



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Meeting Minutes Energy Commission

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

6:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron St.

CALL TO ORDER

Appleyard called the meeting to order at 6:14 pm

ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Wayne Appleyard, Joshua Long, Diane Kurz, Brigit Macomber, Mike Shriberg, and Mark Clevey

Absent: 6 - Charles Hookham, John Hieftje, David A. Wright, Michael Delaney, Kenneth J. Wadland, and Cliff Williams

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

For later agenda/discussion: Macomber asked about small wind turbine off 14 and whether it is worth considering moving to a different location. Appleyard said similar system at the front of Cobblestone Farm, both with solar array to help provide illumination. The blade is very small and the park light's turbine does not spin regularly. We would first want to get the spec to see how difficult removing the blade would be.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved on a voice vote

13-0250

Ann Arbor Energy Commission Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2013

Attachments: FINAL Minutes Energy Commission 2-12-13

Approved as amended by the Commission and Forwarded to the City Council due back on 5/20/2013

PUBLIC INPUT

None

ENERGY REPORT - NEWS FROM THE ENERGY OFFICE AND COMMISSIONERS

Geisler: Earth Day at Leslie Science Center, Sunday 4/21 from Noon-4pm (tablers welcome)

Green Fair is June 14th from 6-9pm on Main Street. Volunteers for tabling requested.

International High Performance Building Conference (IHPB 2013) at Lansing

Community College June 19 and 20. More at www.ihpbc2013.org
Michigan Energy Fair is June 7-8 in Ludington. More at www.glrea.org
Working to have an update on Green Fleet goal progress in approaching meeting(s).

Appleyard: Solar Ypsi announced they are trying to get Ypsilanti to commit to a 1,000 solar roofs program by 2020. Already some significant installs in town there: Corner Brewery has 144 panels of pv and thermal, as well the Food Co-Op. Also in the running for a half (or more) megawatt of solar on their closed landfill. May be opportunities for collaboration.

Governor's Fact-finding

Appleyard: Governor's fact-finding website has added more questions (now 110) if you have not gone on recently. Should keep submissions related to Ann Arbor experience. April 22nd is deadline for submitting to the site.

Fossil Fuel Divestment

Shriberg: I spoke with the city CFO and there does not seem to be fossil-fuel investments by the city, largely because investments are more short term assets. Pension Fund is semi-autonomous body with other investments. I used a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request a week ago that matches those used elsewhere by cities and universities. Not drafting a resolution until that information is back in. The Pension Fund's Investment Policy Committee is meeting next week and I am lined up in the final slot of their agenda. FOIA requests what investments come out of the top 200 fossil fuel companies, in the present time. University has disclosed approximately \$400 million in investments. A student group is following up on regents process going forward.

Appleyard: Report from Canada stating that the value of fossil fuel may change based on future regulations, so they are risky investments.

Commercial Building Energy Disclosure

Geisler: Staff has requested the Attorney's Office review whether this would be allowable in Michigan. They are still researching the question, though initial indications don't point to anything preventing this. We are trying to use helpful contacts in the Urban Sustainability Director's Network to assist the information gathering, especially in locations who are doing this.

Commission Ideas for City Properties – Post Connecting William Street

Geisler: Commissioners Appleyard, Kurz, and Planning Commissioner Bona and Council-member Briere met to discuss. Connecting William Street completed now that it has been presented to Council, but the Energy Commission was interested in providing input on these or other city properties going into sale. The Administrator confirmed that the RFP for broker services at the Y-Lot would not be the best time for input, but once any contract is in place, that there may be room to write-in energy/sustainability best practices for the property. The other area of potential Commission input is for the D-1 zoning district review happening at the Planning Commission, who has until

October to add new recommendations into zoning. Planning staff request any input happen in the next three months, specific especially to LEED premiums for floor area ratio (FAR) being offered now and whether they can be improved upon or reconsidered.

Appleyard: Premiums for increased density or square footage call out LEED Silver now, but may not be detailed on energy specific things. Who could ask for so many credits under energy, and could add other reporting metrics. One problem with LEED is no one goes back and checks that everything was done as initially designed, or modeled as is typically done.

Shriberg: We should think about how premiums to increase square footage for energy may actually result in increased energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, even if the building is more efficient.

Long: Must balance that with opportunities for more downtown dwelling, which lessons occupation at the periphery and transportation emissions.

Appleyard: There is interesting research on optimal density for energy usage, and from a resiliency standpoint in the future, if some predictions hold. Above 6 stories people tend to not walk stairs.

