

## Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 11/14/24

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission (SEC) was called to order by Dan Small at 6:07 on Thursday, October 10th, 2024, in the Council Chambers of Grand Haven City Hall.

Present: Ryan Cotton, Brittany Goode, Jean Madden, Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, Dan Small

Absent: Pamela Blough, James Hagen, John Kinch, Jim Mathews, Andrei Skelly

Also present: Eric Law (Administrative Liaison)

1. Call to audience. No public comment. Jan O'Connell, Georgette Sass, Larry Burns, and three Grand Valley State College (GVSU) students present.

2. Previous Meeting Minutes unanimously approved.

## AGENDA

### Forest Management Update: Jean Madden.

- Dr. Ali Locher from GVSU presented the results of a "Tree Inventory" that was completed for Duncan Woods, Mulligan's Hollow and the Cemetery. Most of the forests are made up of Eastern Hemlock, Oak, and American Beech. Many the Beech trees are infected with Beech Scale especially along the trails. Many Oak trees have Oak Wilt. They are especially important to the area because they keep the sand dunes intact. However they have difficulty reestablishing themselves due to deer grazing. Dr. Locker reported that the forests sequester 6 million pounds of carbon per year (equivalent to the emissions of 600 cars). Trees in the area have a significant ecological benefit. Madden reports that an invasive tree species, Ailantus ("The Tree of Heaven") have been treated with herbicide to inhibit their growth. Cotton motioned that the results of the Tree Inventory be shared with the City Manager with recommendation that it be shared with City Council to provide support of the "Save Our Forests" efforts to protect the City's trees. Madden supported. Unanimous support for the resolution.
- Madden reports that Larry Burns and Jim Mathews have been working on the mechanics of obtaining a reasonably accurate count of the deer population in the City. They suggest a drone "test flight" of approximately 4 hours over public property using a high definition camera that will take pictures of red heat sources that will confirm if its a deer. Additionally, a thermal camera can be placed on a truck to find the deer that are not in the forests. Once the data is obtained, a DNR expert can present the data to City council. Cotton motioned that the Sustainability and Energy Commission has resolved to support a test flight of the

city's thermal imaging drone in combination with a truck-mounted thermal imaging camera (Berg's Pest Control of Rose City, MI) to provide a preliminary estimate of deer throughout the city at a combined cost of approximately \$2,500.00 to be reimbursed through the "Save our Forests" funds at the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation. Madden supported the motion. Unanimous support for the resolution.

## 2. Community Energy Plan: Ryan Cotton

Members of the SEC received draft copy of the CEP a few days prior to this meeting. There was discussion about the plan and some suggestions were made. Cotton gave presentation about the Holland Energy Plan which originally included deep home retrofits (goal of reducing energy waste by 50% in participating homes) and then evolved over time into Holland's "Energy 101" initiative (goal of 15% energy waste reduction by offering basic weatherization incentives to homeowners and landlords).

Ryan Cotton moved, and Dan Small supported, to recommend that the City Manager present the Northwest Ottawa Community Energy Plan to the Grand Haven City Council -- inclusive of her recommendations of which policies should be selected, and including which "good, better, or best" strategy options are recommended for adoption -- with the expectation of implementation between 2025 and 2030. Goode abstained. Unanimous approval from other members.

Final Call to Audience: No public comments.

Adjourn: Small made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 PM. Madden supported. Unanimous approval.