

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

February 23, 2023

2:30 p.m.

Councilman Denny Whayne Conference Room (Bush Building, 4th floor)

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Craig Hosmer, Chair; Monic Horton, and Heather Hardinger.

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Richard Ollis.

COUNCIL

PRESENT: None.

STAFF

PRESENT: Jason Gage, City Manager; Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager; Collin Quigley, Deputy City Manager; Erick Roberts, Assistant Director of Environmental Services; Jenny Deppe, Probation Officer; Pat Sullivan, Assistant City Attorney V; Rhonda Lewsader, City Attorney; Anita Cotter, City Clerk; and Lauren Fischer, City Clerk Administrative Specialist.

GUESTS: Jim Kreider, Renew Missouri; James Owen, Renew Missouri; and Dan Chilles, citizen.

Councilman Craig Hosmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 2:30 p.m., and roll call was conducted. Present: Heather Hardinger, Monica Horton, and Craig Hosmer. Absent: Richard Ollis.

Councilwoman Hardinger moved to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2022, meeting as presented. Councilwoman Horton seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Horton, Hardinger, and Hosmer. Nays: None. Absent: Ollis. Abstain: None.

Councilman Hosmer introduced Jim Kreider, Renew Missouri, and James Owen, Renew Missouri, as today's presenters.

Mr. Owen noted Renew Missouri is based out of Columbia. He explained his company works on ways to access clean energy through the State by advocating before the Public Service Commission. He noted his company also works with rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities on energy-related topics.

Mr. Owen gave an overview of his presentation. He noted the topics he would review include community solar with low-income focus, fleet and transportation electrification, decreasing

waste and increasing recycling, new metering and commercial solar ordinances, and long-term possibilities.

Mr. Owen expressed roughly 85% to 90% of Springfield residents have shown interest in clean energy. He noted the demand for clean energy from businesses has increased because of the low cost. He further noted the cost of clean energy will continue to decrease as technology continues to advance.

Mr. Owen noted the Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law in August of 2022. He noted the purpose of this act is to be able to help utilities, businesses, individuals, and municipalities to transition to clean energy. He further noted there are still provisions for the act in progress as far as rules and regulations. He noted Springfield City Utilities has expressed an interest in the Inflation Reduction Act because it would benefit some of their future projects. He further noted cities such as Des Moines and Kansas City have also embraced the idea of clean energy.

Mr. Owen noted clean energy options are currently available. He noted community solar is a project City Utilities and the local government could work towards. He noted weatherization funding can be utilized for low-income community solar. He further noted this funding is available through the Department of Energy's Sustainable Energy Resources for Consumers and distributed through community action agencies such as Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation (OACAC).

Mr. Owen spoke about municipal fleet and transportation electrification. He noted cities like Kansas City have shown interest in transitioning their Public Works vehicles from gas to electric. He added electric vehicle projects could use money from the Inflation Reduction Act to make transitioning more affordable. He provided information regarding the Springfield Airport and Public Works fuel purchases, auto allowances, maintenance, and motor vehicle purchases for 2020 through 2021 (Exhibit A). He noted expenses such as fuel would no longer be an issue because it would only require electric energy from City Utilities.

Mr. Owen addressed decreasing waste and increasing recycling. He noted this is not in the realm of Renew Missouri, but noted this presentation covers ways the City can take immediate action towards clean energy. He suggested using information taken from the Kansas City Climate Action Plan. He noted the benefits of this plan include developing the secondary materials market for recyclables, providing incentives that create and sustain locally-based recycling jobs, and expanding recycling collection. He noted diverting organic waste from the landfill would help reduce the amount of methane emissions.

Mr. Owen discussed net metering and large-scale solar ordinances. He explained allowing residential and business customers to install solar panels at the point of distribution could result in lower utility bills. He noted there are some businesses in Springfield that would like to have large-scale solar installed on their establishments, but are unable to do so because of a law limiting large-scale solar production to 100 kw of power. He suggested the City could reevaluate the current policies regarding large-scale solar to expand the 100 kw limit and embrace solar energy production. He noted Columbia currently offers rebates for utility customers who use large-scale solar production. He further noted California is using a pilot program where the

utility company installs a large-scale solar panel and battery storage unit on their customers' home or businesses, then using the stored energy, to create a virtual power plant.

Mr. Owen noted some long-term possibilities include programs like Pay-As-You-Save (PAYS). He explained that PAYS is a finance tax added to a person's utility bill to be used by City Utilities to provide capital for energy efficiency improvements to moderate-income customers and renters. He noted the city of St. Louis passed the Building Energy Awareness Ordinance which requires municipal and private buildings over 50,000 square feet to track and report energy and water usage annually. He discussed a grant available through the U.S. Department of Transportation which could be used towards electric buses. He added Renew Missouri would be willing to help the City of Springfield apply for these grants, if needed.

