

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes February 8, 2022

Conducted Remotely

Commission Members Present: Laura Derks (Chair), Stephen Morales, Cassandra West, Darryl Baker, Lisa Boone, Liz Lukehart.

Commission Members Absent: Colin Taylor and Mark Goldberg.

Staff Liaisons Present: Mindy Agnew, Sustainability Coordinator and Marcella Bondie Keenan, Sustainability Coordinator.

Guest Presenters Present: John Carter, Robert MacIntosh, and Eric Bell from Eastern Research Group (ERG); and Tim Kelly from the Building Code Advisory Commission (BCAC).

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Derks at 5:30p.m.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** A Motion was made to approve the agenda and it was unanimously approved with no revisions.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** A Motion was made to approve previous meeting minutes with suggested revisions, it was unanimously approved with none opposed.
4. **Public Comment:** Staff Liaison Mindy Agnew read the following public comment aloud:

Alex McLeese, Mac Robinet, Pamela Tate, Gary Cuneen, Nick Bridge:
Submitted their joint public comment sharing their eagerness to work with applicable citizen commissions on promoting building electrification in Oak Park. They cited examples of reliable electrical systems options and the environmental and community public health benefits.

5. Agenda Items:

- **Chair/Staff Liaison Report:**
 - Mindy Agnew provides a brief overview of the status of the Sustainability Fund: In 2021 the board approved appropriation of funds to enhance the Village's energy efficiency grant program. There were budget amendments made to fund the comprehensive Sustainability and Climate Action Plan and Resiliency Plan and the short-term sustainability campaign Better Homes Better Planet. The campaign costs were up to \$24,000. Another budget amendment was made for \$9,000 to fund affinity

group implementation for the Climate Action Plan. The GRaEF consultant for the climate plan funding total was \$125,000. The energy efficiency grant programs that were funded totaled \$645,000 (\$220,000 for income eligible programs, \$225,000 for solar rebates, and \$200,000 for energy efficiency upgrades).

- Chairperson Derks asks if those funds have been taken out of the 2021 sustainability fund already so we can see how much is left? Mindy Agnew responds that the money is removed from the sustainability fund as invoices come in and the deductions are in process. The 2022 budget is projected to be just over \$1 million.
- Chairperson Derks asks if that includes the \$400,000 to the Park District? Mindy Agnew responds yes, but she will double check to make sure.
- Mindy Agnew continues on to pull up the workplan and confirms that the board will approve workplans on 2/22/22.
- Chairperson Derks asks the commission members to go over their projects for the 2022 workplan.
- Stephen Morales begins discussion of single-use plastic source reduction stating that this project was difficult during the pandemic but now there is the ability and willingness from the Board of Trustees to revisit the topic in a comprehensive way. There was recently a municipal ordinance proposed in Chicago that limits the use of single-use plastic items to only those that are requested by the customer or obtained from self-service stations. He brings up the possibility of doing something similar in Oak Park. He likes that The Chicago ordinance includes a standard placard that is given to restaurants to inform customers of the need to request these items. Lisa Boone further explains that Oak Park has smaller business environment and that it might take more effort to plan. Chairperson Derks asks about the state level Styrofoam ban, he responds that it is still at the proposal stage but we should look to it to create a Village ordinance.
- Darryl Baker provides an update about collaborating with other commissions. He attended a BCAC meeting and learned a lot about what they are working on regarding electrification. He defers to them for their update later on in the meeting.
- Liz Lukehart discusses a potential collaboration between the Park District and the Village to pilot a community garden program. She mentions the possibility of creating a small grant to encourage residents to plant pollinator gardens, improve water management, or implement green infrastructure on their property. She also suggests working with the Village to identify and propose green community space locations. Lisa Boone and Cassandra do not have anything to add but agree that these are good ideas. Chairperson Derks says these could be great Earth Month activities in March and to make any requests for materials soon.
- Mindy Agnew provides an update about the 2021 Green Awards. There is still a decision to be made about recognition, announcements, and certificates.

