

CITY OF DUBUQUE - COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

GOVERNMENTAL BODY: Resilient Community Advisory Commission (RCAC)

DATE: July 13, 2023

TIME: 5:00 pm

LOCATION: Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Josh Chamberland, Katharine Connolly, Robin Kennicker, Lalith Jayawickrama, Steven Drahozal, Dean Boles, Adam Hoffman, Sandra Evans

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jake Kohlhaas

STAFF PRESENT: Gina Bell, Amanda Lewis

Commissioner Kennicker called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

TEST AGENDA

MINUTES APPROVAL: Connolly motioned to approve the June minutes. Chamberland seconded. Jayawickrama, Drahozal, and Boles abstained. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Paul Schultz: 1040 Mt. Carmel Drive

Concerned about changes to the administrative code, which would increase the amount of compost in Dubuque (from 2 tons to 30 tons per week). Old administrative code is interpreted as 2 tons of food scraps and yard waste together. New requirement states that materials collected in trucks are to be processed daily. Typically, the processing for compost only occurs every several months. To capture 27% of material that goes into the landfill, it would require community consensus of how to move forward. General dilemma is to cut off composting program directly or to increase it. 553 people are currently subscribed to the composting program.

Commission requests to add a conversation about compost concerns to the September agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Bike Signage Plan – Review proposal and determine next steps regarding placement/distance/sign design

Bell showed previous document from RCAC meeting in November 2021 related to bike route connections and sign cost estimates.

Question: ECIA is having meetings with bike groups in Dubuque about routes and signage – does the City know about that?

Answer: Yes and the plan is finished. City wants to discuss the longer implementation of their plan as it relates to the City of Dubuque rather than the whole region and put something into action.

Question: Can Public Works use the standard bike signs?

Answer: Bell had a discussion with Public Works to discuss standard bike signage.

Question: What is the cost associated within the document?

Answer: It relates to the signage cost of how much it would take to create and display new bike signs.

Question: Does this include money for painted bike lanes?

Answer: No, the cost estimates are just for bike signage.

Question: Are there standard bike signs?

Answer: The Department of Transportation has standard bike signs, but they are green and most cities (including Dubuque) already use green as a main color for other signage. Many cities use black and white signs to avoid confusion with other green signs.

Comment: The question about bike signage has been up to City staff for a long time.

Evans motioned to send a letter to City Council to discuss bike routes and bike signage. Chamberland seconded. Motion carried. Chamberland will draft letter.

2. GHG inventory Preliminary Update

The City of Dubuque does a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory every three years. City contracted with Lotus Engineering & Sustainability (Lotus) to review 2018 inventory and to ensure accuracy. Lotus is also setting City staff up with data so City can continue data collection in the future. City staff members had kickoff meeting, started work plan, obtained memo with findings from 2018 inventory, and Lotus is in the process of finalizing current inventory and setting a science-based target to look at worldwide emissions to see if 50% reduction in GHG emission by 2030 is an equitable reduction number. Currently, they are working on a Business-as-Usual plan to see what would happen if no further actions are implemented. Lotus will be presenting at the City Council work session on August 7th.

Question: How do they get the energy and consumption data?

Answer: Most of it comes from Alliant and Black Hills, but Lotus has also reached out to some state offices.

Question: Will they produce an appendix as to how Lotus got the numbers (a formula for how they obtained the numbers)?

Answer: City staff can ask Lotus to mention this aspect during the work session.

Comment: The City of Dubuque eliminated the coal power plant but was converted to natural gas rather than solar.

Question: What are the GHG inventories scopes?

Answer: The GHG inventory will focus on Scope 1 and 2.

Question: Has there been a push for community-owned energy in Iowa?

Answer: Kennicker discussed previous meeting with Alliant to push for community owned energy, but Alliant did not want to fund it. The Clean Energy Districts of Iowa are pushing for community-owned energy. City of Dubuque has a franchise agreement with Alliant for 25 years, which was signed in 2018-2019.

3. Request for Education subcommittee

Boles showed chart with 4-year high school graduation rates comparing the State of Iowa and Dubuque Community School District (DCSD). High school graduation rate in DCSD has been declining over the years. When it comes to resiliency, the graduation rate is something to consider. There are about 800 students in a graduating class and DCSD currently is at a 10% decline in the graduation rate.

