

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Acting Chair Wozniak called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. and at his request, Public Works Director Marc Culver called the roll.

Present: Acting Chair Joe Wozniak; and Members Michael Joyce, Member Michael Kruse, and Nancy Misra

Absent: Chair Brian Cihacek, Members Thomas Trainor, and Martin Kors (Excused)

Staff Present: Public Works Director Marc Culver; and City Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer

2. Public Comments

Ms. Keeley, East Metro Regional Manager for Conservation Minnesota, introduced herself to the Commission and announced on April 13th from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Congregation at 511 Groveland Avenue in Minneapolis there is an Environmental Commission Conference that Conservation Minnesota is co-sponsoring Alliance for Sustainability, Green Step Cities, and Metro Certs. She noted breakfast and lunch will be provided. She indicated there is a signup online.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated Green Steps was mentioned as a part of the event and the Commission is responsible for the City addressing the Green Step goals and he believed the City is at Green Step three.

Mr. Culver stated the City is at step two but plan to be at step three this year.

Ms. Keeley stated there will be a couple of Commissions at the event at step four and working towards step five which might be a good resource to ask questions.

Acting Chair Wozniak thought it would be helpful for the Commission to meet with other city commissions that address the same topics that Roseville does to learn from them.

Commissioner Misra asked what Conservation Minnesota is about and what other cities might be present at the event.

Ms. Keeley stated Conservation Minnesota working within the State of Minnesota on State issues. A lot of stuff Conservation Minnesota works on, especially in the first part of the year, is Legislative based. She stated Conservation Minnesota endorses candidates and as a 501c3, 501c4 and a Small Pac. She noted Conservation Minnesota endorses candidates who have good records on environmental issues, a lot of community outreach is done to connect community members with their elected official in order to translate what is important to Minnesotans as far as environmental issues.

Ms. Keeley stated at the conference the Cities of Shoreview, Maplewood, Stillwater, and Bloomington. She noted it will not be Minneapolis, or St. Paul but mainly the outer metro region represented at the event, so it is a lot more unique to smaller cities to talk about what the big issues and successes are.

Member Joyce asked if Conservation Minnesota did anything with wind energy.

Ms. Keeley stated Conservation Minnesota does a little bit with wind energy but there is not anyone who works in Southwest Minnesota but something Conservation Minnesota is looking at because that is where some of the Counties need some support in talking to Boards about wind energy. She stated one of the big pieces of Legislature Conservation Minnesota is behind is the Clean Energy First Legislation that Governor Wahls announced a couple of weeks ago.

3. Approval of February 26, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Comments and corrections to draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC commissioners prior to tonight's meeting and those revisions incorporated into the draft presented in meeting materials.

Mr. Culver noted Chair Cihacek sent him a couple of minor changes to the minutes, one of which he re-wrote one of his statements to clarify.

Motion

Member Joyce moved, Member Kruse seconded, approval of the February 26, 2019 meeting minutes as amended.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Election of Officers

Public Works Director Culver stated the Commission is asked to elect a chair, vice-chair and a member to serve on the Ethics Commission.

Acting Chair Wozniak wondered if this item should be postponed due to the number of members absent from the meeting. He indicated he was a little uncomfortable with electing these positions without all of the members present.

Mr. Culver stated Chair Cihacek indicated he was still interested in serving as Chair of the Commission if the rest of the members were fine with that. He stated if there is not any controversy on who the Commission is electing then he thought it was certainly appropriate to elect the different positions with the current quorum of Commissioners.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated with that being said he would open up the floor for nominations.

Member Misra stated she would like to nominate Member Cihacek and Acting Chair Wozniak to continue as Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission.

Motion

Member Misra moved, Member Kruse seconded, appointing Cihacek as Chair of the Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Motion

Member Misra moved, Member Kruse seconded, appointing Wozniak as Vice-Chair of the Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Mr. Culver noted the Commission needs to elect a representative to the Ethics Commission but could be tabled until all the members or most of the members are present. He noted Member Trainor was the Commission's representative on the Ethics Commission. Chair Cihacek took over that role early this month but was not sure Chair Cihacek was interested in serving that role going forward.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if there were any members interested in serving as liaison to the Ethics Commission.

