

Decorah Sustainability Commission

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

Members present: Ben Grimstad, Jeremy Leitz, Jim Martin-Schramm, Aaron Detter (new commission member), Ann Mansfield, Michelle Barness (absent), Molly McNicoll (absent)

Others: Travis Goedken, Lorraine Borowski, Emily Neal

Minutes

Agenda

1. Call to order
 - a. Meeting called to order by Jim Martin-Schramm at 5:01 pm
2. Approval of Minutes for November meeting. See attachment.
 - a. Minutes reviewed and approved. Motion made by Ben Grimstad. Second by Jeremy Leitz.

3. Updates:

- a. Decorah Sustainability Commission (DSC) vacancy (Mayor Borowski)

Mayor Borowski introduced Aaron Detter as new Commission member to replace Brent Parker. Aaron's background in transportation, housing, community development will be a welcome addition to the Commission. Travis Goedken and Emily Neal shared that there was discussion by the city council re making the Commission 9 members verses 7. Jim Martin Schramm said that the Commission will take the Council's lead.

- b. City Council work session on goal prioritization (Mayor Borowski, Travis Goedken, Emily Neal)
 - i. The City Council is viewing the DSC plan as large with possible overlaps with city council efforts. The goal is to thoroughly review the plan and priorities, sort out what the council can have for priorities verses the DSC in a work session. The effort/process will then include the DSC in a meeting/conversation with the city council after this review. One of the outcomes of the council planning was a desire for the Decorah area to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. This may be a focus of the DSC which will include a climate action plan. Overall, the council is interested in developing a partnership with the DSC to achieve our collective sustainability goals.
 - ii. The Council is very interested in the MEU task force efforts and upcoming report.
- c. Ad hoc groups on affordable housing and city communications plan (Mayor Borowski and Travis Goedken)
 - i. The committee working on affordable housing is in its infancy; still recruiting members. Goal is to include a DSC representative, Councilmen Steve Luse, UERPC

representative, area Housing office representative, Mayor Borrowski. Perhaps others as they form the group and focus.

- ii. Communications Plan – City is currently advertising for the Deputy City Clerk position. When position is filled, the plan is to assess the skill set of all office employees and determine a central point of contact for press releases, website notification updates, etc.
- d. Recycling in the business district (Travis Goedken)
 - i. City is waiting for feedback from the private garbage haulers re creating a process where they might pick it up directly instead of having the city pick up Water St. and “store” it for the private haulers to pick up. The consideration “on the table” is to streamline this process in addition to picking up recycling. Travis Goedken explained that this is a “game of numbers/amount of tonnage”; there’s incentive for the private haulers to expand their pickup amount. In some cities, they’ve contracted with one hauler and then able to negotiate things like recycling.
- e. Solar PV projects proposed by Novak Electric (Travis Goedken and Molly McNichol)
 - i. The city solar project at the Streets Department is being discussed. No update from Park & Rec since last meeting.
- f. Baseline greenhouse gas studies (Jim Martin-Schramm)
 - i. Over the course of the fall, Jim Martin-Schramm has been working with Alliant’s Jacob Seaman to gather Decorah data to determine electricity consumption by city operations. Jim has also been working with Black Hills Energy to determine gas consumption.

4. Discussion and Possible Action: Invitation to join the pilot year of Resilient Iowa Communities. Led by Jim Martin-Schramm. See attachment.

a. RIC Participation

- o Discussion of ordinance vs. resolution continues for RIC participation.
- o Motion by Ben Grimstad, seconded by Aaron Detter to recommend for approval to the Council; motion passed unanimously.

5. Other business

- a. Quarterly meeting with community leaders
 - Mayor Borrowski and Travis Goedken discussed the ongoing nature of this, and the discussion at the Council strategic goal-setting for the need to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders.
 - Jim Martin-Schramm touched on the potential joint work session between SC and the Council
 - Mayor Borrowski and Travis Goedken will continue to coordinate
- g. Discussion of meeting time
 - Commission members discussed possibilities for daytime vs. evening meetings. Consensus for changing meeting time from 5:30-6:45 p.m. while sticking with the third Wednesday.
 - (I don’t believe a vote was taken, but there was consensus.)

6. Minute-taking in 2022

- a. Members discussed the drawbacks of having a commission member take minutes; the possibility of Travis Goedken or Emily Neal taking minutes was also considered.

- b. Will continue to discuss, and Jim Martin Shramm will touch base with Ann Mansfield.
- 7. Motion to adjourn by Ben Grimstad, seconded by Jeremy Leitz.
 - a. Emily Neal and Travis Goedken noted open seats on other boards and commissions
 - b. Motion passed unanimously; meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Minutes drafted by Ann Mansfield and Aaron Detter