

Sustainability & Energy Commission Minutes 4/10/25

A regular meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission (SEC) was called to order by Dan Small at 6:05 on Thursday, April 10, 2025, in the Council Chambers of Grand Haven City Hall.

Present: Pamela Blough, James Hagen, Jean Madden, Jim Mathews, Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, Dan Small

Absent: Ryan Cotton, Brittany Goode, John Kinch, Andrei Skelly

Also present: Eric Law (Administrative Liaison)

1. Call to audience: Jan O'Connell of the Sierra Club provided information about Earth Day on April 26th to be held at the Temple Lounge in Spring Lake. She also provided information on an upcoming speaker for the Wege Foundation.
2. Previous Meeting Minutes approved.

AGENDA

1. Forest Management Update: Madden reports no updates on the Mulligan's Hollow Trail System grant or the deer management plan work session. Law suggested that the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation might have funding opportunities for community projects.
2. Energy Task Force Update: Nelsen reports that the North Ottawa Community Energy Plan (NOCEP) was approved by the Ferrysburg planning commission last fall and by the Ferrysburg Council on March 17 with a 5-2 vote. They have a growing interest in residential energy retrofits. Grand Haven Township (GHT) Council discussed the NOCEP on March 24th and scheduled a work session for Monday, April 14 at 6 PM. to get more information on aspects of the plan. The Grand Haven City Council will review NOCEP on April 14. Both the SEC and City administration recommend adopting the plan, with implementation directed by the City Manager. Individual actions involving budgetary expenditures will require City Council approval. Cotton and Gary Post (NOCEP committee chairperson) met with City Manager Latsch and Rob Shelly (Board of Light and Power Manager) to discuss grant funding for a temporary, part-time residential energy advisor.
3. Prioritization Survey Results: Madden presented results of the Prioritization surveys based on Michigan Green Communities and NOCEP sustainability initiatives. Key goals identified by the SEC: Assist staff in implementing the NOCEP; Review city ordinances and policies and recommend sustainable alternatives for energy efficiency, renewable energy and land use; Implement a

city-wide tree canopy improvement project; Enhance healthy, low-impact transportation infrastructure and transit options; Improve residential, municipal and business recycling and composting levels. The next step is to rank goals in order of importance, and determine the feasibility of pursuing multiple projects simultaneously.

4. Burns provided an update on urban forest management in Grand Haven. Key achievements in 2024: the City transitioned from reactive to preventive measures; thirty-five trees that were unsafe were removed including six with potential Oak Wilt disease; hemlocks were treated for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) in Lake Forest Cemetery, Mulligan's Hollow, and Highland Park; twenty new trees were planted in the Dunes, and native grass planting will start next fall; conducted drone surveys that detected no new Oak Wilt epicenters. In 2025, drone flights will be expanded to include Highland Park. Burns also provided information for the management and mitigation of Oak Wilt, HWA, and Beech Bark Disease. Without management treatment and mitigation, "We could lose 60%-90% of our tree canopy to invasive species if left untreated."

Other Business: (a.) Earth Day is April 26th in Spring Lake at the Temple Lounge, noon- 4PM. (b.) A NOCEP celebration is planned for May 6th.

Final Call to Audience: no additional comments.

Adjourn: Small made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Madden supported.
Unanimous consent.