Mr. Culver explained to the Commission what the Ethics Commission is required to do.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated he was not hearing any interest from any of the present Commissioners.

Mr. Culver stated he would send out an email and asked the Commissioners to consider being a representative on the Ethics Commission. He noted he would bring this back at the April meeting.

5. Communication Items

Mr. Culver stated the City Council filled the vacancies on the various Commissions. He stated Ms. Stephanie Hammer was appointed to the Public Works Commission. He noted Ms. Hammer has been a Roseville resident for thirteen years.

City Engineer Jesse Freihammer provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated March 26, 2019.

Mr. Freihammer stated the 35W/MNPass lane will be starting shortly and will have some major impacts within the City. MNDot already has some closures, one is Southbound Snelling Avenue to Southbound Hamline Avenue; that exit, and left-hand turn lane will be closing beginning next week.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if that exit will stay closed.

Mr. Freihammer stated right now it is a temporary closure but there is a possibility it will become permanent.

Mr. Culver stated MNDot plans on doing a cable median project there in the next couple of years and the City is anticipating and in favor of the median to be closed permanently.

Mr. Culver reviewed the 2019 overall staging of the 35W project with the Commission.

Member Misra asked if all of the current lanes be available during the winter.

Mr. Culver believed 35W will be back to three lanes in each direction but was not certain.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if MNDot will be working on the north bound right thru lane to begin with.

Mr. Culver stated starting April 1st, North bound 35W will be down to two lanes for the rest of the summer.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if there will still be a way to get from 36W to 35N.

Mr. Culver stated he did not believe MNDot was not closing any of those access points.

Acting Chair Wozniak if the Cleveland Avenue/County Road C exit will remain open.

Mr. Freihammer stated Northbound will remain open, eventually Southbound will be closed later in the summer for up to 120 days.

Mr. Culver noted MNDot does have a website for the project and an email list if people want to stay up-to-date and the City also has a link on the website to the MNDot site.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked what major impacts the construction will have on the people in Roseville.

Mr. Culver stated the biggest issues that the residents in Roseville will have is to commute to work or to a cabin, if going Northbound, otherwise the major impact to Roseville will be traffic diverting to Snelling and Cleveland Avenues.

Mr. Freihammer continued with project updates.

Member Joyce asked if there would be anyway to turn the solar panels on starting on Earth Day, April 22nd.

Mr. Culver stated that is one of the dates staff identified as a potential ceremony date because there will be a City Council meeting that evening.

Acting Chair Wozniak indicated the organic site at the leaf compost site was moving forward to the Council and is currently being designed and should be ready by the summer.

Member Misra asked if the organic site will only be a collection site.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated it will be just a drop off site. People will put their organic waste in a compostable bag provided by the County and available by the City. This will be contained organic waste.

6. Commercial Utility Analysis

Mr. Freihammer provided a brief review and update on Commercial Rate Analysis in the staff report dated March 26, 2019.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if Richfield has noticed any change in revenue or fees as a result of having irrigation meters.

Mr. Freihammer stated he did not ask Richfield that question and Richfield did not give staff any feedback on that. He did not think the irrigation meters were meant to be a revenue generator, but staff could follow up with Richfield on that. He stated the secondary intent of establishing the irrigation meters was for larger commercial properties and does protect them from incurring sanitary sewer charges.

Mr. Freihammer reviewed the variety of ways to charge water rates for Commercial properties.

Member Joyce asked if the City has always separated residential, commercial real estate on a commercial rate.

Mr. Freihammer stated as far as he knows the City has but he would have to do some more research. He noted it has not been recently.

Member Joyce stated there is an advantage to not to have so many houses not to have to feed water to.

Mr. Freihammer indicated every city has it reasoning for setting up a system the way the city sets it up which is why there is such a variety of systems and almost endless options of how to go about it.

Member Kruse asked if retrofitting an irrigation meter in, does that depend on how the building is plumbed and how easy that is to do.

