

CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 8, 2019

MEETING CONVENED: 7:02 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair George Irvine (presiding), Beth Chajes, Helga Huntley, Mary Clare Matsumoto, Bob McDowell, Robyn O'Halloran, Shelia Smith, John Wessells

ABSENT: Kismet Hazelwood

STAFF: Renee Bensley, City Secretary
Michael Fortner, Planner II
Nichol Scheld, Administrative Professional I
Thomas Zaleski, Parks Superintendent

GUEST: Dave Athey, AECOM
Bahareh van Boekhold, Chair of the Steering Committee

Mr. Irvine called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

MOTION BY MR. MCDOWELL, SECONDED BY MR. WESSELS: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

AYE – IRVINE, CHAJES, HUNTLEY, MATSUMOTO, MCDOWELL, O'HALLORAN, SMITH, WESSELLS.

NAY– 0.

ABSENT– HAZELWOOD.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. STEERING COMMITTEE/SUSTAINABILITY PLAN – MIKE FORTNER & AECOM

Mr. Fortner introduced Dave Athey who is the lead consultant with AECOM. He added Ms. Smith and Dr. Huntley have assisted with the plan.

Mr. Fortner presented the proposed "roadmap" outlining the future City of Newark. It balances the needs of the people and the planet and encourages robust civic engagement. There will be new ideas

and ways to encourage Newark to be more sustainable.

There are four themes of the plan, 17 goals and 84 action items. The four themes are as follows:

- Clean Energy
- Good sustainable planning
- Green buildings
- Preserving natural environments

The biggest change from last month was an increase in the percentages and goals in Theme 1. The Committee increased the percentage to 30% by 2025 from the state goal of 25% by 2025, thus exceeding the state goal. The Committee decreased the time to be 100% from 2050 to 2045. He believed the estimates were based on the Paris Accord or a similar objective standard to be reached as a society. This includes the 3% goal to triple the generating capacity by 2025.

The second theme, the planning theme is a standard set as a “toolbox” with a complete community guide with the University of Delaware Institute of Public Administration. The group has developed a “toolbox” for the Committee to use as the basis to encourage the community to be a walkable, sustainable and supportive of a car free lifestyle by embracing clean transportation options by establishing a network for electrical vehicles.

The third theme, Green buildings has a designated committee currently working to improve the City’s green building design standards. It will establish benchmarks and when to achieve them.

The fourth theme, Protecting the Natural Environment had no major changes pertaining to goals from the last report according to Mr. Fortner.

Mr. Fortner hoped to discuss and get a recommendation at this meeting. A public workshop has been scheduled for October 17, 2019. There will be a station for each theme for the public to learn about the plan and to discuss the goals. The plan itself has been scheduled to be presented to Council on November 11th, 2019 where the Committee hopes it will be adopted.

Mr. Fortner introduced Bahareh van Boekhold, Chair of the Steering Committee.

Mr. Fortner explained the Steering Committee would like for the CAC to drive the plan and coordinate with the Newark Energy Transition Net Team. The CAC would oversee allocating funds for contractors, prepare an annual report and an updated plan which the CAC could delegate to a steering committee no more than every 5 years. The next step would be a creation of a dashboard to be posted on the City’s website to show real time data on renewable energy, water consumption and public engagement. It would help to explain to the public what is being done and what they can do to make their lifestyles more energy efficient and to help implement the plan.

Mr. Fortner stated that the Committee has worked together for about two years. He noted City staff has also been involved as well as AECOM staff by putting in additional consulting time to bring the plan together. The plan has gone through the Committee process and has also been reviewed by staff who have provided input. He believed this plan could be presented to Council with a united front.

Ms. Smith liked the breakdown of the 4 themes and 84 tasks. She believed it was important for

people to realize that all the information has been provided within the plan and the CAC would review those tasks, chose the ones they feel are important and work on them.

Ms. van Boekhold wanted to add that one of the things in the old Comprehensive Plan was under Part 5 of that plan and noted there are different things happening in the City, where the Committee felt those items could come under the Sustainability Plan. This plan brings all the efforts and actions of the City together for everyone to see that there are no random actions. The actions together make the City better and more sustainable.

Mr. Irvine questioned what the City's current state was regarding the first Goal 1.1 for the City to procure renewable generation resources for its distributed electricity mix of at least 30% by 2025. Ms. van Boekhold stated the City falls under DEMEC, in its requirement must meet RPS which is 25%. Currently, DEMEC is at 16%. The City claims the same mix as DEMEC. She added that is it mandated per state to meet 25% by 2025. There are efforts within the State to raise the cap to 35% to 50%.

Mr. Irvine believed the 16% to be a mix of 9 municipalities within DEMEC's portfolio. He asked if there was a way to figure out how much of that percentage was the City's contribution. Ms. Bensley explained at the City Council meeting held on the previous night, this was a discussion as part of the financial workshop with the budget. In the original proposal, staff had proposed the City to be at 100% Green Energy supplied to the City through purchasing the different RECs (Renewable Energy Certificates). At the end of the meeting it was determined that the City pledged to be at 50% Green Energy by the end of 2020.

Ms. Bensley added that the direction to staff was when preparing the final budget for presentation on November 4th, 2019 to use the 50% goal as part of that but noted Council will still need to vote to change the Green Energy charge that is on the electric bills to be able to fund it. Mr. Irvine stated that the fee would have to increase to cover any additional cost to procure green energy or to exit contracts. Ms. Bensley agreed and stated it may cost the average household roughly \$2.64 a month. However, this would not include the University of Delaware or large industrial users. Ms. Bensley explained that it would be 50% Green Energy for electricity for residential owners.