- Darryl Baker discusses his work with the surrounding communities. He met with two organizations in Austin and wants to put together an invite to extend to them for Oak Park activities. Liz Lukehart will leverage her connection with Seven Generations Ahead to continue bridging across communities.
 - Chairperson Derks wants to reserve time in March to discuss focus and messaging for events this year.
 - Lisa Boone asks about education and promotion around recycling as we switch to the new waste hauler? She suggests touring the recycling center before the new contract begins to gather content and information. She offers to organize it if needed. Mindy Agnew will follow up with Public Works to see if this is possible. Mindy also suggested reviewing their website content for more information ideas.
 - Chairperson Derks asks about EEC input in the climate action planning process. Marcella Bondie Keenan explains that there are joint commission meetings coming up in May in addition to the monthly updates. When the draft climate plan is available it will go to commissions for review. She offers to host a focus group with the EEC to gain more granular input.
- **S/CARP Climate Action Plan Update – GHG Inventory Overview**
 - Marcella Bondie Keenan introduces the ERG consultants for their Greenhouse gas inventory presentation.
 - ERG provides an overview of their role and tasks for the Climate Plan.
 - ERG recently completed the audit of the Village’s greenhouse gas inventories and recommended updates. Therefore, some of the information presented today may change.
 - ERG provides charts that display 2020 Oak Park GHG Emissions by category, and GHG emission trends since 2017. The primary sources of emissions are from building energy and transportation.
 - ERG discusses options for transportation data.
 - ERG answers commissioner questions about travel on I-290, building energy, carbon sequestration from trees and parks, and comparison to other communities, and the Illinois energy mix.
 - Sustainability Coordinator Bondie Keenan states that the Village is working to close all data gaps this month, including the Illinois energy mix, before presenting a revised version of the inventory to the Board of Trustees.
 - There is general discussion of community wide energy benchmarking and building electrification.
- **Better Homes Better Planet Campaign Update:**
 - Mindy Agnew provides a brief update on the energy efficiency campaign. The website has been updated with a countdown of the funds remaining. There have been 500+ website inquiries. To date there are 14 applications in the process for approval: 3 for income eligible rehabs (~\$13,000); 5 for solar rebates (~\$50,000); and 6 for energy efficiency upgrades that are

mostly for insulation (~\$30,000). So far, a total of about \$90,000 has been used leaving plenty of room for more applicants. There is a new promo video on the YouTube channel, feel free to share!

- Chairperson Derks asks if there is a list on the website of all the upgrades that are included? Mindy Agnew responds the process that the resident fills out a form on the website with their interests, this form is sent to her email and she responds with a list from the specific grant guidelines.
- **Energy Stretch Code Information:**
 - Tim Kelly from BCAC reiterates that the BCAC acknowledged the board's workplan objective for electrification and their role is to amend the building codes. They chose an October deadline in order to have time to develop presentations and discuss topics such as electrification infrastructure, envelope testing, finding building leaks, and tracking energy usage per building.
 - Chairperson Derks suggests creating a subgroup with members from EEC and BCAC to focus on ordinances for energy benchmarking and requiring electrification for all new commercial buildings. She wants to offer support to ensure that whatever recommendations that BCAC brings to the Board are adopted.
 - Darryl Baker asks if there is still a plan to implement a stretch code? Tim Kelly answers no because there is a new statewide code next year.
 - Stephen Morales asks if the EEC will be talking to businesses about energy benchmarking or who will provide guidance? Chairperson Derks suggests looking at Chicago and Evanston that have benchmarking ordinances.
 - **New Business:**
 - There is one commissioner opening.
 - Stephen Morales mentions that all of the Village Manager candidates are supportive of the EEC and sustainability.
 - Chairperson Derks reiterates having a discussion in March about community gardens and Earth month.
6. **Adjourn:** At 7:00 p.m. a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

The next EEC meeting is planned for March 8 at 5:30pm.