Mr. Freihammer stated in some cases it could be difficult and some cases it could be simple and depends on how the building was set up and how the irrigation is coming off of the building. In some cases, it could be very easy, every situation is a little different for commercial properties.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if it was the responsibility of the customer to pay for installation of an irrigation meter.

Mr. Freihammer indicated it was.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if staff knew what kind of cost savings the business would see from the avoided sewer charges on that.

Mr. Freihammer stated it depended on how much was being used but it could be really insignificant to really significant.

Member Kruse asked if there were any other water uses besides that which would not discharge to the sanitary sewer system.

Mr. Culver stated filling a pool or some other water toys like that. Other recreational uses of water or washing cars. The vast majority is irrigation.

Member Misra stated there was a slide in the presentation on water usage with a condo and three different apartments and she wondered if that slide was from Roseville.

Mr. Freihammer stated the apartments are all in Roseville and is a snapshot of four different buildings and may not be representative of water usage.

Member Misra asked why Apartment A is such an outlier.

Mr. Freihammer indicated Apartment A is a newer complex and most likely have in unit washer and dryers and also more likely to have more appliances in the facility which can make a huge difference.

Member Joyce stated water usage in an apartment or condo is not separated by unit.

Mr. Freihammer stated that was correct. The condo sample in the slide have one meter and is serving 201 units.

Member Joyce stated when trying to conserve water usage to the resident, there is no meter or metric to figure out.

Mr. Freihammer stated that was correct. There is no monetary incentive for those users in those buildings to know the resident are getting charged more.

Mr. Culver stated there are opportunities for landlords to install metering devices to each unit. Those are not City meters but meters the landlord can monitor per unit. He stated this was a newer technology and did not know if any of the Roseville apartments would have it but if the City were to implement something like this and there were incentives for the landlord to actually implement something like that, that might end up being one of the consequences of that.

Member Misra asked what the Summer Consumption column on the slide indicating.

Mr. Freihammer stated staff tried to differentiate between Summer and Winter because typically Summer the irrigation is the difference.

Member Misra stated the average Summer is 7.8 and average Winter is 7.7 and Summer consumption is 1186 on the slide for Apt A.

Mr. Culver stated 1196 is the total consumption for the year.

Mr. Freihammer stated the slide is missing the Winter consumption so if looking at the averages, Summer average is the Summer Consumption divided by the number of units so the winter average would be the Winter Consumption divided by the number of units. He indicated he must have hidden a column on the slide.

Member Misra stated Mr. Freihammer indicated there was another city that was considering a different scale for residential/commercial.

Mr. Freihammer stated there was another city that defined it differently. The city had some general commercial with apartments and senior housing. The fee schedule had multiple rates and uses. That is not typical but certainly an option.

Member Misra stated she was puzzled why the City would want to consider multi-resident buildings as commercial. At least in the summer the single-family homes are using more than the average commercial user including multi-family overall.

Mr. Culver stated this is tricky when comparing all of commercial rates to single family rates because there is a wide variety just within the multi-family residential. If the Commission were to look at all of the commercial uses out there, there is an extreme variety of water use versus residential.

Member Misra thought it makes sense to her to pass the commercial rate on to a family in an apartment or a senior living situation feels a little unfair, especially given that there might not be much irrigation done in the Summer months and if anything, there may be more conservation prone situation.

Mr. Culver stated as a recommendation, something that could be easier to implement from a City Code perspective or a policy perspective is for these multi-family residential buildings, if irrigating and have a separate irrigation meter the City would move the building off the Commercial rate but will not move the building off the Commercial rate until a separate irrigation meter is installed. That way the City can track the two differently.

Acting Chair Wozniak thought the entire Commission could support the idea of drawing more attention to water usage for non-essential items, such as pools, water related activities and even irrigation as opposed to something related to food preparation or hygiene. It seems to him that offering the option for commercial users to install an irrigation meter that will be billed at a higher rate than regular water usage but will reduce the sewer charges is one way to do that and as part of that maybe look at the multi-unit buildings and offer that option to the landlords as well. He thought those could be a couple of ideas for changes to recommend to the water rates which he thought was the City goal was, to decide whether or not if the rates are fine the way it is or if there are some tweaks the City can make to them to encourage water conservation.

