

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: Thursday March. 4, 2021

TIME: Scheduled for 4:30 pm (Virtual Zoom Meeting)

PRESENT: Dan Hall, David Ruff, Niki Ciulla, Lynette Power

GUESTS: John Finn, Daniel Botz

STAFF: John Howard, Katie Grannes (Community Forestry Corps), Kelsie Travers (GreenCorps)

1. **Call to Order:** Call to order at 4:34 PM by Dan Hall (Chair)
2. **Review and Approval of Feb. 2021 Meeting Minutes:** Motion by David, second by Dan Hall. Approval unanimous.
3. **Noise Pollution:**

Dan asked for Mr. Finn to describe the noise issues he was encountering in his neighborhood just to the west of downtown. Dan stated that noise pollution can be perceived differently by people. Mr. Finn says the issue is primarily use of “Jake Brakes” in trucks. Mr. Finn explained that this method of braking utilizes the engine as an air compressor, and if installed with muffler, noise is minimal. However, many trucks have the muffler removed so they are quite loud. The noise often come from the bridge. Mr. Finn said many cities have signage notifying that use of “Jake Brakes” is not allowed, but often not enforced. Dan said Winona has this signage. Dan wonders if moving the 30 mph limit on the bridge to earlier on the incline could lead to less “Jake Braking”. Mr. Finn said this would require highway department cooperation.

Dan asked if any point sources cause issues. Mr. Finn noted one point source is rail car vibration, which creates a buzzing/humming sound, but it is not constant.

Dan asked if John had researched state and local ordinances about noise pollution. John said the City has a code chapter related to noise pollution, and shared it on his screen. John will shared the code with the CEQC and meeting attendees. John stated that the code prohibits modifying vehicles to create unnecessary noise, and how has limits on noise in residential areas. Thus, the City may be able to measure the noise and provide recourse for violations.

Dan asked if any specific decibel limits are described in the code. John scrolled to the applicable section of code, and stated that residential areas have a daytime upper limit of 65 decibels. Dan gave a primer based on his experience with noise monitoring.

Lynette noted that truck traffic noise is miserable on Franklin, and even worse on Mankato Blvd. Monitoring of all truck routes, and enforcement needs to be more serious.

Mr. Finn noted that industrial noise is more an annoyance while outdoors, while the vehicle noise is even a problem inside.

John to send out the applicable regulations, and determine City's ability to monitor noise pollution.

4. **Citizens Climate Lobby:**

Mr. Botz provided a summary of the carbon fee and dividend concept that is a central tenet of Citizens Climate Lobby.

The local chapter of the organization began in September, and has 14 members.

Dan asked for Mr. Botz's request for CEQC action. Dan was unsure of how CEQC could be involved. It may be more suitable for CEQC members to participate on their own time.

Lynette asked if support for carbon trading is included in the GreenStep Cities program. John was not aware of this being a consideration in the GreenStep program. Dan clarified this proposal is a carbon tax, rather than carbon trading. Discussion on environmental attribute trading ensued.

Dan suggested for John to determine if CCL proposal is applicable to GreenStep and City plan. Dan suggested Mr. Botz might have more success with business outreach.

5. **Community Garden Update:** John began by explaining that the Mayor announced he is forming a task force to explore community garden. This group will explore the need, research future expansion areas, and search for funding and how to sustain the garden. Niki described that her capstone group is doing a multi-prong feasibility study looking at: mapping gardens and current areas, looking at the feasibility of other sites, and drafting a community survey on need and interest.

Dan asked if Niki was involved with the Mayor's task force, and she said she is likely to be a member. Lynette added that one of her neighbors, who is a WSU professor, has students who could help with the survey preparation. Lynette wonders if Bruno was contacted, and John said he was and has expressed interest in the task force.

Lynette shared that a friend tried to reserve an East Rec. Center community garden plot, and only one plot was available.

6. **Sustainability Planning update:** John said that the advisory committee is up and running. Engagement and outreach is ongoing. At a later meeting, John will have a link to a survey. John plans to bring some questions and discussion items to the CEQC for April. Lynette believes noise and light pollution should be on the table for discussion as part of the plan.

7. **Other Business:** Lynette would like the City to make plans to avoid the catastrophe in heat and water that affected Texas. Mr. Botz said Texas was an anomaly since they are not used to cold weather. Lynette wondered about making a separate energy system to sustain in case of grid failure. John said there is discussion in the sustainability committee about islanding a micro-grid powered by renewable energy.

Lynette feels it would be valuable to have a guide on which community solar options are available, and alternative energy education in general. Lynette said wind farms are increasing all the time. John relayed that he and Kelsie held an educational session with the Citizens Utility Board this winter, and it seemed well received by the attendees.

John said he hopes to continue the weed treatment at the West Lake using similar methods as last year. This is separate from the phosphorus control via alum treatment.

8. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:43 pm. Motion by Lynette, seconded by Lynette. Approval unanimous.

Notes prepared by John Howard.