

**MEETING OF THE ELK RIVER  
ENERGY CITY COMMISSION  
HELD AT ELK RIVER CITY HALL  
UPPERTOWN CONFERENCE ROOM  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2008**

Members Present: Bryan Adams, Denny Chuba, Vance Zehringer, Susie Overholser, John Setala, Todd Berreman

Members Absent: Ed Stoutenburg IV, Stephen Rohlf, Mayor Stephanie Klinzing, and Maureen Griffiths for Deb Walters,

Staff Present: Jeff Gongoll, Community Development Director  
Rebecca Haug, Environmental Administrator  
Nicola (Nicki) Blake-Bradley, Environmental Technician

The regular meeting of the Energy City Commission was called to order by Chair Zehringer at 1:35 p.m.

1. **Approve June 18, 2008 ECC Agenda**

Environmental Administrator Haug added several items to the agenda: Greenstar Cities initiative, League of MN Cities update (from Nicki), and a budget update. Commissioner Overholser added an ECONAR update and Chair Zehringer added an update on Connexus as well.

2. **Consider May 21, 2008 ECC Minutes**

No changes were requested of the minutes. They were accepted as presented.

3. **“Project Conserve” Update**

The Project Conserve subcommittee met regarding the possibility of this initiative moving forward. Environmental Administrator Haug discussed the time commitment and options for working with Spectrum High School or an intern. The main question is whether the Commission wants to continue this program. If so, a utility bill stuffer will go out as advertising to all ERMU customers. The two people who expressed interest in the program from the Energy Expo either live in Otsego (not on city water) or have Connexus energy (no historical data), so essentially the project would be starting over.

Commissioner Setala questioned whether starting with a smaller number would be better since there are a lot of questions about exactly how much time would need to be spent per household, how much time it would take to answer questions, etc. Estimated time requirement for 30 homes was a minimum of 150 hours and staff time is very limited. If the commission agrees that the project should move forward, there is an opportunity to potentially get some homes involved in Trout Brook Farms since Environmental Technician Blake-Bradley has been working on beginning an organics waste collection in the development. This program could piggyback on the organics (since that would be waste reduction).

Chair Zehringer expressed concern over reducing the number of homes involved since 30 is the average for sampling and confidence levels. Community Development Director Gongoll stated that marketing is the key regardless of the number of homes that are involved.

Environmental Administrator Haug also discussed “carrot” ideas to entice people to participate, including potentially having a cost up front that would be reimbursed through products, services, or at the end of the program. Concerns expressed revolved around the number of participants, diversity of home designs/sizes, and whether low income households (who likely need this program the most) would choose to spend money to (ultimately) save money rather than buying food or gasoline.

The commission felt as a whole that this project should move forward. The subcommittee’s next meeting is scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup> and any commissioners who are interested in participating are welcome to attend. The goal will be to roll out the program by September 1<sup>st</sup>. A logo will be created, if possible, to bring continuity to advertising efforts. Environmental Administrator Haug has already asked a staff member to work on a possible logo.

A suggestion was made to put the power point presentation concerning “Project Conserve” on the website. Environmental Administrator Haug will send the information to the web page consultant.

#### **4. Energy House IV Discussion**

Commissioner Chuba stated that he has placed this idea on the “back burner” due to the storm season and damages that have occurred to homes around the region. However, design ideas were discussed such as photovoltaics. Commissioner Chuba expressed interest in receiving feedback and ideas from the Commission. He also questioned whether anything was discovered regarding the lots on Pinewood Golf Course. Financing is a concern. He expressed that he doesn’t necessarily need to make money on the project but, understandably, he doesn’t want to lose money. This item will stay on the agenda along with photovoltaic information.

#### **5. Amendment to Bylaws Discussion**

Discussion of vacant positions and bylaws changes resulted in a question of whether “at large” members are on the Commission and whether there should be if there aren’t currently any appointed. Spectrum School is within its own District and not part of ISD728. A suggestion was made to change the verbiage to “a school district serving the Elk River area” since the Elk River School District has not shown interest in being involved with Energy City. Chair Zehringer stated that he will go back to the School District once again to ask about interest.

A question of whether the bylaws should be less specific was raised. Environmental Administrator Haug stated that the most recent amendment submitted to the City Council was more general, but it was returned to the Commission. The City Council was not entirely comfortable with only having one builder represented on the board rather than an association. With the Suburban Northwest Builders Association continuing rather than dissolving, there is potential to keep the verbiage concerning their position on the Commission.

Currently, the commission is comprised of up to 15 members without “at large” members. Adding “at large” members would make the commission larger and there have been issues with having a quorum already. Perhaps verbiage such as “up to two” would be acceptable.

Environmental Administrator Haug commented that she will work on verbiage and bring it back to the commission next month.

**6. Other**

Environmental Administrator Haug informed the commission that a Greenstar Buildings Program is being formed through the State and they are looking for people to sit on the advisory committee. She questioned whether anyone on the commission is interested in representing the City of Elk River, Energy City. The commitment is at least two meetings beginning in September. It sounds as though it's a similar program to the Star City concept. If no one is interested in being on the committee, she will be our representative.

Environmental Technician Blake-Bradley informed the commission that the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) has chosen Elk River as one of four cities to be shown in a documentary on green initiatives from approximately 30 submissions. The LMC will be coming to Elk River on the afternoon of June 25<sup>th</sup> to conduct interviews and film various demonstration sites. Chair Zehringer volunteered to give a short Powerpoint presentation to the crew prior to going to film the locations to help prioritize where they'd like to go. The LMC crew is likely to be here for four hours or so. The Mayor will also be interviewed for the program.

Environmental Administrator Haug informed the commission that budgets are extremely tight and that she isn't sure how that will affect the Energy Expo next year. The City Council has already trimmed the Expo budget by approximately \$10,000 and may have to cut more. She will have the detailed budget and expenditures from the Expo at the next meeting. The County still has to be billed for the expenses they stated they will cover. One more invoice is needed from a "thank you" ad before the invoice can be sent to the County.

Chair Zehringer stated that he approached Bruce Saylor from Connexus to see if he'd be interested in being a commissioner representing the company. Bruce stated he'd be interested. Chair Zehringer will give either his home address or the company address to Environmental Administrator Haug.

Commissioner Overholser stated that ECONAR has a community loop geothermal system in place in St. Paul (she had been asked to look into whether there were any installed). She will get more information on the system from the person that was the project manager on it (as to how many homes there are, etc.). She added that representatives from ECONAR attended a party for the Roloff family in Portland, Oregon (the family showcased in "Little People, Big World") where the company donated a geothermal system for the show. She stated that they've decided to hold the program featuring ECONAR until the season premier in September. Commissioner Overholser will let staff know when the show will be aired so that the commission can be informed.

Commissioner Overholser also invited anyone from the commission that would be interested in attending the Town Hall meeting held by Senator John McCain in Eagan on Thursday, June 19, 2008 at noon. ECONAR was invited due to the meeting being "energy related". There is no cost.

Concerning group-loop, geothermal systems, Chair Zehringer commented that GRE has a geothermal heat pump at the bottom of a 13' deep pond which will heat and cool their entire building in Maple Grove.

**7. Schedule Next ECC Meeting and Identify Agenda Items**

The next ECC meeting will be held at Elk River City Hall on Wednesday **August 20, 2008** at 1:30 p.m. in the Uppertown Conference Room. The July meeting will be cancelled formally. Agenda items will include standard agenda and minutes, Energy House IV Discussion, bylaws, and a photovoltaic update.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:46pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Nicki Blake-Bradley