Member Joyce thought the timers or sensors would be a great benefit.

Mr. Culver reviewed different sensors and timers available and what is required.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated another option would be to change the rate structure to charge more for irrigation than what would be charged for regular usage.

Mr. Freihammer stated that was correct.

Mr. Culver stated the only issue with that is reaching some sort of compromise because the vast majority of the City's irrigation users do not have an irrigation meter, so staff is guessing how much water the user is using for irrigation.

Member Kruse stated if the irrigation rate is higher then there would not be any incentive for people to get an irrigation meter.

Mr. Culver stated that was correct unless there was some other threshold where the rate would be higher without the meter.

Member Misra stated the Commission is thinking like residential users because the discussion has been about irrigation as the main use of water which is probably true in a lot of cases but for the commercial users who are true industrial users their water use is probably based on something else and in that case the incentive might be finding ways to recycle water as an example, she did not know if the City can prescribe that for all users or that the City can anticipate for commercial users to looking at irrigation as the answer. She thought it was when looking at residential users but when looking at commercial users it is very different and will be very hard to figure out. Another thought is she still felt a resident in Roseville is a resident whether the person lives an apartment or a condo or a house and she did not think the resident should have to pay the highest rates in the City because the person happens to be renting or living in a multi-unit dwelling. She thought somehow the City needs to distinguish the commercial accounts from residential based accounts within the commercial segment in the City and those residents get charged on a residential scale rather than a commercial scale. She thought the City should also keep the Summer Tiered rate for those residents. The remainder of the commercial accounts, she did not know if installing an irrigation meter was sensible.

Acting Chair Wozniak thought it might be sensible for some which is why if he were to suggest it, he wouldn't make it a mandate, he would make it an option for commercial accounts.

Mr. Freihammer indicated it already was an option and probably why the commercial businesses that have one have done it already because those businesses are irrigating so much and want the charge off their sewer bill.

Mr. Culver thought through some communication to the commercial users it could be suggested to install an irrigation meter to lower their sewer bill.

Member Joyce asked how the City can ensure that the residential billing is applied to commercial residents through the landlord and ensure the resident is actually seeing the reduction in the water cost. He noted the City could lower the rate but no guarantee the landlord will lower the rent. He stated what the City is trying to get to is smart water use so what is the incentive.

Member Misra stated if the City were to look at a tiered service on the commercial side, is there a logical cut off point because she thought there was for residential.

Mr. Culver stated one recommendation that is on the table is establishing a new tier at 50,000 gallons for the residential. He did not know if a dollar amount was defined but at least looking at that and establishing a new higher tier at that level so on the commercial side did the Commission want to do something similar. He did not think it was as clear on the commercial side going from Winter to Summer.

Mr. Freihammer stated on the commercial side the one downfall he sees is the difference in commercial users. Every single-family resident is very similar to most others.

Member Misra thought the City would really want to incentivize conservation for the commercial users and cost seems to be the best way to do that.

Member Joyce asked what kind of bills the users were seeing because he thought the businesses were conscious of the water use by what is being paid.

Mr. Freihammer stated it is a very large bill for the significant commercial users.

Mr. Culver indicated the businesses base fee is significantly higher with a larger meter and service coming in along with all of the consumption.

Member Misra did not think it seemed that significant to her if the user is using 300 thousand gallons at \$3.00 for a thousand gallons.

Mr. Culver reviewed the Commercial Water Rate Analysis graph with the Commission.

Member Kruse asked what would happen with the large users if their costs were plotted in each city in the Metro, would the costs be similar even though the structures are different.

Mr. Culver stated that is an interesting thing and would be more variability in those costs than the Commission thought. He stated there are other factors to consider as well besides water use.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated Member Misra's idea to move multi-unit families from commercial to residential rates, but he was not sure if Member Misra was suggesting installing an irrigation meter as part of that or would that be an incentive for them to move over to the residential rate.

