



Council Worksession
October 3, 2023
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle
Councilmember Pam Axberg

Absent: Councilmember Graeme Allen
Councilmember Emily Dunsworth

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Craig Schlichting, Jennifer Fink

Guests in Attendance: Ted Redmond, paleBLUEdot

Climate Action Plan

Massopust stated staff would be presenting the Climate Action Plan to the Council. He commented on the extensive engagement the City has done on the plan to date and explained staff was looking for some idea on how they felt about the plan and how to move it forward.

Ted Redmond introduced himself and described the climate work he has done with cities in the Midwest. He discussed how the average temperature over the past 130 years in the State of Minnesota was trending to be warmer and warmer. He explained the 21 of the 23 hottest years have been in this century. He reported by the end of this century New Brighton can expect an increase in the average temperature of 6+ degrees. In addition, there will be 48+ days that are 95 degrees or higher and there will be changes in precipitation levels. He stated by the end of the century summers in Minnesota will feel like Denison, Texas. He then discussed how this projection could change if action was taken. He commented on the great opportunities that were available to New Brighton. He reported how there has been efforts to reduce emissions when it comes to electricity, transportation and natural gas.

Mr. Redmond commented on the community engagement and process that was followed to create a climate action plan. He described the planning process took about 17 months to complete and done in cooperation with Xcel Energy Partners in Energy (PIE). He discussed the five foundational research study documents that were created by the planning team. He reviewed the data that was collected from the community noting the majority of the community agree or strongly the City should take action.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked that the extra equity work be spelled out within this plan. In addition, she wanted to know who the six partners were that worked with the City on this project. Mr. Redmond indicated he could complete this task.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if the City had any additional engagement planned before the CAP was approved. Mr. Redmond stated there was an opportunity for additional engagement and he would be speaking with staff regarding this matter. Massopust indicated the CAP would be presented to each of the Commissions in order to gain their feedback. Schlichting reported CERT (Clean Energy Resource Team) would be pursuing

a seed grant to help with a dedicated publication in order to educate the public on what they can do down the road.

Mr. Redmond commented on the eight sectors within the CAP and noted they included 40 different strategies to achieve the City's desires goals and have 230 strategic actions that detailed the steps to be taken. He anticipated the implementation time period for the plan would be seven years. He discussed how there was more funding available for cities to address climate initiatives.

Councilmember Axberg expressed concern with the fact this plan has no costs associated with the implementation. Mr. Redmond provided further information on how the plan will be implemented, as the City deems appropriate. He explained the key would be to anticipate what will be implemented in year one, year two, etc. and what resources were available to the City. Massopust stated he understood staff needed to provide the Council with further information on how the plan will be implemented, to the best of his ability.

Councilmember Abdulle recommended plan be broken out to what items will be an expense to the City and what items can be completed through partnerships.

Councilmember Axberg agreed this would be valuable information because the City may not always be the best at completing some tasks and partners would greatly benefit the City. Mr. Redmond reviewed the implementation matrix in further detail with the Council. He commented on how the County may partner with Xcel or the County on some of these tasks.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented on how the City would be on a journey as it implements the CAP. She anticipated some tasks would be easier than others to complete. She appreciated how the City was voluntarily preparing for the future and noted she understood this implementation plan would take time.

Mr. Redmond reported the goal of the CAP was to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 42% by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. He reviewed the goals for Albert Lea, Burnsville, Duluth, Edina, Madison and Maplewood. He stated as communities begin to create more awareness regarding the goals, more funding will become available to assist with meeting these goals. He further discussed how the actions would have connectivity between the sectors. The strategic transportation and land use goals were reviewed, as well as the buildings and energy goals. He discussed how important it was to have safe pedestrian access and walkability. The waste management, water and wastewater goals were described, along with the strategic goals for local food and agriculture. He commented on the greenspace and tree goals noting the benefits of reducing dark impervious surfaces. He then described how the climate economy will have to be considered by the City. The impacts of lower GHG emissions were discussed as well as the cumulative economic savings potential of implementing the CAP through 2023.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if the City should be adding a staff member in two or three years in order to assist with implementing this plan. Schlichting stated the next task for the internal team would be to see who has capacity to check items off the list. After this task was complete, he believed staff would have a better idea on how much additional staff time was needed to move this plan forward. Fink discussed how having this plan in place will allow the City to apply for Green Corp grants. Massopust noted a sustainability coordinator may have to be considered in the future.

Mr. Redmond commented on the next steps for New Brighton. He reviewed the implementation and cross pollinating actions the City could pursue in order to have successes. He discussed how the City could approach funding the CAP implementation, noting grant opportunities would continue to become available over time.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked how the CAP aligns with the Comp Plan. Schlichting explained he viewed the

CAP as an add on to the Comp Plan. Massopust agreed noting he did not see any areas that were misaligned.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if the implementation team will help break down the goals and how much funding was needed. Schlichting stated this was the case. Mr. Redmond commented on how the implementation work would be done in phases based on priorities.

Councilmember Abdulle thanked staff and Mr. Redmond for all of their work on the CAP plan. He explained he appreciated the equity strategies that were written into the plan. He supported the City focusing on reducing GHG from the sectors that were producing the most GHG at this time. Mr. Redmond reported the goals were focused on tasking the City with reducing GHG the most, which would be through transportation changes. However, he encouraged the City to now just focus on the heavy hitters.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if the methane being released on Block B should be written into the CAP plan. Schlichting stated he would investigate this further and would report back to the Council.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas inquired if any of the water and wastewater goals would be cause for concern with the agreement the City has in place with the Army. Schlichting stated the City cannot put infiltration basins in place in certain places in the City.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas suggested this plan consider wind energy options. Mr. Redmond reported wind energy in a metro area was quite complex and required a great deal of testing and property.

Worksession adjourned at 6:54 pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Terri Spangrud". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Terri" and last name "Spangrud" clearly legible.

Terri Spangrud
City Clerk