected in city code.
- A reduction in speed limits can be done in certain zones (parks, cemeteries, school zones, etc.) or citywide (all residential neighborhoods now have a lowered speed limit).

**Partners:** Public Safety (Police Chief) and City Engineer, UERPC Regional Transportation Planner

**Update on action:**

- **Meeting with Decorah Police Chief and Engineer, and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) Senior Transportation Planner**
  - Meeting held w/partners to understand city's current policies or practices around changing speed limits
  - There isn't a formal process for assessing speed limits at this time, but nonetheless there are instances of the city reducing speed limits when city staff raised concerns
  - Speed limits in town are currently mostly 25 mph
  - There are a few specific locations in town that have come onto city staff's radar as having potential for reduced speeds, but these aren't many
  - There are also areas in town where public safety has a strong presence to discourage speeding, and this has been successful (as opposed to policy changes to reduce speeds)
  - UERPC Senior Transportation Planner shared examples of communities that have decided to lower speeds across the board to improve pedestrian/bicycle safety, and access for all users
  - Police Chief, City Engineer and UERPC Transportation Planner recommended discussing the idea of lowering speed limits across the board in Decorah with the DSC, to receive feedback on the intent of T5 and whether this would be an appropriate move to fulfill the action. Transportation Planner to provide discussion points/background at meeting.

**Next Steps:**

- DSC provides feedback on across the board speed limit reductions
- Meet again with Police Chief, Engineer and Transportation Planner to identify specific steps for moving ahead on citywide speed reduction (if that is the guidance), or to go back to drawing board on how to tackle action if different approach is recommended
- Draft code amendment for speed reduction for P&Z (?) and council review/approval if needed