

**MEETING OF THE ELK RIVER  
ENERGY CITY COMMISSION  
HELD AT ELK RIVER CITY HALL  
ELK RIVER, MN  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2009**

Members Present: Vance Zehringer, Maureen Griffiths, Todd Berreman, Denny Chuba, Martin Gagliardi, Stephen Rohlf, Bruce Sayler, John Setala, Scott Hagen and Mayor Stephanie Klinzing

Members Absent: Susie Overholser and Ron Touchette

Staff Present: Rebecca Haug, Environmental Administrator  
Nicola (Nicki) Blake-Bradley, Environmental Technician

Others Present: Diane Windingland, Energy Cost Cutters  
Kim Windingland, Energy Cost Cutters  
Paul Steffes, Energy Cost Cutters  
Rob Rydberg, Energy Cost Cutters

The regular meeting of the Energy City Commission was called to order by Chair Zehringer at 1:32 p.m. Commissioner Setala questioned whether there were still positions open on the Commission because he would have a person that is interested in participating. There are no positions currently open.

1. **Consider February 18, 2009 ECC Agenda**

No changes were made to the agenda. The agenda was accepted as submitted. The position of the presentation by Energy Cost Cutters was moved up to allow them to speak before elections.

2. **Consider January 21, 2009 ECC Minutes**

Chair Zehringer had several changes to make to the minutes. Three participants in Project Conserve did not have infrared tests done because they are not Centerpoint Energy customers. ERMU will contract with the same firm that conducted the others and pay for it out of CIP (Conservation Improvement Program) funds. The final participant copy will be brought to the next meeting for Chair Zehringer's signature (now required for document retention).

3. **Energy Cost Cutters Presentation**

Mr. Kim Windingland was present to discuss his company and its goals to the committee. First he thanked the Commission for its efforts. The mission of his company is to reduce energy use for commercial companies without sacrificing comfort. They have a comprehensive energy savings package and their goal is to have a payback period of three years. A free audit is included. They review lights, HVAC, and intensive energy use machines. He gave examples of lighting projects where the lighting levels were increased and operating costs were reduced.

Mr. Paul Steffes also spoke regarding the company. He discussed changes at Target, Inc. and described microturbines. He reported that the company helped Cub Foods improve lighting while reducing energy use by up to 75%.

Commissioner Berreman questioned whether they just worked on lights or whether there were other areas of savings as well. Mr. Steffes stated that other areas were addressed as well. He discussed issues including energy recovery ventilation systems and occupancy sensors.

Following the presentation, those present from Energy Cost Cutters left the meeting.

Commissioner Griffiths entered at 2:10 p.m.

A comment was made that the presentation was too long and was very “commercial”. Much of Mr. Steffen’s presentation was likely too in-depth for most commissioners and staff members.

4. **Elections of Officers**

Mayor Klinzing nominated Chair Zehringer to remain in the Chair position. Chair Zehringer stated that one more year would likely work. Commissioner Chuba seconded the nomination. No other nominations were brought forth. Nominations for Chair were closed.

Mayor Klinzing nominated Commissioner Setala to remain as Vice Chair. Commissioner Berreman seconded the nomination. No other nominations for Vice Chair were brought forth. Nominations were closed.

Voting for both positions at once resulted in both Chair Zehringer and Commissioner Setala being carried forth as Chair and Vice Chair for 2009.

5. **“Project Conserve” Update**

Before discussion of Project Conserve, Chair Zehringer stated that the compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) given out at the Energy Expo are high power factor, low mercury lamps. He had to special order these lamps. CFLs sold at area stores are typically higher mercury, lower power than those given away at the Expo. Low power factor CFLs are becoming a concern for electric utilities.

An article on Project Conserve was in the Star News, giving good coverage and looking great. The paper has agreed to do weekly tips on conservation.

