

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee**  
**April 3, 2019**  
**West St. Paul Municipal Center-Administrative Conference Room**

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Committee members in attendance: Carol Hall, Tara Wright, Jonathan Wagner, Rebecca McCarty, Polly Saatzer, Jade Pennig

Non-voting members present: Dave Schletty, Samantha Green, Lisa Eng-Sarne

Guests: Claudia Engelhoff

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Minutes Attendance at the last meeting were corrected. These members attended the meeting but were excluded from roll call minutes: Rebecca McCarty, Carol Hall, and Samantha Green.**

The minutes of the March 6, 2019 meeting were approved with the correction by the committee.

**b. Discussion On Climate Change Resolution**

Claudia Englehoff came before the committee to talk about a citizen's climate Lobby [the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act]. It the first bipartisan bill regarding climate change. Rick Hansen and Matt Klein both support the bill. Englehoff's organization is working in the state legislature for support on the bill, which will affect Minnesota Utilities. The volunteer group is working on a national level across a wide spectrum including agriculture, manufacturing and personal consumption.

Englehoff and other volunteers are talking to local government about supporting the bill. The cities of Duluth, St. Paul, Prior Lake, Red Wing and Northfield support the bill. The bill endorses the concept of the price of carbon. Two years ago, she spoke with Clpn. Bellows about her organizations' efforts. Bellows agreed with Englehoff but was not interested in City Council taking the bill to Congress. He did not feel it was appropriate. Now there is more conversation and concern regarding the issue. There are more concerns about vector borne diseases. Climate change (causing warmer winters and longer summers, draughts and excessive rains) are causing extreme heat events. People that are more vulnerable die in type of weather, (old people, homeless and babies). Air pollution is another concern; coal-burning plants impact the upper Midwest and aggravate chronic respiratory disease. Flooding has affected small towns in Minnesota; small town budgets have been spent on containing runoff and building new culverts.

Englehoff explained how in the bipartisan bill works. There will be a fee on fossil fuels emissions that will increase over 20 years. The fees will be returned to people, not to government programs. The fees will be mitigated for low and middle-income people. Products from other countries that do not pay carbon tax will be charged. Products exported from the United States will be refunded. This will protect US industries. The bill would also put a pause on the Clean Power Plan for 10 years to see what impact a carbon tax has on emissions. Englehoff said the bill has 27 cosponsors (26 Democrat and 1 Republican.) The bill is supported by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Presbyterian Church, the Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy and RepubliCAN. It is also supported by some evangelical groups. The Silicon Valley Leadership Group (Google, Apple) also support the bill.

Engelhoff asked what the committee thought about the timing of the bill. McCarty said that she understands the need for a bipartisan effort but feels the bill does not go far enough, and that "we

do not have ten years to wait.” We cannot wait for the good will. There is a lack of teeth to the bill and we need more regulation. Englehoff replied that this one policy would affect every part of the economy. McCarty is concerned that without regulation, the rest of the world will be affected. Wagner said that the largest corporations have a lot of money; they can spend a lot of money to pay for the taxes before they make changes. The corporations can “hold out a long time.” A new competitor does not have the income when they start and it would be harder for them to pay for the taxes. Engelhoff replied that wind and solar energy will be a cheaper [alternative] and it will cause an industry effect. Wagner is also concerned that the poor will be more affected by the bill. Engelhoff said church groups support the bill because they feel the bill protects lower income people.

Engelhoff said there are three ways the city can support her organization:

- By asking Council to take action on climate
- By Supporting a carbon fee program or
- By supporting HR763, [Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act.]

Schletty said the committee would need to do more research before passing a recommendation to Council. Engelhoff said there is no deadline. Schletty said Engelhoff could present to Council during their Open Council Work Sessions. Engelhoff gave the website for more information regarding the bill.

- c. **Site Plan Review 186 Marie Avenue East** Schletty presented the site plan for the Clean’n Press at 186 Marie Ave E. Clean Holdings LLC would like to expand the rear parking lot because the business will lose 6-7 parking stalls when the new trail is built this summer. The addition of the parking lot will remove five cotton wood trees from the property. Cottonwoods are not considered quality trees by the city and therefore do not require replacement. The code does require that one tree be planted every twenty feet in the setback area. Clean Holdings is also working with their neighbor on storm water management by regrading the sod. Schletty asked for comments from the committee. The new trees will have to be a shorter smaller variety for the power lines. A committee member wondered if more prairie and pollinator plants could be planted as well. The committee talked about the business’s need for more parking. Schletty said they would lose the parking spots that their trucks usually use. The business need stems from the city taking away existing parking spaces because of the new trail being built. Schletty does not know if they would be going below the city requirement. Wright said that the plan meets expectations; there is not a lot of space [to work with.] Wagner asked if they could reduce the number of parking spots being added. Penning said if they cut the number of spots, a green space could be installed for drainage. Wagner suggested hard wood trees that grow no higher than 20 feet and spread not more than 15 feet.

Schletty said that he would take the committee’s ideas to the City Planner. Construction for the project is slated for this summer.

- 4. **OLD BUSINESS-NA**
- 5. **UPDATES**

**a. Subcommittee Update**

- i. **Arbor Day Planning-** Schletty reported that Garlough School is not going to do the program this year. The committee will proceed on Plan B and the celebration will be on May 18 during the Harmon Park/West St. Paul Days celebration. The committee will have a table in the Harmon Park Neighborhood Center during the Open House event. The parade will begin at 1 pm. The celebration will take place about 2:30-3:00 pm. A ceremonial tree will be planted for the celebration. Volunteers from the committee may work 1-hour shifts; the event will be 2 hours long. A committee member said that she had contacts from heritage and Sibley that are interested in participating. Schletty said that there is no room for others because city staff will have their tables as well. Other participants could register through the West St. Paul Days website. The committee can put flyers from other organizations on their table. They can still have the spin the wheel/plant give away. Schletty is working with Southview Garden Center for the plant and tree donations. The committee needs to decide on their shifts and what resources they want on the table. Schletty is getting seedlings from the Recycling Coordinator for the event.
- ii. **GreenStep Cities Program** Schletty said that we are in a pending status. Next month the City will receive a rating from the GreenSteps people. On a side note, city council is in favor of the Forest Credit program that Michael Orange spoke about at the last meeting. Schletty will work with Orange on the program.

- b. **Council Updates-**Eng-Sarne said Mr. Orange's [presentation] was wonderful and everyone was supportive. She mentioned that there is an "appetite for a City Wide Cleanup." A committee member asked if the city could require business owners to clean up their property. She referenced a particular bar. The city can tell a property owner to clean up (through code compliance) but does encourage residents to talk to their neighbors about problems.
- c. **Staff Update** –Schletty reported that there are no staff updates.
- d. **Parks and Recreation Committee-NA.**
- e. **Planning Committee Update-** Green said that there is not much to report. She does agree with the committee regarding the Clean-n-Press recommendations. She does agree that the Clean-n-Press does not need so much parking. (She also mentioned Hobby Lobby did not need so much parking either.) She said that the Planning Commission is working on this in their work sessions. Wagner asked about parking/asphalt ratios to population. It was mentioned that Thompson Park is also cutting down its parking spaces as well.

**6. OTHER-NA**

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:59 pm.