

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Chair Ficek called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. and at his request, Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer called the roll.

Present: Chair Bryant Ficek; and Members Jarrod Cicha, Daniel Fergus, Edwin Hodder, Allison Luongo, Des Mueller, and Sarah Rudolf

Absent: None

Staff Present: Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer; and Sustainability Specialist Noelle Bakken, and Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jim Taylor

2. Swearing in of New Commissioners

Chair Ficek performed the swearing in of New Commissioners for Daniel Fergus and Sarah Rudolf.

3. Selection of Vice Chair

Chair Ficek indicated the Commission needed a new Vice Chair and he knew Des Mueller was interested in that position, so he nominated Des Mueller.

Motion

Member Ficek moved (there was no second to the motion) to elect Des Mueller to the Vice Chair position of the PWETC.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Public Comments

None.

5. Approval of August 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Comments and corrections to draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC commissioners prior to tonight's meeting and those revisions incorporated into the draft presented in meeting materials.

Motion

Member Hodder moved, Member Mueller seconded, approval of the August 22, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Abstain: 2 (Fergus, Rudolf)

Motion carried.

6. Communication Items

Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated September 26, 2023.

Sustainability Specialist Bakken updated the Commission on sustainability work being done in the city.

Chair Ficek thanked staff for setting up a tour at the recycling center. He thought it was great and would encourage more people to take the tour.

Member Mueller agreed and thought the tour was really eye opening and perfect timing for the tour.

Member Fergus asked what the Partners in Energy program was about.

Ms. Bakken explained the program to the new Commissioners.

7. Emerald Ash Borer & City Tree Update

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jim Taylor updated the Commission on the Emerald Ash Borer and the City tree programs.

Chair Ficek thanked Mr. Taylor for the presentation. He asked if any of the Commissioners had questions or comments.

Member Mueller indicated Mr. Taylor touched on the one-year upkeep for the trees and he also mentioned AmeriCorps. She wondered if the City was doing more than one year of upkeep because it takes a couple of years to get a tree established.

Mr. Taylor explained the one-year upkeep is in the contract, but the City will make sure the trees are kept up moving forward, which is why he brought up a three-year

plan with either AmeriCorps workers or through grant funding. The contractor is required to do the tree upkeep for the first year.

Member Mueller appreciated Mr. Taylor touching on the need to protect the investment the City has made because that is where her mind goes.

Member Hodder asked regarding resiliency, with climate change the Minnesota zone has been changing and he wondered how the City is preparing for that change in the canopy from climate change.

Mr. Taylor thought when the City first started this there was not talk about what the ongoing maintenance was going to be and that is why he thought the City was committed to moving forward and need to put specific resources in to just maintaining all of the trees that are being planted. That is one of the reasons why the City will need to redo its Natural Resources Master Plan and the Urban Forestry Master Plan to talk about what the City is going to do moving forward to deal with some of those things. He thought in the short term staff knows the City needs to put resources into taking care of the investment and he thought in the long term the City needs to plan accordingly for resiliency and the changes in the climate through the City's natural resources planning and the City's Forestry Update Master Plan.

Member Mueller explained it is great to be focusing on the newly planted trees, which need to be babied while being established but even established trees need care and one of the things she tries to share with people in her neighborhood and with how dry it has been trees need to be watered, especially going into winter. Even established vegetation needs care and is easy for people to forget.

Member Rudolf wondered about the degree of partnership with other communities in doing all of this. She asked to what degree is Mr. Taylor in touch with the foresters or city staff in neighboring cities. She also wondered to what degree there might be for an opportunity to partner with the U of M Forestry students because they are right there in the city's backyard.

Mr. Taylor explained as far as partnerships, there is not a lot. City staff has a lot of people asking them how the City is doing its program now because it is a little different than most of what people have done. There is an EAB regional type of group that talks Statewide. They talk about the spread of EAB and what is and is not working. The group meets quarterly throughout the year and have been a little less now that a lot of the State has started to be infested now. As far as the U of M, the City has not done any partnerships with them. One of the things that enticed the City with Tree Trust is that they have an actual training program as well. Part of the people working on the trees in the City are a part of the Tree Trust program and has been part of the focus and one of the reasons why the City picked this contractor. The City has done a lot of things with the Minnesota Forestry as well.

Member Rudolf asked about the upkeep of the inventory of trees. She wondered what the plan is for maintaining the inventory of trees.

Mr. Taylor explained one of the things the City made sure of with the contractor is that all of the data the City gets from them can be dumped into the City's current asset management software, Beehive. It will all be managed in Beehive when this is done and it will be the City's Forestry Coordinator's responsibility when a tree is removed, added, or replaced to keep that data complete and up to date.

Member Fergus understood it was important to maintain some Ash trees and, hopefully, the ash borer population will go down, but he was aware of very substantial trees on private property that are clearly sources of lots of ash borer. Mr. Taylor mentioned there was a ten percent discount with Tree Trust and he wondered if there was any possibility of incentivizing, saying if the resident gets rid of an infected tree, the City will give them another tree or something that would allow the resident to remove the tree.