Question: Do the numbers include students that are homeschooled?

Answer: No, it does not. Only Dubuque Community School District (does not include Holy Family or Western Dubuque district).

Comment: The corporation that is doing all the evaluations for all the private schools, the details are only given to the Governor.

Comment: If a letter is written to City Council, Evans mentioned including some suggestions in the letter about possible actions to take.

Question: Do the schools have reasons as to why there is a decline in the graduation rate?

Answer: Boles does not know.

Comment: Kennicker has talked to some teachers, who have said that the funding has been cut and teachers are now asked to increase the class sizes.

Comment: Students are always asked to write on the computer rather than writing by hand.

Question: If commissioner is putting forth a letter to City Council, would teachers get blamed for the graduation rates?

Answer: That is a potential issue.

Chamberland motioned to invite Kate Parks to an upcoming RCAC meeting to discuss what RCAC can do to support DCSD. Evans seconded. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Policy Work – Review ordinances and policies as they relate to Climate Action Plan and determine subcommittees and where to focus plane height, urban agriculture, and tree canopy Reports from Commissioners regarding Climate Action Plan (CAP) activities (Lawn Chemicals Subcommittee Update) Evans discussed including residential properties, the Sisters' restoration plot, and a City park that are pesticide free in garden tours. A business or organization would be good to include. Evans talked to Mowing to Monarchs and the potential for volunteers to talk to others about the program. There is a potential to create an educational opportunity with different properties. Kennicker said the Parks Commission wants more pesticide free parks, but they lack capacity. Kennicker suggested talking to the Arboretum, EV Lyons, and Swiss Valley Nature Center. Boles suggested including a financial incentive for going pesticide free or creating a voucher program through the City, like the Tree Voucher Program. Bell discussed there is already a program for pesticide free parks. Green Iowa AmeriCorps Members are working on educational information about pesticide free parks. In general, many of Dubuque's parks are pesticide free, but are spot treated. Evans suggested an *adopt a park* idea or a center lane (i.e. on Grandview Ave.) Kennicker mentioned that adopting a center lane has been discussed, but the problem is staff capacity and visibility for cars. Boles suggested creating a "Pollinators Forever" program based on Dubuque Trees Forever. Chamberland had a conversation with Public Works that they use a brine solution to suppress the weeds in the green alleys.

Question: Is there a restriction on RCAC writing a Sustainable Dubuque Grant?

Answer: Bell said if the grant guidelines are met, but unclear of how to score the grant.

2. Next steps: contracts in city facilities (GRC contract + Five Flags contract + Farmers Market contract)

City Manager is open to a proposal about guidelines to start implementing waste/recycling management at city facilities. Bell will ask Marie Ware about additional city facilities that might be able to include

language in future contracts to improve recycling management. Kennicker stated that Parks Commission is always trying to include more recycling, when possible, when contracts are getting renewed. Boles discussed creating an incentive with contractors to improve waste management. Bell mentioned that comingling waste and recycling has always been a problem during large events, which leads to a lot of materials going to the landfill. There is a purchasing policy that includes buying compostable materials instead of Styrofoam, but there is a cost involved. Another idea is a durable plate/container program, but the issue is limited staff capacity to wash and redistribute reusable items.

Chamberland motioned to draft a letter to advise City Manager to having paired landfill and recycling containers at all City owned facilities. Connolly seconded. Motioned carried.

HOW DID I SHOW UP? COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

Connolly discussed creating a framework around coalition building relating to climate change and resiliency. She is gathering information from organizations in Dubuque who would like to be involved in coalition building rather than working alone.

Chamberland is providing recycling services for Music on Main Street.

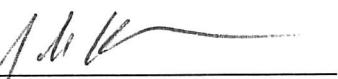
Lewis mentioned that Park(ing) Day registration is officially open and anyone is able to sign up to create a park.

Bell talked about starting Tree Voucher Program again and increasing lowest amount of tree voucher from last year from \$25 to \$75. There is nearly \$16,000 allocated for this program. The first program will take place on July 27th.

Motion to adjourn by all.

NEXT MEETING: The next commission meeting will occur on September 7, 2023, at 5 pm at the Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) in the Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

ADJOURNMENT: The Commission adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Minutes approved by: 
Jacob Kohlhaas, Commission Chair

Prepared by: 
Amanda Lewis, Climate Action Coordinator