



City of Harrisonburg Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2024 5:10-7:00 p.m.

City Hall (Room 11)

Members in attendance: Vice Mayor Laura Dent, City Council Representative; Andy Kohen, School Board Representative; Bill Howe; Dave Powell; Doug Hendren; Ferwerdin Barzanji; Jeff Heie; Rob Alexander

Staff in attendance: Tom Hartman, Keith Thomas, Shayna Carter, Brittany Clem-Hott

Others in attendance: Brian O'Dell, General Manager of HEC; Zach Nyce, Manager of Engineering; HEC

Call to Order

Rob Alexander called the meeting to order. Rob Alexander then presented several expectations he would like to implement as Chair. First, to make sure members are clear about role clarity. He noted that the bylaws for the committee state the purpose is to advise staff and Council. Rob Alexander noted Andy Kohen was present as the School Board representative, however, EPSAC does not advise the School Board. Second, Rob Alexander noted he was going to be listening for assumption. Lastly, Rob Alexander asked the committee to define key terms so that all members can better understand the discussion.

Approval of Virtual Participation

Keith Thomas advised the Committee that no members requested virtual participation.

Election of Officers

Rob Alexander called for nominations for Vice-Chair. Andy Kohen nominated Dave Powell as Vice-Chair. Laura Dent seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Review and Adopt Meeting Summary

Andy Kohen noted a few typos in the previous meeting summary that included misspelling Dave Powell's name and the Solsmart Silver designation. Bill Howe moved to approve the January 2024 EPSAC Meeting Summary with the aforementioned edits. Dave Powell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no public comments received by the required date and time and no comments given by those in attendance.

Focus Area Updates

Keith Thomas presented an update on the Stormwater Improvement Plan (SWIP). He noted that while Focus Area 6 has not met as a group yet, that staff were still working on items related to it. Keith Thomas noted that the City has a public survey available and that the survey was translated into eight different languages. Keith Thomas stated the next public engagement process would be an open house meeting held on May 7th at City Hall and Pleasant View Inc. Keith Thomas advised he would send a flyer about the open house to the committee when it was finalized. Bill Howe asked how staff incorporated pollinators into stormwater detention basins. Keith Thomas noted that many of the detention basins that are around town are likely privately owned and maintained. For the City owned detention basins, Keith Thomas noted staff have planted pollinators in some and have converted others to enhanced extended detention basins

which have more plants and trees in them. Bill Howe asked if it would be helpful to research seeding costs for the City. Keith Thomas noted that staff do a good job looking into costs as well as collecting seed from previously planted plants to reduce program costs. Doug Hendren asked if there were opportunities for getting the public involved in planting trees or pollinators. Keith Thomas noted that staff organized volunteer planting events for trees and pollinators. Rob Alexander asked if staff could send out volunteer opportunities. Rob Alexander asked if there were any final comments. Tom Hartman asked the group to share our SWIP open house with their groups and individuals they may know as this was a chance for the public to provide input.

Keith Thomas then gave an overview of the Focus Area 1 meetings that occurred on February 28th and March 18th. Keith Thomas advised that members who attended the first meeting meet with Dr. McGinnis where the primary focus was to review the greenhouse gas model that he made for the City. The second meeting covered the draft municipal net metering policy that is the next agenda item for tonight and to review the draft scope of work for an EPA grant that will be later on the agenda tonight.

There was some discussion on the format of the Focus Area meetings and if they were considered public meetings. Tom Hartman advised that staff would meet with the City Attorney to get clarification on how staff needed to organize future Focus Area meetings.

Updates from Sustainability & Environmental Manager

The group discussed several concerns they had about the proposed municipal net metering policy and voiced several questions they wanted to get additional clarification.

It was determined additional meetings would be required to continue the discussion around the proposed policy.

Due to time constraints, the meeting did not progress to the remaining items for solar implementation plan and grant updates. These items will be carried forward to the agenda of our next meeting.

GHG Inventory & Modeling Update

Due to time constraints, the meeting did not progress to GHG Inventory and Modeling Update. This item will be carried forward to the agenda of our next meeting. Keith Thomas briefly shared that he was collecting data for calendar year 2023 and Dr. McGinnis is expected to start work this summer.

Other Committee Topics

Due to time constraints, the meeting did not progress to Other Committee Topics. This item will be carried forward to the agenda of our next meeting.

Next Meeting Dates

2024 Dates

- July 24, 2024 (NEW DATE)
- October 30, 2024