

Decorah Sustainability Commission Minutes

Wednesday, March 16th, 2022

5:30 - 6:45 pm, In person and via Zoom

Members present: Jeremy Leitz, Jim Martin-Schramm (Zoom), Aaron Detter (Zoom), Ann Mansfield (Zoom), Michelle Barness, Jim Tripp (Zoom), Molly McNicoll, Kevan Klosterwill, Ben Grimstad (Zoom)

Not present: Lorraine Borowski, Travis Goedken

Others: Emily Neal (Zoom), Charlie Sylvester, Jeremy Brill

AGENDA

1. Call to order
 - b. Meeting called to order by Jim Martin-Schramm at 5:33 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes for February 2022. See attachment.
 - b. Minutes reviewed and approved by all present.
3. Introduction of new members: Jim Tripp and Kevan Klosterwill.
 - b. Jim Tripp – Lives in Decorah area, two children, teaches high school Spanish.
 - c. Kevan Klosterwill – Moved to Decorah two years ago. Historic landscape architect for parks and clients around the country.
 - d. Welcome! We're glad to have you on the Commission!
4. Updates:
 - b. ED1: April meeting with community leaders on workforce development (Jim M-S and Mayor Borowski)
 - Will focus on Workforce Development for April. No date set yet. Jim has contacted speakers. The plan is to hold the meeting via Zoom.
 - DSC Goal for these meetings; implementing an action item in the Plan. Pandemic stalled meetings. Spring 2022: Initial Goal - Community leaders getting acquainted and becoming familiar with DSC plan; build trust, build relationships.
 - b. CO1: Communications Plan (Ann and Jeremy)
 - See Addendum notes from 02.22.22 meeting with City.
 - Next steps: Update from City at DSC meeting in June 2022.
 - b. W3: Recycling in the Business District (Travis/Jeremy Brill)
 - Jeremy Brill – Got pricing information from local vendors to collect from downtown (4 bins) The vendor will not pick up co-mingled recycling. Single stream only, \$800/year. Most cost-effective option to go with local vendor. Nearly unanimous support from city council.
 - Next steps; Can move forward from city's perspective. Need number and location of bins. Prepare for single stream (1 bin for plastic, 1 for metal at each location.) Discussion followed about whether we should seek only to recycle plastics or also recycle aluminum cans. We may be able to find someone who will recycle redeemable

cans. For now: let's tackle plastic. Last estimate for number of containers is 4.
Recommendation: Waste group will follow up with Jeremy Bril and Downtown Betterment to proceed. All DSC members in agreement.

- b. AW20: Update on "Beyond Pesticides" program available through Resilient Iowa Communities (Molly McNicoll)
 - Continued conversations with Luther and Decorah Parks. Recently just started work with Beyond Pesticides.

5. Discussion Items:

- a. Sustainability Plan Sub-Committee Preferences and Tentative Assignments
 - i. Energy: Ben, Jim M-S, Michelle
 - ii. Economic Development: Ben, Kevan, Jim M-S
 - iii. Transportation: Michelle, Aaron, Ann
 - iv. Waste: Jeremy, Jim M-S, Jim Tripp
 - v. Communication & Education: Aaron, Jeremy, Ann
 - vi. Social Sustainability: Aaron, Ann, Molly
 - vii. Clean Air & Water: Michelle, Molly, Jim Tripp
 - viii. Land Use: Kevan, Molly, Jim Tripp
 - ix. DISCUSSION: Recommend that each subcommittee meet before next DSC meeting on April 20, 2022.
- b. City Council Sustainability Plan prioritization (Mayor Borowski and Emily Neal)
 - City Council has had 2 full work sessions going through the DSC plan; not finished yet. Final work session is in March.
 - Take away – Council has reaffirmed commitment, especially to carbon neutrality by 2040
 - i. Energy – Carbon neutrality by 2040.
 - 1. E6 & 7 – rewrite for better measurement. Focus on city operations emissions versus larger Decorah community-wide emissions.
 - 2. E3 - Municipal Electric Utility Task Force: Hope there is a recommendation from Task Force this year.
 - 3. E4 – Admin. Policy: Are there other metrics that need to be in place?
 - 4. E9 – Suggest removal from plan.
 - ii. Waste – Council wants to see this as a priority; hope from city administration and Council for DSC to work with them. Questions re city-wide recycling pick up. Council wants to see downtown recycling happen.
 - iii. Economic Development – Re-worked 28E agreements with Jobs, abatement plans. More information to follow.
 - iv. Communications – Priority – New position; communications lead in city, started this week. Push notification system addresses CO3. Will revisit Communications planning with city update in June 2022. Continue working with city administration. City website – plans to update. CO4 – Remove from DSC –

should be with Emergency Management. CO5 – City will add language to applications to complete this.

v. Air and Water – How do we best achieve this long list of objectives?

vi. FEEDBACK for Emily N. to Council:

1. Molly M. - Request more clarity from Council re Air & Water.
2. Aaron D. - We should be striving to develop Performance Measures/Targets (example for Transportation)

c. E7: Review completed 2020 greenhouse gas baseline studies: (Jim M-S)

- i. Decorah City Government
- ii. Decorah City-Wide Emissions
- iii. Discussion: Jim has a high degree of confidence in the studies. CEEE will provide mitigation suggestions for the city/businesses/homeowners, etc. Jim hopes to have those suggestions for the April meeting.

