

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING**  
Inver Grove Heights City Hall – Council Chambers  
January 24, 2019

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**1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Trenzeluk

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Roll Call**

Commissioners Present: Chair Ted Trenzeluk, Patricia Todd, Robert Heidenreich, Nichole Boehmke, Ken Johnson

Commissioners Absent: Joan Gabriel (resigned 9/27/18); Adija Jime, Sarah Brass and Lauren DeGidio (excused)

Staff Present: Ally Hillstrom, Environmental Specialist

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Boehmke moved to approve the minutes from September 27, 2018 as submitted, Commissioner Todd seconded the motion. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

**5. Applicant Requests**

There were no applications to review on the agenda

**6. Other Business**

**a) Review 2019 Environmental Commission Draft Schedule**

Ms. Hillstrom stated that during the last Environmental Commission meeting on September 27, 2018 the Commission asked how they can assist the City with the Greenstep Cities program. Ms. Hillstrom stated she has since developed a flexible schedule for 2019 Environmental Commission meetings to provide the Commission a workplan based on existing program priorities.

Chair Ted Trenzeluk said he likes the draft schedule because it will help the Commission meet more regularly. He requests that in the future, Environmental Commissioners inform the Commission as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a meeting so the Commission can determine if a quorum will be met when needed.

Ms. Hillstrom stated she would like to review the next item, Greenstep Cities Step 3 requirements, prior to reviewing the schedule to provide the Commission background information on items included in the schedule.

**b) Review Greenstep Cities Program Step 3**

Ms. Hillstrom reviewed the benefits of the Minnesota Greenstep Cities program and why she and other communities believe it is important for the City to be involved. She stated that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and many other partners have developed Sustainability Best Practices

for cities to consider following. She stated benefits of the program are that it; 1) Provides a Continuous Improvement Pathway, 2) Saves Staff Time, 3) Saves Cities Money, 4) Is Flexible and Tailored to All Minnesota Cities, 5) Provides Public Reports and Peer to Peer Interactions, 6) Provides Special Opportunities, 7) Increases Competitiveness for Grants, 8) Provides Leadership Opportunities for Community Members, 9) Provides Public Recognition, and 10) Encourages Interdepartmental Collaboration.

Ms. Hillstrom reviewed the 29 Best Practices so that the Commission is aware of the themes promoted by the Minnesota Greenstep Cities program. She stated that within the 29 Best Practices there are over 175 actionable items, however the City has the flexibility to prioritize which actions to complete.

Ms. Hillstrom reviewed the following Best Practices the City is working on now to reach Step 3 of the program.

Best Practice #2: Existing Private Buildings

- **Action 2.1:** Create or participate in a marketing/outreach program to promote/achieve residential energy/water use reduction and energy efficiency.
- **Action 2.5:** Conserve/protect drinking/groundwater resources by creating a watering ordinance, water-wise landscaping ordinance/guidance, WaterSense purchasing program, or guidance on rainwater harvesting and home water softener use.

Ms. Hillstrom stated that these assistance providers will be promoted to the residents through the City website, social media, and newsletter. She also noted that the City has an existing water conservation ordinance (IGH City Code: 8-2-14) that will also be promoted through the City's communication channels.

Chair Trenzeluk suggested that we begin to advertise additional water conservation opportunities on the website such as rain garden development during street reconstruction projects.

Best Practice #15: Sustainable Purchasing

- **Action 15.1:** Adopt a sustainable purchasing policy or administrative guidelines/practices directing that the city purchases at least:
  - o EnergyStar certified equipment and appliances and
  - o Paper containing at least 30% post-consumer recycled content.

Ms. Hillstrom stated this Practice is different than other Best Practices because it may have budgetary impacts and requires a change in existing behavior. Ms. Hillstrom stated that the Finance Department suggests that sustainable purchasing be adopted as a policy with City Council approval. She stated that this is an opportunity for the Environmental Commission to become involved and provide recommendations to staff and the City Council on a Sustainable Purchasing Policy. Ms. Hillstrom noted it is state mandated for public entities to purchase recycled content paper so long as the recycled paper costs less than 10% of the non-recycled alternative. Additional opportunities to lower operational costs can be promoted as well such as double-sided printing, defaulting printers to black and white ink, and more.

Commissioner Boehmke noted the Best Practice mentions sustainable products and services and asked if Ms. Hillstrom has researched sustainable services. Ms. Hillstrom responded that she has not researched requiring sustainable services yet. Ms. Hillstrom noted it is possible the City has contracted in the past for services that are certified for their sustainable practices. Ms. Hillstrom stated this is not a requirement of the Best Practice but that it is something that can be considered.

#### Best Practice #24: Benchmarks and Community Engagement

- **Action 24.1:** Use a city commission, or committee to lead, coordinate, and report to and engage community members on implementation of sustainability best practices.
- **Action 24.2:** Organize goals/outcome measures from all city plans and report to community members data that show progress toward meeting these goals.

