

1. Call to order – 6:30 p.m.

1a. Roll call

Members present: Chair Eric Zweber, Vice Chair Abigail Oppegaard, Shaina Ashare, Marisa Bayer, Ryan Griffin, Ramil Goonetilleke, Dave Wilsey, Paul Zeigle

Absent: Tatiana Giraldo, Sasha Shahidi, Andrew Willette

Guests: Michael Hennen, resident

Staff present: Emily Ziring, sustainability manager

2. Approval of minutes – Aug. 7, 2024 – The minutes were approved unanimously as presented with 3 abstentions.

3. Business

3a. Commission administration

- Prepare for Sept. 16 city council study session discussion

1. What does the commission want to convey to the council?

Ms. Ziring presented the three discussion questions that will be asked in the meeting with council, along with some suggested responses.

Chair Zweber stated the majority of the ESC members' terms are up now, so depending on who gets appointed and who is new, some onboarding will be required. He added the work session will still happen in December to draft a workplan. Ms. Ziring noted the work session may happen in January 2025 instead of December depending on the November meeting with council.

Commissioner Bayer asked whether the benchmarking policy plan is also another item to include in the list of items that were discussed by the commission in 2024. Ms. Ziring offered to research the answer.

Ms. Ziring stated the boards & commissions restructuring was a regular topic over the past year's meetings. Commissioner Griffin stated restructuring has been disruptive, but there were items the ESC worked on during this time.

Commissioner Bayer explained an email she sent to Chair Zweber and Vice Chair Oppegaard. She stated that the council is no longer discussing the consultants' report on boards & commissions, including barriers to participation that were identified. She noted that city council needs to tell the ESC what policies to work on. She added the council will need to also give direction to the ESC on how to meet the environmental stewardship

strategic priority. She stated commissioners should be asked how they can bring their professional work outside the ESC to the city. She stated she would like to hear more from the council on all of this, and how they support and collaborate with other commissions on environmental stewardship.

Commissioner Griffin added he agrees on this, adding it is important that the council give this direction, and also that the ESC has the ability to bring its own ideas forward as well.

Ms. Ziring noted that this will be a question the council asks the ESC -- what policies they want to work on in 2025.

Commissioner Zeigle stated if there is a policy around traffic calming, and this would be a good one to partner with as it interconnects with more green space and infrastructure.

Ms. Ziring stated ESC brought the policy of Living Streets to council in 2017, so this is something the city has been doing for a while.

Commissioner Bayer stated when looking at existing and new policies, can we look at them through the lens of climate and then do more dedicated bike lanes and pedestrian crossings, vs. creating new policies.

Commissioner Oppegaard added partnering with other commissions or departments within the city and working together would also be helpful.

Commissioner Griffin stated looking at accomplishments over the last 10 years would be worthwhile.

Chair Zweber stated while the city's comp plan will be updated in 2028, it is timely to look at the climate action plan to see how ESC can collaborate with other commissions as they review the comp plan. He added reviewing the climate action plan and the budget will help the ESC look at what stays and what goes in the climate action plan when it gets updated.

Commissioner Bayer stated there was work on the Arrive and Thrive small area plans this year, and a residential zoning code update could be given to the ESC as well. Chair Zweber agreed a zoning code update would be helpful for the ESC, including housing types and lot size information.

Commissioner Oppegaard asked if the ESC has any say in building materials used at schools. Ms. Ziring stated that would only be through the green building policy, and/or lobbying the school board.

Ms. Ziring added that discussion on additional items can happen at the annual retreat.

Commissioner Wilsey stated it would be helpful to discuss an appropriate deliverable from the ESC to council, or what type of document could be exchanged that would be most effective for communicating back and forth.

Ms. Ziring stated sometimes this can be a staff report, or a report on research the ESC has done.

Chair Zweber asked if ESC could request a councilmember come to ESC meetings so as to have interaction with council on an ongoing basis.

Commissioner Griffin stated if the ESC writes a document to council, the ESC should expect a response back to know that the council has read it.

Chair Zweber asked if commissions could meet jointly to discuss topics of concern. Ms. Ziring stated yes, that would be acceptable, and not need permission from the council to do so.

Commissioner Bayer asked if ESC members could go present to another commission or to council rather than submitting a written report. Ms. Ziring stated she is supportive of that and happy to facilitate it, but the question is whether the council be able to add that to their agenda.

Commissioner Wilsey agreed this would be a more desirable way of communicating to council. He asked if there is a way to have work groups across commissions also. Ms. Ziring stated she could look into this.

