



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ENERGY COMMISSION

Fridley Municipal Center, 6431 University Ave Ne

### MINUTES

February 9, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

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Location: Conference Room A (Main Level, Fridley City Hall)

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:24 p.m. by Vice Chairman Mark Hansen.

#### **Approve Environmental Quality and Energy Commission Minutes**

Approve Minutes of January 12th, 2015.

MOTION by Commissioner Westby and seconded by Commissioner Foell to approve the January 12<sup>th</sup> minutes.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **New Business**

##### 1) *Osborne Road Diet*

The Environmental Quality and Energy Commission participated in a public meeting about a road diet on Osborne Road (aka CSAH 8). The meeting was held at Woodcrest Elementary School, at 880 Osborne Rd. in Fridley, prior to convening the formal session of the EQEC. The EQE Commissioners wanted to weigh in on potential safety/physical improvements on the roadway toward improving bike and pedestrian crossing and use. The group has long advocated for this same type of roadway along Mississippi St. in Fridley and Anoka County Transportation planning officials were in attendance that evening, which allowed the EQE Commissioners convenient access to them. Anoka County Transportation planners have stated that they will look at adding this type of roadway change along Mississippi in due course, when the road is slated for improvements. The main Osborne Road diet presentation was conducted by the consultant, Bryan, from Bolton & Menk, who also prepared the design scenario boards. Basically, four lanes would be replaced by a center left turn lane, increasing the

right of way area for police to ticket speeders and for homeowners with driveways leading out to Osborne Road to nudge out, without being immediately in the land of traffic. The EQEC meeting commenced immediately after the question and answer part of the presentation. Vice Chairman Hansen said that the engineering information presented by Bolton & Menck is absolutely correct and that these changes will make the Osborne Road corridor safer for all (*autos drivers, local homeowners, pedestrians and bicyclists*). He asked that Commissioners come back to the March meeting with any other recommendations for Osborne Road. He and Commissioner Foell chose to submit written comments after their review of the project, subsequent to the meeting. Residents only provided two written comments.

## 2) *New City Hall*

This topic, while not on the agenda, was introduced by the Commissioners. Commissioner Foell asked about the efficacy of foliage (*like trees and shrubs*) for stormwater absorption vs. water retention devices like cisterns. Vice Chairman Hansen stated that Coon Rapids is doing a tree box pilot project and said that Rice Creek Watershed District and project engineers will work on stormwater issues for the new site. Commissioner Westby said that paying a little more for doing finishes and systems right, not precluding solar in the design, planning raingardens and other infiltration devices, is important. He wants planning and Council to think long range with some innovation. Commissioner Hansen said that a few newer environmental concepts could be incorporated into the process, using the analogy of making the Toyota work better. He also mentioned that a nice park could be expanded upon and that Rice Creek Watershed District will have a big role in the whole project. He stated that it will be positive for Public Works to remove the large piles and to do site cleanup on an old sprawling location. Commissioner Stoxen opined that the new City Hall should have solar panels (or at least plan for them) and that removal or reduction of *Poa* species (lawn grass component), in favor of native plantings is a priority for him. Commissioner Westby asked if pollinator species can be added to the project.

## **Old Business**

A discussion led by Vice Chairman Hansen recommenced about the EQE Commissioners' top three goals for 2016. To re-cap, the group had been asked by Vice Chairman Hansen to bring their 2016 Goals and Priorities List to the meeting regarding EQEC objectives for the year and toward achievement of GreenStep Cities Step Two. Chairman Olin, who could not be in attendance, will add his priority items for 2016, as he is available to do so. Vice Chairman Hansen asked staff to turn the information below into a spreadsheet for the March meeting.

As stated in the February minutes, and repeated here for the convenience of those who could not be in attendance:

1) Vice Chairman Hansen's goals are:

- Prepare and get stormwater regulations and revisions into City ordinances in 2016. .
- Trail connectivity
- Routes to School
- Volunteer Development
- Ways to make progress in EQEC areas in the City outside of monthly meetings, with more neighbors and community members.

2) Commissioner Foell stated:

- Safe Routes to School is a focus and that he would like to see grant applications for current initiatives by the City.
- Moore Lake water quality and park re-design
- Promotion of a Mississippi St. road diet and re-design, to improve safety near schools
- Recycling in schools, in association with Anoka County programming opportunities
- Getting bike route signs and information in alignment with the 2012 Active Transportation Plan, as this was suspended after the SHIP grants were not pursued by Anoka County in 2013. Signs are in wrong place now.

3) Commissioner Velin (from Jan. meeting) declared:

- Effectiveness of street alternations for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists was a big concern.
- Volunteerism for EQEC projects through renewing of connections to the Boy Scouts.

4) Commissioner Mulrooney (from Jan. meeting) mentioned:

- Community volunteerism (like Girl Scouts)
- Trees/Parks

5) Commissioner Westby mentioned:

- Increasing stormwater infiltration and installation of a significant water improvement project in Rice Creek Watershed District is a priority for him as part of his Water Steward schooling at RCWD.
- Increasing momentum for volunteerism,
- Creating more pollinator plantings city-wide, reducing mowing of low-priority turf areas
- Food shelves as his other areas of interest.

### **Other**

Grant status: the official paperwork from the LCCMR-DNR grant has not yet come in, and some adjustments will be required to the budget. EQE Commissioners will receive e-mails about the grant, but early signs were very positive. Staff met with the organization, **Hands On Twin Cities**, one of the partners in the LCCMR grant. Their organization will work with Commissioners on volunteer capacity building in the community for installation of small trees and other projects associated with the grant. The University of Minnesota is another partner supporting the grant, as is the Conservation Corps, who will provide free labor for an element of the project, if all parameters and budget details are worked out upon grant approval.

### **Next Meetings/Announcements**

Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 7:00 p.m., location at City Hall, Conference Room A, the usual location.

### **Adjourn**

MOTION by Commissioner Westby and seconded by Commissioner Stoxen to adjourn at 9:03 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.