Mayor Klinzing questioned whether the Commission recommends audit firms for people in Project Conserve or the public. Chair Zehringer stated that there are at least five other firms which do energy audits like Energy Cost Cutters and there is no way that one is supported over any others. He added that ERMU and other utilities also do energy audits for residents and walk-through energy assessments for commercial customers as well. Commissioner Berreman added a caution regarding energy audit firms. Environmental Administrator Haug suggested giving the tip to the Star News to add as a tip.

The next Project Conserve meetings are scheduled for February 26 and 28. The group is still very energized. Joni Astrup is following the Harvey family and it might be interesting to have one of the Harvey children do a presentation.

Environmental Administrator Haug and Chair Zehringer attended the CERT (Clean Energy Resource Team) conference in St. Cloud, MN as speakers regarding Project Conserve. The CERT committee would like to highlight the ECC and Project Conserve in April.

The next meeting will focus on improving energy efficiency in homes (building inspectors are scheduled to attend and assist with questions). The energy audit results and indoor air quality issues will also be discussed.

**6. 2009 Energy Expo**

Sponsors are still needed and exhibitor openings are still available. Environmental Administrator Haug stated that a script is being put together which will be distributed to all commissioners to help with contacting potential exhibitors. A grant proposal was put together for Sherburne County and will not be known yet until March.

**7. Energy City Commission Ordinance Amendment**

Environmental Administrator Haug discussed possible amendment changes. The commission is composed of 15 members of which 5 come up for re-election every three years. Commissioner Rohlf expressed concern that every effort be made to include District 728. A question was posed as to whether a representative from Twin Lakes Elementary might be interested in being a commissioner.

Commissioner Chuba suggested using terminology such as “up to” 7 and “up to” 2 for a maximum of 15 members. Commissioner Rohlf suggested the ordinance is perhaps not flexible enough. Environmental Administrator Haug stated there is no deadline for submission of the amendment.

All commissioners were opposed to taking the amendment to the City Council as it currently is written.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROHLF AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER CHUBA TO HAVE STAFF REVISE THE ORDINANCE FOR MORE FLEXIBILITY. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**8. Energy Policy Update**

Mayor Klinzing, Environmental Administrator Haug and Chair Zehringer met with the CEP (Citizens’ Energy Plan) group from Willmar. This group wants to have a national energy plan ready for consideration for Congress by September, 2010. The grass-roots group already has consultants and members from electrical coops in western MN. Mayor Klinzing, Environmental Administrator Haug and Chair Zehringer have been asked to share what has been done by the Energy City Commission at their Energy Summit (noon luncheon). Others can register for the energy summit (cost is \$50). Commissioner Rohlf expressed concern about policies being set.

CEP would like to come and speak to the Energy City Commission. Commissioners expressed concern regarding another “commercial”. Commissioner Setala stated he would be interested to hear what they want to do.

**9. Foreclosure Situation**

ERMU (Elk River Municipal Utilities) is developing a plan and ordinance concerning foreclosure properties. There are currently 229 foreclosures in Elk River alone. Six are known to have flooded (1.4 million gallons of water were used in one house alone before the situation was caught). There is a moratorium on shutting off electricity until the water is shut off. Most of these homes were empty during the summer and the electricity was not turned on again (but water was never shut off and winterizing wasn’t done). Connexus energy has a limiter (allows

one 15 amp line) so the furnace blower can operate. Discussion followed that the utilities have to coordinate this.

**10. Other**

No other items were brought for discussion.

**11. Schedule Next ECC Meeting (March 18) and Identify Agenda Items**

The next regularly scheduled meeting for the energy city commission will be on March 18, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Uppertown Conference Room. Topics for the meeting include updates on foreclosures, energy policy committee, Project Conserve, and the Energy Expo. The next Expo subcommittee meeting will be held on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m.

**12. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Nicola Blake-Bradley.

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Tina Allard  
City Clerk

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Vance Zehringer  
Energy City Commission Chair