6. Action Items:

a. E8: Consider City Engineer proposal regarding downtown EV Charging locations and related fee structure (Jeremy Brill and Charlie Sylvester)

- 2 chargers will be here tomorrow.
- Location: Keep 1 station behind the Hotel as planned or have the 2 together behind the Coop.
- Fee: can charge re the KW or hour or both? Cover variable costs or cover variable and fixed costs.
- Discussion: General agreement to locate both chargers behind the Coop and to have the fee be the higher one and cover variable and fixed costs. Conclusion: Need more information before making a motion that includes definite location; will table until April meeting.

b. E8: Consider City Engineer proposal that the City of Decorah apply for funding via the VW settlement for an additional EV charging facility in the angle stalls on State Street adjacent to Fareway. (Requires 10% match). (Jeremy Brill)

- Would like to submit an application with financial support/cash match \$3,850. Do we as a commission support a 3rd charging station? Yes. All in agreement.
- Motion by Michelle B. to support this application with request for the match by the City. Seconded by Aaron D. Passed unanimously.

c. AW13: Consider two items regarding NRCS Watershed and Flood Prevention Operation (WFPO) program (Michelle Barnes)

- A letter recommending the city consider participating in the WFPO program and providing a brief explanation of the program.
- A letter requesting initiation of a Preliminary Investigation and Feasibility Report (PIFR) for the City of Decorah HUC 12 sub-watershed, to be reviewed and endorsed by the City Council. The letter would be sent to NRCS and the State

Conservationist and would essentially initiate the WFPO program application process.

- Discussion: Conversations on going directly with Council; if they're interested, will bring this item back to DSC in April.

d. CO6: Consider Decorah Public Library proposal for the Sustainability Commission to co-sponsor sustainability-related book discussions around Earth Day in April. (Ann and Jim M-S)

- Limited time to discuss at this meeting; will bring to future meeting.

7. Other Business.

- b. Discuss possible splash pad by Parks & Rec (Molly McNicholl)
- Discussion postponed for next meeting

8. Adjourn.

- Motion to adjourn by Aaron Detter, seconded by Ben Grimstad.
- Motion passed unanimously; meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Minutes drafted by Ann Mansfield.

Addendum:

Notes from Agenda Item 4.b.

Review from meeting with City on 02.22.22:

1. DSC Plan reviewed by new DSC in early fall 2020; subgroups assigned to the 8 categories for prioritization and timeline.
2. DSC Plan - Communications and Education Outreach Objectives
 - Develop a comprehensive communications plan to include social media, website, app-based communication and print notifications.
 - Update city's website to improve links regarding recycling and waste, workshops, meeting notes, etc.
 - Development of city app for push notifications
 - Develop a skilled volunteer pool for city projects
 - Incorporate sustainability into all event applications
 - Provide educational programming re sustainability
3. Research/exploring other Sustainability plans - Oct. '20- Mar. '21
 - Middleton, WI, Dubuque, Ft. Collins, CO,
 - Iowa communities with Communications with recent RFPs
 - Independence, Colfax
4. March 2021 - Draft RFP "Consulting Services for the Creation & Implementation of a Community Outreach Plan for the City of Decorah" presented to DSC.
 - Project Purpose:
 - Resident and stakeholder engagement
 - Two-way communication
 - Efficient and effective communication with internal and external stakeholders

- Be a resource for the community
 - Marketing/promotion of sustainability initiatives
 - Assess need for branding of city
- DSC has \$10K in this years budget to support RFP.
 - Discussion/ Recommendation: Meet with City Dept. Heads before sending to city council
5. June 2020 - Meeting with Mayor Borowski, city dept. heads, city clerk, DSC members
 - Recognition that a lot is happening with communication as well as department sustainability efforts. How might efforts be more coordinated and highlighted for our community?
 6. July 2021 - City communications stakeholders attended DSC meeting
 - Good discussion. Consensus; wait for the new city administrator to come on board.
 7. Fall 2021
 - Brief exploration of comprehensive city communications tools civicplus.com - Oskaloosa, IA "Improves citizen service through an engaging website", opengov.com/products
 - Considered requesting a demo; will wait for the new city administrator and clerk to be in discussion.
 8. February 2022
 - Meeting; Travis Goedken, Keri Sand, Emily Neal, Jeremy Leitz & Ann Mansfield
 - New city staff role to include communications responsibility; individual not on board yet.
 - New Push Notification system has been purchased; plan to implement in early March. The system is GroupCast which is similar to Decorah Schools, capable of mass texts, emails, etc. Possibly newsletters.
 - Keri is in the process of working on a contract with IROC web development to update the city website; make it more interactive, keep it current with a up-to-date calendar, etc.
 - Examples of interactive features with the public discussed; for people to have the ability to register a question (or complaint) directly with the department and get a response would be very effective in engaging the community, being accessible and transparent and building trust. Everyone feels this is important.
 - Travis has had experience with OpenGov and "See-Click-Fix"; initially they can be good tools, but need to plan for potential "mis-use". (Can backfire).
 - Going forward...
 - Travis and Keri asked that we give some time for the new staff person (communications role) to come on board and for the new Push Notification system to be implemented, see how it's going... and then to consider next steps. Everyone agreed. Will plan for an update from Travis and Keri at June DSC meeting.
 - Consider ways to get community feedback; discussed information that Jeremy Leitz gathered from Middleton, WI. Jeremy sent that information in a separate email.