

Decatur Environmental Sustainability Board Minutes
June 19, 2020, 8:05- 10:05am

Present (over video): Michael Black (ESB), Meisa Salaita (ESB; left at 9:41), Dave Malkin (ESB), Mary Jane Leach (ESB), David Nifong (CoD), Rich Malerba (ESB), Allison Ericson (ESB)
Absent: Susan Montgomery (ESB), Alan Farmer (ESB), Steve Blackburn (ESB)

1. Approval of past minutes

MOTION: Approve May 15 and June 12 minutes (Rich moved, Mary Jane seconds, all in favor)

2. Public Comment

- a. Hobie Stocking: He is leading the charge for All in for Decatur 100 - a coalition of residents, students, non-profits to achieve the goal of making Decatur 100% renewable energy. Four main efforts:
 - i. Converting schools and renewables
 - ii. Converting city fleets to EV
 - iii. Improving energy efficiency of buildings
 - iv. Putting in policies to make transition easier.

3. Staff Updates

- a. Water station has been installed in Decatur Square, other two (Oakhurst and McKoy) are in the works
- b. Meeting with Pratt is still in the works
- c. Meeting with consultants on approved Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) grant next week
- d. Solar Energy Procurement Agreement (SEPA) mtg next week with City Manager and Financial Director. Working on RFP for SEPA.
- e. David N will send out a list of all grants in the works.
- f. Renae Madison and Linda Harris in Community and Economic Development are rolling out staff anti-racism training that will then be offered to residents
- g. Greenspace plan, waste audit, heat island sensors/study were all approved in the budget

4. Committee Updates

- a. Natural Systems
 - i. Walk through Legacy Park trails with Hugh Saxon, David Nifong, David Junger, Greg White, Jack Amick, cross country coaches, ESB members, and others. Five team track meet planned for Fall, Regions meet in the Spring. Trail not going around the back of the lake. Richard has revised the trail map to reflect that. Plan to talk with Lynn Meene for input on Legacy Park as a whole in advisory role.
 - ii. Kay Evanovich open to conservation award. Looking at other organizations for best practices.
 - iii. Wylde Center willing to do a Sally Wylde Award again
 - iv. Steve will share ppt presentation for the advisory board with the group

- b. Education and Outreach
 - i. Discussion of taking the insert and pulling out key ideas for social media.
 - 1. Concern over lack of infrastructure in city communications to handle social media. Michael will ask Renae if the new person has been hired.
 - 2. Public Works doesn't have as many avenues for communication as other city connections to City Boards (eg Active Living)
 - ii. Two articles submitted to the Focus for the July/August issue: one on Solarize campaign and one on eating less meat.
 - iii. Mary Jane is stepping down as the chair of Education and Outreach.
 - c. Resource Conservation
 - i. Second task force meeting happened with the city where we discussed some models for tip and tag initiatives in other cities.
 - ii. Agreed that we can't get farther in planning our own tip and tag until we have a meeting with Pratt (city is setting this up)
 - iii. Working on pulling together materials to roll out an education campaign around cleaning up our recycling
 - iv. Shelved single use plastics for now
 - d. Energy and Transportation
 - i. Solar panel article on Renfro solar panels went in June Focus
 - ii. Those with example climate action plans should add them to the Google Drive.
 - iii. Solarize campaign is going on still till August. First house install has already happened, and we are currently in Tier 2 pricing (almost at Tier 3).
5. Matt Cox from Greenlink Analytics
- a. 501c3 that helps cities do energy transition planning work and make the transition as fast and fair as possible. Has helped cities in planning to get to 100% clean energy and in alignment with Paris Climate Accord (and other similar efforts), and equity work mapping disparities across the community to leverage clean energy opportunities to right some of those situations. Has been technical lead for all 25 cities in Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge. City-specific models allow these cities to look at 40 different policy options to dial in how aggressively they want to be with different options, and find the most meaningful policies to achieve their goals.
 - b. Plan for Decatur would be production/delivery of their tech resources for assessments and city-specific model, assisting with presentation to community, and assisting with the plan itself. Model includes city-specific economy, public health, rate and bill analysis, and energy burden analysis and projections for each, paired with equity platform (20 equity indicators) launching in July.
 - c. Concern from ESB members that we aren't at a point to take advantage of these services yet.
 - d. The modeling could show what things would look like in terms of economy, equity, and public health if we do business as usual or if we go for 100% clean energy or somewhere in the middle and allow us to choose where and when is best for us to target as a city.
 - e. Resolution of the model would be census track data resolution
 - f. Three phase funnel for assessing viability and predicted outcomes in the model:

