Environment Committee Minutes

August 26th, 2015

In attendance: Steve Yetter, Tim Wulling, Michael Russelle, Amanda Yang, Daniel Sarasti, Matt Hass, Betty Wheeler, Wanjiru Mugo

Staff: Cailin Rogers

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| Minutes and agenda | The minutes from last month were approved unanimously. |
| Neighborhood Energy Connection | Rebecca Olson from the NEC came to present on the work they do on energy and how individuals in the area can use their services. The NEC helps home dwellers identify the work that needs to be done in their homes and then connect them with contractors. Xcel subsidizes the energy audit so it costs $60-$100. They look at appliance efficiency, lighting, air leakage, sealing, etc. They hope to win a contract for multi-family tests from Xcel to do energy tests in apartments. Their Home Energy Squad helps to weatherstrip doors, get water saving devices, insulate water heater tanks, and more. The NEC can help you find rebates for making these energy upgrades as well. They have done a lot of work on the Energy Fit Homes Certification to publicize the heightened re-sale value of homes that pass this. Other NEC programs include: HOURCAR, multi-family assessments for developers, and greater MN gas. |
| Community Garden Proposed Easement | Sue Conner and Sherm Eagles from the Community Garden joined this conversation along with Ferd Peters to discuss a railroad-requested permanent easement on the land the community garden shares. The committee heard from Ferd to de-construct the legal jargon in the proposal from the railroad. The group discussed concerns with the pipeline and came up with a list of questions to be answered by Ferd.  **Matt moved to approve a recommendation that the Council accepts the easement agreement with BNSF railroad subject to the following:**  **- SAPCC receives all reports conducted on the land.**  **- The MPCA reviews the agreement.**  **- If the railroad disturbs any land, they will restore it to its previous state.**  **- Complete disclosure of any VIC program involvement.**  **- If the surface needs to be disturbed, SAPCC must give approval.**  **- There can be no 30 ft rendition as in item #2 of the agreement.**  **- The company will pay $15,000 for this easement approval.**  **- They will offer a complete description of the pipeline (including depth and pipe specifications).**  **- The railroad will look into and address the feasibility of pre-collection traps.**  **- They will address de-watering concerns.**  **- SAPCC will receive a copy of all of the information and involvement of the City of St. Paul.**  **- They will address concerns about plumes.**  **- The water in the pipeline will be tested quarterly for two years (to test for organics and other contaminants) and that information will be shared with SAPCC.**  **Wanjiru seconded the motion. The approval was unanimous.** |
| MWMO Grants | The MWMO has opened up a grant proposal period for a variety of levels of grants. Betty invited the group to an MWMO event on Sept. 19 from 10:00-1:00pm. The Capitol Region Watershed District also has a grant program open. The group wants to discuss the creating more rain gardens in the neighborhood in fuller detail at the next meeting. |
| Staff Updates | Amanda updated the committee on her project. Cailin gave an overview of the other work of the Council. |
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