Member Misra thought that option was there.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated the option is there, but it could also be made a requirement to install an irrigation meter if moving to residential rates. He wondered if the Commission was close to making some recommendations about rates or does the Commission need another meeting to talk about this with other members.

Member Joyce thought more members should give their input.

Mr. Culver suggested maybe the Commission should hire a consultant who has a lot of expertise in setting water rates. He noted other cities have done this. The consultant could come back with recommendations and what has been done effectively in other communities nationally. He indicated he did not know what the cost of the study would be, there is not anything in budget for this, but it could be looked at to see about budgeting for it and recommending to the City Council. That could potentially be a much more intense approach.

Member Misra thought the Commission had a pretty good idea of Roseville and what it is as a community. She stated Roseville is mostly residential and a lot of the commercial is not highly industrial. Where she was having trouble is that it was pretty easy to figure out the tiers for the residential usage but does not feel as clear to figure it out for the commercial usage. She guessed if the City took all of the residential water use out of commercial and look at what is left, it is probably a pretty small number of users that use a lot of water either for irrigation or whatever the industrial use is. One of the things the City could do is once all of the residential users are taken out, increase the tiered rate, not by adding tiers but by going from 295 and 315 to 315 and 325 for example. Then the City is not looking at residential use and she thought it was fair to say that people who are using water as a source for promoting their business have a reason to pay for it in a different way.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked staff if that made sense and something the City could do. He stated in terms of making multi-units a residence, he would be interested in making that decision based on more than four randomly selected examples out of the hundred or so the City has.

Mr. Freihammer stated staff could come back with some language to define the properties as something different and try to look a little more at the data.

Acting Chair Wozniak did not think the Commission was coming to any other recommendation other than what Member Misra suggested.

Mr. Culver stated staff can pull the multi-family residential users out of the commercial users and bring the information back to the Commission.

Acting Chair Wozniak asked if staff could explore what a consultant would charge for a study.

Mr. Culver stated he would look further into consultant costs.

7. Items for Next Meeting – April 2019

Discussion ensued regarding the April PWETC agenda:

- Environmental Sustainability

Ms. Priscilla Morton, 2593 Western, stated having to do with many development items that are a part of the packet, it seemed as if the developers were taking down a lot of forestry which would be carbon sync. There is a tree preservation ordinance which is really dense, and part of the Green Step activities and the ordinance does not prevent anyone from taking down acres of trees. She stated in terms of environmental protection, specifically greenhouse gas, trying to lower the footprint, she wondered if that was being taken into account. She did not know how important a few acres of trees were. That was one point that she wondered if the Commission and City considered when these developments are approved.

Mr. Culver stated without officially changing the Tree Preservation Ordinance the City cannot prevent a developer from taking down less trees than allowed through that and the City Council is very aware of this and staff tries their best to police that.

Ms. Morton stated she was speaking up to make sure the City is thinking of these things. She stated another item is as development is added is the City increasing its carbon footprint, unless it is actually a net zero building, it does mean the City is increasing the challenge of getting to minus eighty percent by 2050 so she did not see any signs indicating the development is a net zero building.

Mr. Culver stated that is not a requirement within Building Code.

Ms. Morton stated that is the reason she brought this up because this is the low hanging fruit of getting to that minus eighty when it is brand new construction. This is where people spend the least amount of money to get to net zero when it is brand new. She thought this is something to consider when new development or major remodels are done in the City.

Ms. Morton stated with all of the road resurfacing being done in the City, light colored road surfacing reflects more and is probably a tiny assistance to the heat sink factor. She thought this was something to consider.

Acting Chair Wozniak stated County Road C will be concrete when redone and those points that Ms. Morton brought up are all important as Green Team Members, as Commission Members those points are a little more aligned with the Planning Commission with proposed developments. He would encourage Ms. Morton to talk to the Planning Commission with this issue as well.

8. Adjourn

Motion

Member Misra moved, Member Joyce seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:40 p.m.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.