Ms. Hillstrom mentioned that she anticipates developing an internal staff GreenStep Cities team to assist with prioritizing Best Practice implementation. She noted these priorities would then be brought to the Environmental Commission to discuss their recommendations.

Chair Trenzeluk asked if the City would be able to develop a citizen advisory committee. Ms. Hillstrom responded in the affirmative so long as there is City Council approval. Ms. Hillstrom stated other cities have created citizen advisory committees for action plans specific to one topic such as an Energy Action plan where shareholders and individuals in the community who specialize in the topics are asked to join.

Ms. Hillstrom stated that the City is also working to consolidate all city-wide plans into one area on the website and add information including the purpose and progress towards goals to increase community awareness of the plans.

#### Best Practice #25: Green Business Development

- **Action 25.2:** Create or participate in a marketing/outreach program to connect businesses with assistance providers, including utilities, who provide personalized energy, waste or sustainability audits and assistance.

Ms. Hillstrom mentioned assistance providers for businesses will be added to the same page of the website as the resources for Best Practice #2.

Chair Trenzeluk asked for additional examples of assistance providers. Ms. Hillstrom responded that organizations such as Xcel Energy and ReTap offer free audits for businesses. She also mentioned that Dakota County provides businesses with a recycling grant and technical assistance to start up or improve their existing system.

### **a) (continued) 2019 Environmental Commission Draft Schedule**

Ms. Hillstrom reviewed the Draft 2019 Environmental Commission Schedule. She stated that the first half of the year will be focused on progressing to Step 3 of the GreenStep Cities program. Ms. Hillstrom reviewed the draft schedule that states the Commission will discuss; Best Practice #15: Sustainable Purchasing Policy and provide recommendations in February; Best Practice #13: Efficient City Fleet based on existing programs and City priorities in March; Fleet Carma Electric

Vehicle Suitability Analysis provided by an Xcel Energy grant in April; To be Determined Items in May; Review Greenstep Cities Progress in June; Review Step 4 in July; To be Determined Items in August; Sustainability Highlights and Greenstep Cities Step 4 Progress in September; To be Determined Items in October; Sustainability Highlights and Greenstep Cities Step 4 Progress in November; and City Council Annual Update and additional To be Determined Items in December. Ms. Hillstrom said that her goal is to keep the Commission informed of upcoming discussions so they can prepare to provide feedback.

**c) Review Greenstep Cities Step 4 & 5**

Ms. Hillstrom stated achieving Step 4 of the Greenstep Cities program will require the City to collect data within the following Core categories. She also noted to reach Step 5 of the program, the City need to improve annually on three of the following metrics:

**Core Categories for Step 4 and Step 5 Required Metrics**

- **City Buildings and Lighting**
  - o 1.1 kBtu per square foot, per year
  - o 1.4 Percent LED street lights
- **City Fleet**
  - o 3.2 Average miles per gallon (MPG) for city's gasoline fleet
  - o 3.4 Average miles per gallon (MPG) for diesel fleet
- **Transportation Modes & Miles**
  - o 3.2 Average miles per gallon (MPG) for city's gasoline fleet
  - o 3.4 Average miles per gallon (MPG) for diesel fleet
- **Open Space, Parks, & Trees**
  - o 8.6 Net number of new trees planted
- **Stormwater**
  - o 9.1 Assessment number from the Wisconsin Green Infrastructure Audit (MN Blue Star City program will return in 2020)
- **Renewable Energy**
  - o 14.1 Number of city owned and private renewable energy generation sites
  - o 14.2 Generation capacity at city and at private renewable energy generation sites (kW)
  - o 14.4 Annual renewable energy purchases, city (MWhr/yr)

Chair Trenzelek asked how the data on vehicle miles traveled within the City would be calculated. Ms. Hillstrom responded that other organizations such as the Metropolitan Council collect estimates on this. Ms. Hillstrom responded that going forward, once Step 3 Best Practices are completed, the City will begin researching how to collect the metrics. Five additional metrics will have to be collected by the City in addition to the Core metrics. City staff and the Environmental Commission will be asked to provide recommendations of which additional metrics to collect. She noted the data collection for Step 4 will come from a combination of both City staff and other government agencies.

Ms. Hillstrom asked the Commissioners to provide ideas of additional topics in the future if there are additional items they would like to add. She also noted that by collecting the metrics data for

Step 4, the existing conditions will inform the City of what actions need to be prioritized in the future.

Chair Trenzelek asked if there have been any updates regarding the trash to ethanol plant. Ms. Hillstrom stated she has not heard any major updates but that she will keep the Commission informed if she does. Chair Trenzelek mentioned he will send out additional events to the Commission and Ms. Hillstrom said she will send additional meeting opportunities as well.

Commissioner Johnson moved to adjourn at 7:56 pm. Commissioner Heidenreich seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.