Kurz: In thinking of D-1 zoning, and meeting our Energy Challenge, and resilience in our community (through the Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Framework), there are multiple efforts that are advisory to Council. I really promote working with the other Commissions (Planning, Environment) to determine how our goals are making us resilient as a city. What is our standard for these city properties? Is it to incentivize a certain quality of building, or is it to say this a requirement, not an incentive? What are our next steps?

Appleyard: Planning Commission has recognized our interest and is looking forward to input. Requiring something special for city lots is important, because it is the one place we can go above the state building code (via a deed restriction, rather than zoning, as the lever). There has been discussion of these as planned unit developments (PUDs) as well - parcel specific zoning where the community has to get something in order for site to go beyond normal zoning.

Clevey: Are energy efficient buildings a means to getting a diverse downtown population? Is efficiency a means to that end? (Appleyard: when that item in zoning was written the main emphasis was to get more people downtown.) Can we say the highest LEED standard is the best way to get a diverse downtown population?

Appleyard: We can say we want certain energy points within LEED. But if what we are asking for costs more the result may be the opposite of diversifying downtown.

Long: Diversification means here also effective land use strategies, and improved walkability, rather than simply targeting a certain BTU per square foot for energy. (Clevey: we could say energy efficient buildings cost less to live in.)

Appleyard will make contact with members of Environmental and Planning Commissions to see whether we get together or do this electronically.

Kurz: We walked away from the meeting mentioned earlier (with a few of the other Commission members) with the idea that each Commission, including Parks Advisory, may want to develop their own framework and needs and then come together in a joint meeting, to be more efficient.

D1 Zoning Input

[See notes under "Commission Ideas for City Properties - Post Connecting William Street"]

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Climate Action Plan

Appleyard: Commissioner Cleavey put down ideas on which portions from the Climate Action Plan we might focus on. I also checked with staff on how photovoltaics are being permitted right now and whether there is a way or need for any streamlining. There is a short form for small solar systems, which does streamline the process, and I don't believe is used here. Also trying to find out from the Assessor's Office, how they assess solar equipment. Some state-level rulings have changed things, so looking to see whether there is room for improvement there too. Back in the 1970s solar was exempt, and Jeff Irwin has a bill in Committee to do this again, but it is unclear whether it will go forward.

Cleavey: Clean Energy Coalition is developing model solar zoning ordinances in Saginaw/Bay City in the next couple months (based off the national Sunshot materials). We would have opportunity to be an early test too. They received a grant for the state to do this. Model solar gardening methodologies and process also part of this for those participating. (Staff requests Commissioner Cleavey summarize in email CEC opportunity.)

From or related to the Climate Action Plan, four ideas: develop a model solar zoning ordinance with the stated purpose being to reduce the cost per watt for people wanting to do solar; aggregated purchasing for solar (ways to encourage) -- churches/congregations doing this with Michigan Interfaith Power and Light; community solar gardens (laws now allow net metering, but leaves out any who don't own a building) -- solar array placed in some place where the energy produced is sold or used behind the meter for an application, and monthly check (if metering out) goes back to the investors; lastly issue of the Renewable Portfolio Standard -- no reason we cannot locally have such a standard atop the one at the state level (Kurz thanked Cleavey and emphasized support for final item especially).

Long: Is there components to the city procurement policy that deal with energy/environment? (Staff mentioned living wage/human rights requirements and fleet policy allowing for higher expense for gains in efficiency.) Maybe there are areas we can improve procurement policies to encourage things like solar.

Appleyard: Will raise with Environmental Commission purchasing policy on

broader environmental areas/product choosing (example of VOC paint in stairwells).

Shriberg: Would think there would be strong interest in the community for the solar gardening idea, just don't know what the barriers are being within the DTE service area. (Cleavey stated a contract let to a non-profit to focus on this issue, in the next couple of weeks. Good thing with these "gardens" is they are at a scale where bulk purchasing can drive down costs.)

Appleyard: Tax credits and ability to net meter at home drive down the return on investment substantially, but a large enough array could offset most or all of that (by panels being cheaper in bulk). Problem with city space is that the big energy users (Water and Wastewater Plants) are land and space constrained. The Plants get a cheap rate for electricity by guaranteeing they will use a certain amount. Wheeler Center, near the closed landfill, has space and may have smaller loads where there isn't this same demand guarantee and load might be offset with a large array.

Energy Production

No meeting.

Renewable Energy Access

No meeting.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

None stated.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn (7:30 pm)

Visit www.a2energy.org for community energy information in Ann Arbor,
or
www.a2gov.org/energy to learn more about the City's Energy Programs

Regular meetings shown Live and replayed on CTN Channel 16 and at
www.a2gov.org/ctn

