

Decorah Sustainability Commission Minutes

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

5:45 – 7:00 pm, In person and via Zoom

Members present: Jim Tripp, Molly McNicoll, Ann Mansfield, Jeremy Lietz, Jim Martin-Schramm, Jessie Joyner, Hailey Abbey

Not present: Aaron Detter,

Others present: Travis Goedken, Emily Neal, Alex Rosenow, Mayor Borowski, John Schroeder, Kent Klocke, Marla Klocke, Kirsten Olson,

1. Call to order
 - a. Jim Martin Schramm called the meeting to order at 5:48 pm
2. Approval of November meeting minutes by Ann Mansfield (attached)
 - a. Motion made by Jeremy Leitz to approve. Seconded by Jim Tripp. Approved unanimously.
3. Updates
 - a. Future vacancy on commission: Jeremy Leitz
 - Tim Wagner has applied, been recommended by Mayor Borowski, and appointed by the City Council at their last meeting. Tim will join us at our next meeting in January.
 - b. City Council directive to DSC regarding citizen education about MEU referendum on March 4 (Travis Goedken and Emily Neal)
 - Council has asked the DSC to put a working group together to disseminate information to the public by the City Council. The information is currently being reviewed by the Iowa Ethics Board. The city attorney and Alliant have reviewed and approved the language.
4. Action Items
 - a. Establish a Decorah MEU Citizen Education Task Force to design and implement a communications plan per the City Council's instructions and \$15,000 budget.
 - Motion to establish a working group to design and implement a Decorah MEU citizen education communications plan per the City Council's limitations, made by Molly McNicoll. A second was made by Michelle Barness. Motion carried unanimously.
 - Jim reached out to each member of the DSC to ask if they are interested

and have the time to serve on a working group of the commission to design and implement a Decorah MEU citizen education communications plan.

- Jim Tripp, Jessie Joyner, Aaron Detter and Jim Martin Schramm have agreed to be members of this working group. A motion made by Molly McNicoll to approve the membership of this group. A second by Hailey Abbey. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Make a recommendation to the Decorah City Council regarding a \$10,000 funding request from Sunflower Child and Development Center to fund the water table exhibit in the Discovery Center

- Review Original November 7 email by Stephanie Fromm (attached) regarding Sunflower Child Development and Discovery Center's Funding Request for \$10,000 (attached)
- Review Response of Stephanie Fromm (12-04-24) to request for more information by the DSC on 11-22-24. (attached)
- John Schroerer, Sunflower Treasurer, shared additional information regarding Sunflower's request;
 - SF is a non profit, heavily supported by the community
 - Reviewed Sunflower Project Sources & Uses Fact sheet
 - Offered to have DSC members come out and tour
- Jim Martin-Schramm pointed out that the DSC's FY 2025 DSC budget included \$7,500 for Sustainability Education Initiatives and \$10,000 for Childcare Initiatives
 - Jim moved to use the \$7,500 for sustainability education and \$2,500 from the childcare initiatives line to meet the \$10,000 funding request by Sunflower Discovery Center and to recommend that the City Council approve Sunflower's request.. Ann Mansfield seconded. Discussion; Cost for Discovery center is \$250/family of 6, daily pass is \$9.00. The features of the center are perfect combination of social sustainability, economic development, land use, etc. all in our sustainability plan. Keeping the support of the DSC to make sure this is a success is important. Motion carried unanimously..

5. Discussion Items (as time permits)

a. Review proposed draft revisions to the Decorah Sustainability Plan

1. Social Sustainability - Hailey Abbey and Ann Mansfield co-leaders
 - a. S.1. Wage enhancement discussions just beginning
 - b. S.2. - pair with educational outreach & communication
 - c. S.8. Representation of minorities/disabilities on boards, commissions important
 - d. Welcoming community - Important
 - e. Safety - coordinate with police
 - f. S. 5. Recommended advocacy committee could also be used by renters
 - g. S.9. - Collaborate with Land Use, Human Rights
 - h. Overlap - E.D. 1 and S.1, S.7 Wellness E.D. & Soc
 - i. Educate people re how to create accessory dwellings with zoning rules not restricting that
 - j. S. 5. Advocacy committee- UERPC representative Chris Troendle on this group
 - k. S.3. Winneshiek Energy District - where we can collaborate. Also consider developers and independent contractors to incorporate sustainability. UERPC trying to engage LMI owners/renters with sustainability options/efficiency improvements CHECK - overlap with Economic Development and
 - l. S.5. Advocacy group - Nuisance property needs a definition- city code?
 - m. S.8. How can we (DSC) help the council recruit people with disabilities and minority status. Library might be a good resource

2. Waste section
 - a. F/U probably needed re. recycling bins that are still being misused as trash.
 - b. Like the simplicity
 - c. Have we considered the life of the current landfill? DNR regulations include funds for closure. The landfill is owned by several counties. It has been explored to use the methane generated but it was determined to be cost-prohibitive.
 - d. W.3 or W.5. Home composting added?
 - e. New action item - can we have baseline data for decision-making? Previous DSC discussion re. baseline data; for example, have

worked with UNI CEEE to gather waste disposal tonnage but it's not perfect as the trucks do pick up at other locations that are not in Decorah.

- f. Curbside recycling- Malcom no longer does the recycling because of staffing. This should be a high priority. Municipalization seems to make sense. Winneshiek County recycling can be more efficient if you change the system to single stream plan. W.1. Is this action; a priority.
- g. Additional emphasis - do what we can to extend the life of the landfill.
- h. W.1. Efficient system -what is this and who determines? Actually it's to research options.
- i. W.2. Increased efficiency - fuel used to transport, collection efficiencies, etc.
- j. W.3 Develop and recommend education efforts and name those that exist.
- k. W.4. Should this have a target? Some reluctance from public works director re unrealistic expectations.
 - Communication and Educational - January 2025
 - Transportation - January 2025

6. Other Business

7. Adjourn

- a. Motion made by Michelle Barness . Seconded by Jim Tripp. Unanimously passed.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.
- c. Next meeting is January 15, 2025 in the public meeting room of the Decorah Public Library.

Minutes drafted by Ann Mansfield