



City of Ann Arbor

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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Action Minutes

Energy Commission

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

6:00 PM

Electronic Meeting of the Energy
Commission

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CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:06pm

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Staff Stults read the Land Acknowledgment statement

ROLL CALL

Present: 15 - Charles Hookham, Brigit Macomber, Mike Shriberg, Mark Clevey, Noah Levin, John Mirsky, Carlene Colvin-Garcia, Erica Briggs, Travis Radina, Jay Zoher, Teresa Hatcher, Ember McCoy, Robert Jeorg, Julian Singleton, and Larry Kerber

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Jeorge, seconded by Commissioner McCoy, that the Agenda be Approved. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Zoher, seconded by Commissioner Levin, that the all previous minutes be Approved. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT

Citizen Virginia called in support of municipalization. She cited DTE dirty grid and the need for the City to move to renewables quickly as some of the reasons she was supporting municipalization.

Citizen Zacharia Therum who is part of the student government at the university of Michigan called in support of municipalization. He cited the fact that we only had 10 years to act before seeing the climate impact and the speed of state legislation as reason to act locally.

Citizen Phill Bianco also called to support municipalization. He emphasized the potential to pay for new union jobs along with DTE's dirty grid as some of the reasons he was supporting municipalization.

Katie Coolie was calling to support municipalization. She cited air quality and asthma as some of the main reasons why she was in support for municipalization.

Citizen Dan Lamerk was also calling in support for municipalization . He cited the need for the A2Zero plan to reflect a change in direction towards municipalization. Some of his main reasons for supporting municipalization included DTEs higher costs and the need for greater resilience that could be achieved through a local utility.

Citizen Roshen who is a graduate student with the university of Michigan stressed the importance of municipalization especially as it dealt with climate justice, reducing the energy burden often faced by those hardest hit by the pandemic.

Citizen Rohan Tepermire was calling in support for municipalization. Amongst some of the points raised, he talked about the importance of having a municipal utility who would be held accountable by Ann Arbor Citizens.

Citizen Evan Redmond was formerly running for City Council and was calling to support municipalization. He touched on the for profit component of DTEs operations and how a locally run utility wouldn't be beholden to the same profit margins DTE seeks for its stake holders.

Citizen Eric Lamb is a student of the University of Michigan and was also calling to support municipalization. Amongst his points, he pointed out how young people were calling in because they are worried about the future.

Citizen Dr. Lauren Sargen also called in supporting municipalization. She pointed to the fact that the Michigan constitution supports municipalization and how a CCA would take time.

Citizen Gus Chesky is part of Ann Arbor indivisible and was calling to support municipalization and more specifically a feasibility study that would try and understand what municipalization would take and look like.

Michigan state senator Jeff Irwin called in support of municipalization. He pointed out how the cost for energy from a local utility is generally less expensive and how a local utility could green the power source at the same time.

Citizen Ken Garber raised the difference between Boulder Colorado and Ann Arbor seeking municipalization. He summarized what had happened in the Boulder case and brought up the differences between Boulder and Ann Arbor. Namely that the legal battle would be focused around the Foote act in the Ann Arbor case. And how Foote acts are generally upheld but are only suppose to be in effect for 30 years. He argued that the Foote act Ann Arbor had with DTE was over 135 years old. He finally raised the point that challenging the Foote act could free other municipalities of being locked in with DTE.

State Representative Yousef Rahbi called in supporting municipalization as the most cost effective and reliable way to receive power. He also pointed to the stark difference between Lansing Board and Light and DTE when it came to supporting residential solar.

Environmental Commissioner Rita Mitchell addressed the potential for local jobs and accountability as some important point to look a municipalizing.

Citizen Ian Mark also called in supporting municipalization as it pertained to reaching the City's climate goals, especially as DTE's grid is made up of almost 60% coal.

ENERGY REPORT - NEWS FROM THE ENERGY OFFICE AND COMMISSIONERS

Staff Stults gave an update to the commission on several topics including the aging in place efficiently program, the 10,000 tree initiative, the multifamily and time of marketing ordinances as well as the Solarize program. She brought up equity engagement the Office was undertaking with specific low income groups to better understand how the City could continue to prioritize their needs. She touched on the budget process and for organizations interested in being part of earth day to reach out to the office.

Commissioner Clevey announced that GLREA would be having informational presentations starting with Chuck Hookham every second Thursday of each month at 7pm starting with a presentation by Commissioner Hookham. More information can be found on the GLREA website.

Energy Commission Meeting Topics

Staff Stults reminded the commission that they were creating a list of information sessions for the coming year for the Energy Commission. She informed the commission that there would be a legal presentation at the next meeting on the Foote act. Staff Stults informed the commission that she would be sending out a list of the topics and the commission would vote on them for the next meeting.

Commissioners suggested other topics like energy justice, distributed energy resources, CCAs, the 2030 District, and the University of Michigan's carbon neutrality plan.

Policy Recommendations

Staff Stults informed the commission that Council was looking for policy agenda items by Thursday. She informed the commission that thankfully OSI had a running list of policy topics. Council Member Briggs asked that the list be prioritized as cuts to lobbying was a potential going forward. Stults confirmed that she would prioritize the list.

Commissioners discussed Nuclear power as well as 3rd party demand response bundling amongst other topics to add to the list.

Ann Arbor Public Power Presentation

The Ann Arbor Public Power group presented lead by Tegweyn Elanor John and Greg Woodring. They presented a case for a local utility through municipalization. They pointed out that DTE is the 3rd dirtiest utility in the United States and the inability for a for profit utility to reach the City's carbon neutrality goals. They also covered the disconnect in DTE's target dates versus those of the City/ They covered the legal feasibility of municipalization and some of the benefits they saw of other local utility such as greater reliability, a cheaper energy source, and the utility being held accountable by Ann Arbor's Citizens. They brought up examples of other municipalities who recently municipalized. They also brought up the compatibility of municipalizing and seeking CCA at the same time. They ended with a recommendation for the City to seek out a feasibility study on municipalization.

Commissioners discussed the need to understand the practical and legal implications of municipalizing. They addressed the example of Chelsea and the need to look further into other examples brought up in the presentation. Commissioners discussed what the process for a feasibility study would look like and how it would be funded.

Working Groups Update

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Chair Mirsky asked if anyone had updates. Hearing none, he proceeded with the rest of the agenda.

Renewables

Building & the Built Environment

Community Outreach

Transportation Electrification

Report from Environmental Commission

PUBLIC INPUT

Citizen Conner Davidson called to support municipalization and the benefits it could bring to aligning a local utility with the priorities laid out in the A2Zero Plan

Citizen Matt Sersweeny is a graduate student in favor of municipalization. He underlined the importance that State politicians that had called in earlier were in support of it as well.

Citizen Cathleen Murphy works with Ann Arbor Indivisible and was inspired by the A2Zero plan and sees municipalization as a potential next step. She was in favor of a feasibility study.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair called the meeting to a close at 8:39pm

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City Clerk's Office
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