Councilwoman Horton asked what sectors or industries locally are working toward using renewable energy. Mr. Owen noted most hospitals try to design their energy consumption to reduce demand. He added big box stores and retailers are starting to focus on reducing their energy consumption. He noted Missouri State University is currently working to reduce their energy consumption.

Councilman Hosmer asked if there were any electric vehicles capable of handling the working conditions of a police officer. Mr. Owen responded he did not know of any law enforcement agencies using electric vehicles, but expressed there are more public works fleets using electric vehicles. Councilman Hosmer expressed his opinion the City should investigate using electric vehicles to cut fuel costs for non-fee generating services. Councilman Hosmer asked who would pay for the cost of the electric charging station for an electric vehicle for police officers or Public Works vehicles. Mr. Gage noted if it is a fee producing facility, the City would pay. He further noted the City does not pay for Police Department or Fire Department utility costs.

Councilman Hosmer asked what the disadvantages to City Utilities would be if they participated in programs such as the PAYS program. Mr. Owen explained currently City Utilities does not have the money to provide the capital for the energy efficient improvements. He noted they could potentially access the capital with the Inflation Reduction Act. Jim Kreider noted another concern utility companies have expressed is the reliability of renewable energy.

Councilman Hosmer asked what cities, comparable to Springfield, have a good renewable energy plan in place. Mr. Owen noted cities such as Ft. Collins, Colorado, and Sacramento, California, would be good cities to review as they are comparable to the size of Springfield. Councilman Hosmer expressed his opinion it would be helpful for the Committee to look at other municipalities who have plans for renewable energy.

Councilwoman Hardinger mentioned composting programs that reduce food waste. She expressed the need to expand Springfield's local program, Dish to Dirt, by providing education to community members and businesses.

Councilman Hosmer noted the next topic on the agenda is alternative incarceration. He mentioned a program in Connecticut which assists the jail with their capacity issues. He explained the Connecticut program allows individuals to volunteer their time instead of paying

finer. He expressed his opinion Springfield should have programs that will benefit the City by finding alternatives to individuals paying fines.

Pat Sullivan, Assistant City Attorney, noted currently instead of using programs like Community Alternative Sentencing Program (CASP), they are allowing individuals to set up their own community service. She explained individuals are given guidelines such as volunteering at a non-for-profit organization and reporting on letterhead the work completed and the hours worked to receive credit. She noted this allows for people to give back to the community rather than paying fines. Councilman Hosmer asked if the individual pays a program for the service or opportunity. Jenny Deppe, Probation Officer, noted the individual does not pay any fees for doing the community service.

Councilman Hosmer noted there historically was a concern that a program like this could not be completed pre-conviction. He mentioned the Connecticut program allows first-time offenders who were not sentenced to complete a diversionary program to avoid having a criminal record.

Ms. Sullivan noted another option used is suspended imposition of sentence. She explained, depending on the offense and the needs of the person, an individual can be placed on supervised or unsupervised probation. She noted this can include someone who is stealing for addiction purposes or is experiencing housing issues can receive supervised probation. She noted someone who is a first-time offender can receive the option for community service and unsupervised probation. She explained the person would first have to enter a plea and can then be put on probation. Once their probation is complete, they will receive the suspended imposition of sentence, and the record can be closed for most purposes.

Councilman Hosmer asked if there was a way to direct some of these programs back into the neighborhoods. He mentioned the program in Connecticut redirected the offender back into the neighborhoods which allows for a form of restorative justice. Mr. Gage noted there are possible liability issues with programs like these, such as injuries for participants. He discussed needing to use the jail system as an alternative because there may be more individuals who would rather pay a fine and serve time than to do the work in the community. He noted there may be a statute regarding program alternatives. He suggested this could be a topic of discussion in the future. Councilman Hosmer expressed his opinion that a program like this could be positive for the community, allowing individuals to see the consequences to the offender's behavior.

Councilwoman Hardinger noted some municipalities in Missouri which use youth court as a diversion program. She explained these programs help reduce court time and court fees by creating a court system for misdemeanor offenses in certain categories which can reduce the rate of recidivism in juveniles. Ms. Sullivan noted programs like the Impact on Stealing class, Minors with Alcohol class, and traffic classes are used in Springfield to intercept problems individuals face rather than using fines.

Councilman Hosmer suggested revisiting the discussion regarding statutory programs that could be beneficial to neighborhoods in need.

There being no further business to come before this Committee, Councilwoman Horton moved to adjourn. Councilwoman Hardinger seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Hardinger, Horton, and Hosmer. Nays: None. Absent: Ollis. Abstain: None.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:28 a.m.

Prepared by Lauren Fischer