Commissioner Goonetilleke stated he is interested in reversing the discussion with council and asking council members for their responses rather than having the commission representatives answer.

Chair Zweber stated this sounds like what will happen at the November meeting with council. Ms. Ziring stated she is not sure how the November meeting will be structured.

Commissioner Wilsey asked if there is a way to have a brainstorming session with council on climate goals. Chair Zweber asked if at the ESC work planning session, the council were invited to attend and co-create. Ms. Ziring stated it is a public meeting, it's a nice suggestion, and should be brought to the council as an option.

Commissioner Bayer stated the council should bring topics they are hearing about from residents for the ESC to work on.

2. Establish workgroup/subcommittee to finalize the report before Sept. 16

Commissioner Griffin made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to create a workgroup through the end of 2024 to discuss communications with the city council. The motion passed unanimously.

The workgroup will consist of Chair Zweber, Commissioner Bayer, Commissioner Griffin, and Commissioner Goonetilleke. Ms. Ziring stated that she will contact all absent commissioners to ask whether anyone of them wish to join.

Ms. Ziring will work on setting a meeting date and time for the workgroup.

3. Who should represent ESC at study session

Chair Zweber will represent the ESC at the study session.

4. Proposed plan for Oct-Dec

3b. Discuss rescheduling Oct. ESC meeting

Ms. Ziring stated new and renewed appointments for commissions will be made at the Oct. 21 council meeting and go into effect on Nov. 1. She added staff will hold orientation the week of Oct. 21.

Ms. Ziring added that the October and November meetings could be used to brainstorm policies for 2025 before the retreat. She stated she will also gather information from other departments that may want feedback next year from the ESC on their policies or programs.

Chair Zweber left the meeting at 7:39 p.m. Vice Chair Oppegaard led the meeting.

Vice Chair Oppegaard noted for the ESC October meeting, there is a conflict that evening with the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Ms. Ziring stated the meeting will need to be moved to a different date.

Commissioner Wilsey made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, to move the October meeting date to Oct. 9 due to the observance of Rosh Hashanah on Oct. 2. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Staff updates

Ms. Ziring updated the commission on the following items she and her staff are working on:

- EECBG project on high-speed garage doors
- Reviewing operating and capital projects and looking at various grant opportunities
- Benchmarking ordinance and sunseting the ordinance in 2024 to let the state take over in 2025 per council direction
- Rolled out new EV pricing program and signage
- Working on Aquila Park EV chargers
- Working with finance dept on direct pay guidelines for federal reimbursements for clean energy and clean fleet projects

Chair Zweber returned to the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

5. Work plan update

- 5a. Expand our outreach – events work group update – no update.
- 5b. Share our voice – state policy summary (*Legislature adjourned until Jan 14, 2025*)

Ms. Ziring stated there are some dockets at the Public Utilities Commission that affect the city and she has been talking with the city of Edina and other cities about comments on CenterPoint's natural gas integrated resource plan.

- 5c. Measure our progress – Staff and volunteer reports – Ms. Ziring will report next month on 3rd quarter data.

6. Environmental justice and current events open discussion

Chair Zweber noted a group of developers and planners will meet on Oct. 25 to discuss the missing middle housing legislation that Rep. Larry Kraft introduced in the 2024 legislative session. He noted this meeting is open to the public and costs \$58 to attend. Ms. Ziring stated Chair Zweber could forward the information to her and she will share it with the commission.

Commissioner Ashare described the podcast episode about the Minneapolis comp plan and increasing density, adding this has been challenging with individual neighborhood pushback.

Commissioner Oppegaard noted that 92 million tons of clothes go into the landfill each year. She encouraged the commissioners to donate their used clothing.

Commissioner Wilsey asked what St. Louis Park is doing about residential zoning and how the city is engaging the public proactively.

Ms. Ziring stated there has been lots of outreach on expanding residential housing options with staff to the public, and information in Park Perspective and on social media.

7. Upcoming/proposed events

- September 7, St. Louis Park Art Fair
- September 16 at 6:30 p.m., advisory boards & commissions meeting with city council
- September 17, Fire Station Open House
- October 9, ESC meeting at 6:30 p.m. – City Hall
- November 21 at 6:00 p.m., Electrify Everything MN workshop at The Rec Center banquet room
- November (date TBD), follow-up advisory boards and commissions meeting with city council

8. Adjournment – 8:00 p.m.