Mr. Taylor thought that was a great idea and something staff will continue to look at. Right now, it is not set up that way but does not mean that moving forward the City cannot look into that and adapt to a new plan or something like that.

Chair Ficek thanked Mr. Taylor for coming to the meeting and the presentation.

Mr. Freihammer reviewed the City's tree trimming history with the Commission.

8. AARP Walk Audit

Sustainability Specialist Noelle Bakken explained staff is coordinating with resident, Bob Bierscheid, who is interested in conducting a community-wide walk audit to assess pedestrian safety within Roseville and identify possible areas of opportunity. He noted Mr. Bierscheid would like to use the AARP Walk Audit Toolkit to guide the assessment process and is looking for other interested community members to participate. He asked the Commission to provide feedback after the presentation.

Ms. Bakken introduced Mr. Bierscheid who gave a presentation to the Commission.

Member Mueller asked if the plan was to provide this to the City for consideration.

Mr. Bierscheid indicated when the audit is done it will be brought to the City to show what was done and what the public has seen. He explained there are many professionals in the City that can look at it and maybe the audit itself will need to have some corrections made to it.

Ms. Bakken explained staff's involvement will be minimal because they want to make sure that it is an unbiased account of what people are seeing. Staff will help

with the coordination and safety of the audit by making sure everyone has vests and supplies needed to conduct those audits.

Member Fergus explained he loved the idea of things being very walkable and he would appreciate it if this could also focus on the bike-ability of this.

Mr. Bierscheid explained he does bike a lot and he hopes to be able to follow up with that after the walkability audit.

Chair Ficek explained he is an engineer and being one he knows that engineers got really good at moving cars through the cities and now engineers are trying to relearn and discover that people need to get around in other ways. That is one thing that has been evolving in his own career. He indicated he is encouraged by this. He wondered if there is somewhere that the Commission can go to see the outcome of these audits. He asked if there is information from other cities.

Mr. Bierscheid indicated there is and he will get the information out to the Commission. He noted Rochester, MN just completed theirs and he talked to people, and it was very successful. He indicated the goal is to get one audit done this fall and re-evaluate that and then next spring start the whole process.

Chair Ficek thanked Mr. Bierscheid for coming and making the presentation.

9. Bench Ordinance

Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer indicated the City of Roseville has an existing bench ordinance that regulates benches in the City rights-of-way. He noted there are currently 51 benches that are installed by one company that are permitted. The ordinance was last updated in 2008. He explained after looking at other city ordinances and consulting with the City Attorney, the current ordinance could use some updates to be clearer on some items and to add some additional language. He asked the Commission to discuss and provide feedback on potential ordinance changes.

Member Rudolf indicated she was cautiously supportive of more benches because her job closely touches transit and she feels, especially on the heels of this new walkability index, really just thinking about encouraging pedestrian and alternative transportation options for people and making that more possible and she thought there was a number of situations, including older residents but also parents with children or various people after a long day of work waiting at the bus stop it would be nice to have a place to sit. In general, she is supportive. She thought there are considerations to be had for the types of advertising and the locations and number of them, but in general she was in favor of it.

Mr. Freihammer explained the one thing all the ordinances have is the bench companies propose where the benches go, and the City allows or does not allow them. He indicated these are really advertising companies and not bench companies

and the benches are placed where the traffic is. He noted the City could put a bench in a location but does not typically do that.

Chair Ficek asked if the name should be changed to courtesy bench.

The Commission was in favor of changing the name.

Chair Ficek asked if the benches should be limited to transit stops. He thought in light of how the Commission has talked about putting benches in other places and having it more walkable, he was in favor of opening this up to allow for more benches.

Mr. Freihammer indicated if there is support for benches to be in other places, the City would make sure that the benches are placed in the rights-of-way and look at the technical aspects of the placement.

The Commission discussed possible placement of benches and where current benches are placed, including transit stops.

10. CEE Program Update

Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer explained at the July Joint Council/PWETC meeting, it was discussed whether or not a revolving loan fund should be established that private property owners could utilize to make repairs to their water and sewer services. The Council mentioned that there are existing programs set up through Community Development. Staff discussed the programs with Community Development staff and learned there are various programs administered by the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE). CEE offers 5 specific programs just to Roseville residents and also offer other programs that apply to the whole county or state as well.

Mr. Freihammer reviewed the three programs, Roseville Home Improvement Loan, Roseville Senior Deferred Loan and Roseville Emergency Deferred Loan for Roseville residents only that could be used for private water and sewer repairs.

Chair Ficek thought the CEE website was pretty good with all of the different loans and requirements listed. He encouraged people to go to the website and take a look at it.

Member Mueller indicated CEE is great to work with. She noted she had done two loans over the last few years with them.

11. Future Agenda Items

Discussion ensued regarding future agenda items:

October 24, 2023

- Update on County Road B
- Envision Roseville update.

- Utility rates
- Leadfree Roseville

November 28, 2023

- Public Works – 2024 Work Plan
- Recycling RFP
- Snelling and County Road B update

Mr. Freihammer commented that Envision Roseville may not be able to make it to the October meeting and may have to postpone it until the November meeting.

12. Adjourn

Motion

Member Cicha moved, Member Luongo seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:39 p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.