

**MEETING OF THE ELK RIVER
ENERGY CITY COMMISSION
HELD AT ELK RIVER CITY HALL
UPPERTOWN CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2008**

Members Present: Vance Zehringer, John Setala, Todd Berreman, Ed Stoutenburg IV, Stephen Rohlf, Ron Touchette, and Maureen Griffiths for Deb Walters

Members Absent: Mayor Stephanie Klinzing, Bryan Adams, Denny Chuba, and Susie Overholser

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

Others Present: Dr. Mark Bezek, Elk River School District

The regular meeting of the Energy City Commission was called to order by Chair Zehringer at 1:35 p.m. and introductions were made for the new member, Ron Touchette and possible new member Mark Bezek.

1. **Approve August 20, 2008 ECC Agenda**

Environmental Administrator Haug added one item to the agenda: an article regarding Del Overholser, owner of ECONAR. Chair Zehringer commented that he'd like to switch the GRE virtual tour item with the Photovoltaic Update.

2. **Consider June 18, 2008 ECC Minutes**

No changes were requested of the minutes. MOTION BY COMMISSIONER STOUTENBURG AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER BERREMAN TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

3. **"Project Conserve" Update**

The Project Conserve subcommittee met regarding the possibility of this initiative moving forward. There are now 10 applicants for the program. Chair Zehringer would like to have 100 applicants to be able to narrow it down to 30 for the pilot project. Chair Zehringer described the objectives of Project Conserve and the steps that have been taken so far. The original thought of including only those applicants on City water in the program has become a stumbling block because most interest expressed so far has been from people who have wells and septic systems.

All the City Council members expressed interest, but none are on City water. There is an opportunity to implement water meters for those applicants without City water. No water usage history would be available, though. It would be beneficial to have all the council members in the program to show the leadership of the City is committed to the goals.

Flyers regarding Project Conserve were included in a mailing regarding a Pilot Project for Organics collection that was sent to Trout Brook Farms single family residences. The mailing

generated interest and applicants. Information will be included in the September utility bills as well.

Environmental Administrator Haug will be bringing the topic of Project Conserve to the City Council on September 15th for review. All commissioners are encouraged to attend to show support for this program.

Due to budget barriers, effort will be concentrated on working with businesses and utilities. Commissioner Berreman stated that the window treatment program has essentially closed, but Centerpoint Energy should be able to provide low flow showerheads. Chair Zehringer stated that he'd like to see a company donate Kill-A-Watt meters. Environmental Administrator Haug will be asking the City Council for funding on September 15. Since the ECC coordinator position was tabled, there may be some funds available.

Chair Zehringer stated that blower door tests take approximately 1.5 hours and he'd likely spend approximately 2.5 hours with residents (for a total of 4 hours per household). The total approximate cost for water meters is \$1,500 and \$3,500 for Chair Zehringer's time.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER STOUTENBURG AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER ROHLF TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT OF BEING A CITY WATER CUSTOMER IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT CONSERVE PILOT PROJECT. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Energy House IV Discussion

Commissioner Chuba was not available at the meeting for this discussion. The item will remain on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. Amendment to Bylaws Discussion

Dr. Bezek was present for the School District and will try to see if anyone is interested in participating on this commission. Mr. Bruce Saylor from Connexus Energy has been contacted as a possible participant. Mr. Ron Touchette has been appointed as the EDA (Economic Development Authority) representative. The SNBA (Suburban Northwest Builders Association) is still active so a member of the Association could be appointed. Commissioner Rohlf suggested contacting the Association to see if any builders are interested in the position.

6. Photovoltaic Update

A 2KW photovoltaic (PV) array will cost anywhere from \$17,000 - \$19,000 up front, but will end up costing approximately \$11,000 - \$13,000 after all the rebates available. GRE will give \$2,000 per kilowatt (up to \$4,000 max) and there is a Federal Tax credit of up to \$2,000 available as well. Chair Zehringer stated that solarbuzz.com is a good site to visit for information on photovoltaics. He also handed out information regarding other cities "sun levels". Chair Zehringer summarized the information by stating that PV is almost as good here as it is in the south. It's estimated there's a 25 - 40 year payback period.

Thin film PV systems are only about 8% efficient. Commissioner Engstrom questioned whether legislators, special interest groups, or utilities may be driving costs lower. Discussion followed regarding costs during the last energy crisis. There are State tax credits for these programs which amount to \$2,000 per kW up to a maximum of 10 kW (or \$20,000).

7. GRE Virtual Tour

Chair Zehringer toured the new GRE headquarters in June. He highlighted the tour for the Commission with a Power Point presentation. The windmill on the GRE site is 1/3 the size of the utility scale generator in Elk River. It will produce approximately 390,000 Kilowatt hours per year as compared to 950,000 Kilowatt hours per year at the Elk River windmill. They also have a geothermal system with 36 miles of loops in the stormwater pond. A fixed photovoltaic array, along with the wind power, will produce approximately 15% of the energy needs. To achieve Platinum LEED certification, they only need 12% alternative energy source.

8. Other

Environmental Administrator Haug mentioned that Del Overholser was spotlighted in an article in Twin Cities Business. She passed around copies for all those present.

Chair Zehringer questioned what to do to finance Energy City and encourage businesses to locate here. GRE has made a \$20 million fund for a loan program. The loan would be interest free for up to \$1 million. Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) may decide to participate.

9. Schedule Next ECC Meeting and Identify Agenda Items

The next ECC meeting will be held at Elk River City Hall on Wednesday **September 17, 2008** at 1:30 p.m. in the Uppertown Conference Room. Commissioner Berreman will not be able to attend. Agenda items will include standard agenda and minutes, 2009 Energy Expo, Project Conserve, Energy House IV Discussion, and the GRE loan program.

The Project Conserve Subcommittee meeting will be held on **September 3, 2008** at 1:30 p.m. in the Uppertown Conference Room.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Nicki Blake-Bradley