

A meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission (SEC) was called to order by Pat Nelsen at 6:03 p.m. on Thursday, June 11, 2026, in the Council Chambers of Grand Haven City Hall.

Present: Pam Blough, Ryan Cotton, James Hagen, Pat Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, Dan Small, Andrei Skelly

Absent: Jean Madden

Also present: Eric Law (Administrative Liaison), and Rob Shelly, General Manager of the Board of Light & Power (BLP) attended part of the meeting to discuss the Community Solar Garden project.

Call to Audience: Larry Burns and Jan O'Connell were in attendance but did not make public comment.

Previous Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

AGENDA

Other Business: This part of the agenda was moved to the beginning of the meeting to accommodate Rob Shelly's request to present to the SEC about the BLP's plan for a Community Solar Garden. As reported in the Grand Haven Tribune, the BLP is planning to construct a 300,000 watt solar array on vacant property near the airport. Mr. Shelley reported that registration has opened for all residential, commercial and industrial customers served by the BLP. Customers can purchase shares of the solar array in 300 watt increments for \$570 per share. Participants will receive monthly electric bill credits based on the renewable energy generated by their share of the Community Solar Garden. The BLP needs to sell 1/3rd of the shares before proceeding with the plan. Registration is open until Dec. 15, 2026. Once a customer purchases a share, there is a 20-year commitment. If the customer moves to another residence within the BLP service area, the share will transfer to the new address. If the customer moves outside the service area, the share may remain with the property for the new homeowner or be donated to a nonprofit organization. The BLP also plans to pursue grant funding for the project. Any grant funds received would be used to reduce the purchase price of shares. The estimated payback period for a share is approximately 20 years. Mr. Shelly requested assistance from SEC members in promoting the project and asked the

Commission to consider providing a letter of support for future grant applications.

Holland Home Energy Waste Reduction (EWR): Cotton explained how the EWR program operates in Holland. Holland Energy 101 has support from both the City Council and the Holland Board of Public Works. Cotton expressed interest in developing a similar program in Grand Haven to promote greater energy efficiency and improve home comfort. Such a program would likely require support from both the City and the BLP to be most effective. BLP General Manager Shelly noted that Home Energy Assessments (HEAs) are currently available through Efficiency United, a statewide program offered through participating utilities, including the BLP. He questioned whether additional City-sponsored EWR programming would be necessary. Mr. Shelly was uncertain whether income eligibility requirements apply to the program. Following the discussion, an SEC member confirmed that income requirements apply to Home Energy Assessments offered through the BLP. However, Michigan Gas customers may qualify without income restrictions if they have a natural gas water heater.

City Snowmelt System: Hagen expressed concern about the impact of the downtown Grand Haven snowmelt system, which is heated entirely by natural gas, on greenhouse gas emissions. Based on the cubic feet (CCF) of natural gas consumed, it was estimated that approximately 1.8 million pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) were emitted during the 2025–2026 heating season. Hagen reported that he had also raised this issue during a recent City Council meeting.

City Energy Consumption: Hagen asked whether the City tracks its total energy consumption by facility and energy source, including natural gas, electricity, gasoline, and diesel fuel. Discussion noted that utility consumption data should be available through metered natural gas and electric accounts, while fuel consumption data should be reflected in City budget records. If this information is not already compiled, the City could consider using software to create a comprehensive energy-tracking spreadsheet. A suggestion was also made that the City consider offsetting energy use for municipal buildings and the snowmelt system through participation in the BLP's Green Energy Program, which utilizes Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs).

Balcony Solar: The Commission discussed Balcony Solar, also known as "plug-in solar," a small-scale solar panel system designed to be mounted on apartment railings, patios, or other small outdoor spaces and connected directly to a standard electrical outlet. As of June 2026, six states have enacted legislation permitting plug-in balcony solar systems, while approximately 30 states, including Michigan, are considering or advancing similar legislation aimed at reducing regulatory barriers. Further discussion regarding the potential use of Balcony Solar systems in Grand Haven was tabled for a future meeting.

Adjournment: Small made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51, supported by Nelsen, unanimously approved.