- i. Phase 1: Technical (as an example with solar: satellite photos to see what has enough sun)
 - ii. Phase 2: Economic (example with solar: forecast of price and adoption, 7-10 years on consumer adoption data; lever where city can play a role with local policy)
 - iii. Phase 3: Achievable (example with solar: how much, based on adoption using policies would be likely to come about)
 - iv. Assessment may find that 100% of the roof that could have solar based on satellite photos->10-15% by the time it funnels to achievable
- g. Greenlink is working with 75 cities. Smallest city they've worked with is Clarkston (doing greenhouse gas analysis, economic analysis, and public health analysis), and perhaps the most applicable is Athens, so Athens would be good to contact.
- h. Money spent on energy currently typically goes out of the community. For instance, for every million dollars that goes into solar and energy efficiency in Fulton County, seven jobs are created. For every million going into the traditional power system, it's only three. So by making better investments that are locally driven, you create two and a half times the number of jobs.
- i. In addition, energy efficiency investments can often result in a 50-60% rate of return on financial investment, due to the short 2-3 year paybacks.
- j. The faster we reduce our CO2 emissions, the less bad the consequences of climate change will be. Even a 2 degree increase in global temperature would be quite bad, but business as usual puts us at 4 degrees or higher, and that's much worse.
- k. The ideal process would be an about 18 month engagement, as Athens is approaching this. Less than twelve months is rushed for community engagement.
- 6. Communicating with City Commission
 - a. ESB communication happens currently through our staff liaison and once a year we report directly to city commission with what we've done and what our goals are.
 - b. We also can and have in the past voted on formal letters from the ESB to the Decatur City Commission and sending individuals to speak on behalf of the ESB at city commission meetings, but those actions must be approved by a full ESB committee vote.
 - c. Possibility for one of our established subcommittees to communicate with city commissioners
 - i. Highlighted that there should be either a communication of what our goal is to get feedback on things we need to consider
 - 1. challenges that need to be addressed in working to achieve the goal
 - 2. Things that may be happening in the city that can provide a synergistic effect
 - 3. other city priorities to balance with the goal
 - ii. Also, if we are bringing forward an ask that it is very clear and organized on what is being asked for
 - d. Encouragement that we should reach out on our own as individuals (not representing ESB). Michael in touch with city commissioners on climate action plan in this regard.

- e. Potential for ESB member to be present at all city commission meetings and make a comment (either as an individual or - if approved - as a representative from the ESB)
- f. How can we be more public about what we think are the priorities so that when public provides their input (on things such as strategic plan)?
 - i. Suggestion of Facebook group - like Active Living has, although city would have to manage that, and the things posted there tend to be events rather than priorities.
 - ii. David N has more ability to work with the ESB webpage
- g. Rich will head up a small group to discuss the best way to move forward on updating the website. Anyone else who might be interested should contact Rich to join the group. Michael will send an email soliciting for this.

7. Quarterly Plans

- a. 2020 Work Plan is here:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ez7H4fwnrrQG6r7VbpVZglEwHuY_59Ob0gGZPVN_FTW/edit#gid=1521147738
- b. Reviewed where we are for some of the Q1+2 Goals, some need to be moved to Q3
- c. Michael will again send out the link for the spreadsheet of the 2012 Sustainability Plan and our progress on it as a city that is in our Google Drive, so that we can use that as a guide for prioritization.
- d. The ESB website revision will now become a goal of Q3, headed by Rich Malerba.
- e. One from Q1 that has been put on pause while other priorities were addressed is something Athens is doing right now, where they benchmark what they are receiving from Georgia Power from the franchise fee and then use funds for investments in renewable energy and energy retrofits and then take the savings from those to further invest.
- f. David Nifong has many actions on the spreadsheet ongoing at the moment, including looking at the viability of a sustainable neighborhood program, and things that have mostly been completed like getting all the buildings and meters from Georgia Power into Energy Star. Although we saw a dramatic reduction in electric use this year (22%), we only saw a small reduction in the cost (about 6%), so this may also inform us on getting better rate plans for the electric we use.
- g. David wasn't sure about what electric vehicles were in the budget that was passed. We know there's an electric bicycle that will be purchased by the police. David will see what vehicles may be purchased (maybe one of the new Police Department vehicles is electric?) in the passed budget to report back next time. Pursuing the Will It Work program for converting the fleet to electric was moved to Q4, since there may not be that many new vehicles purchased given the lean city budget for this year.
- h. We see a Climate Action Plan as a priority, so we'll be revising our quarterly plans with that in mind, adding things like getting funding sources, getting data that would be critical for addressing climate action, and working on projects prior to the plan to get things done that we can do now that could have big input.
- i. Getting our natural gas consumption from Atlanta Gas should be a priority for Q3 for David N.

- j. We can populate grants that happen on an annual basis within this quarterly plan, to help in future quarterly plans and plan ahead to be ready (319 grants, GEFA grants, state recreational trails grants, etc.)
 - k. We need to prioritize our goals and comment on this document for next time.
 - l. We will discuss Quarterly Plans at the next meeting.
8. Public Comment
- a. Hobie Stocking: Think of our group (All in for Decatur 100) as a public lever and a public voice. We had a dozen people speak on behalf of the climate action plan. Use us a public network to help on surveys that you need or things you need done.
 - b. Joy Martin: Also consider Save Decatur Trees an ally with the same goals as you, and we would like to help move your priorities forward.