Dr. Huntley asked what percentage of the City's electric sales was made up of residential sales. Mr. Irvine believed the data to be saved and Ms. Bensley stated she would have to research the this. Ms. Bensley added that the University has its own negotiated electric contract with DEMEC. She was aware that the University has spoken with DEMEC to find out the cost to have a more mix of green energy to their energy provision. As far as the industrial users, Ms. Bensley did not have the numbers of how much they are versus residential.

Dr. Huntley stated the reason she brought this up was because the City would not actually be achieving the goal total across the board by next year if the residential sales are only half of the total sales and if the City does not increase the green component for the other users. Ms. Bensley stated that the direction to staff was to review options for industrial users so that portion has yet to be determined.

Dr. Huntley asked if the idea was to make it optional for people to opt into getting a higher percentage of their power from green sources or was the City just going to provide green energy. Ms. Bensley explained Council still must make a final decision, but the proposed path was for all residential users to be opted in.

Dr. Huntley stated DEMEC had to reach certain goals by 2025. If Newark decided to get 100% of green energy would that mean DEMEC could give 0% green energy to all of its other customers and still meet its legal requirements which would mean that there would not be an increase in green energy use throughout DEMEC's service territory. Ms. Bensley was not able to answer that question.

Ms. van Boekhold felt the conversation at the Council meeting discussing renewable energy and hearing about it again at the CAC meeting showed a great example as to what needs to be planned. There needs to be a big picture to show why reaching for renewable energy is a goal. She believed that the plan provides a framework to provide a big picture of where the City wants to go, how to get there in the most economically sound way and identify the windows of opportunity to reach the goals. The plan will be overarching and hopefully guide the conversation.

Mr. Irvine stated the CAC agreed with Ms. van Boekhold. Mr. Irvine said that any questions he asked were not to be critiques. The CAC did critique DEMEC when they presented over a year ago because the CAC felt that the goals were too short. He was happy that the Sustainability Plan increased it to 30% by 2025 and that the City was looking to go 100% as the CAC has always felt that the City could do better. Mr. Irvine felt that there was a small piece missing which was how economic development matters to sustainability. He believed sustainability to be a driver for economic development and that Newark could be a hub to attract the type of entrepreneurs because of its sustainability.

Ms. Smith believed the triple bottom line was part of the economic development piece. Dr. Huntley stated it spoke more about the use of economic consideration alongside social and environmental considerations in making decisions. Dr. Huntley thought Mr. Irvine was looking at the sustainability incentives also being economic drivers.

Mr. Irvine referenced Richard Florida's thesis about the "creative class". It states that sustainability attracts people who are entrepreneurs in the new economy when there are cities which are making efforts like the City. He felt that this was a good thing because the City has had some issues with retaining young professionals. Mr. Irvine believed that if the City could demonstrate and show the efforts it is making to have EVs (Electric Vehicles), green housing, green buses and have the changes that matter to the younger generation. Those people may want to stay and set up their businesses. It could then potentially attract other environmental and sustainable businesses. Mr. Irvine wanted to know how they could get this in the plan because one of the critiques of the environment over the last 30 to 40 years has been that it was jobs or the environment. He believed that has changed now with efforts and with Tesla showing its EV productions and jobs and the environment are more of a concern. He added it would be valuable and would like to have it added.

Dr. Huntley explained that if there were a few sidebars in the beginning of each theme outlining a list of benefits which started with economic benefits. She pointed out that one of the benefits was promoting green jobs under the Climate Change goal. Mr. Irvine was not sure if there was a chance to revise the plan to move the economic benefits to the front of the plan. He thought perhaps the CAC could "own" it by taking it but stress that it is good to do from a triple bottom line perspective but really good to attract talent and start-ups coming out of the University of Delaware and elsewhere.

Dr. Huntley suggested adding it to page 1 in the introductory paragraph and work the green economy into that paragraph. Ms. Smith added that when the City interacts with businesses they should ask if the business has looked at the City's Sustainable Newark Plan. The plan is something that should attract young people and those interested in following the goals to be walkable and bikeable City with

green infrastructure. Mr. Irvine said that it could also be used to attract companies to settle in Newark. He noted the Delaware Prosperity Partnership covers this. One idea would be to speak with Kurt Foreman, the new head of the partnership, to show that Newark has a plan and it would be a great place for companies to settle when they are looking for a place to setup.

Ms. Smith stated that the partnership may also have suggestions for how the plan more attractive.

Mr. McDowell was looking forward to the dashboard being created to show his students what is happening in the City. He would also like show the number of green jobs and infrastructure that has been created specifically for renewable energy. He felt that the dashboard would help make Newark more attractive to anyone searching for a place to go. It would highlight all the environmental impacts the City has been making by using green energy which falls in line with the economic.

Mr. McDowell added that this would show how the City is trying to flip the thought it has been either “the environment or jobs” to “the environment is why there are jobs”. Newark should want to be known to be a green and popular city.

Mr. Irvine asked for clarification of the role the Steering Committee has for the CAC.

Ms. Bensley provided follow up information on the City’s proposal by stating that Mr. Coleman had explained that commercial users would be included as part of the Green Energy proposal and only the highest industrial users. University of Delaware would not be included. He expected it to not be more than 10 to 20 exempted accounts out of 12,000. However, he did reserve the right to correct the figure once DEMEC provided a final list. Mr. Coleman also advised that the City’s chose to go above the RPS curve for the 25% goal would not influence the requirements of the other communities to meet the minimum under the DEMEC umbrella.

Dr. Huntley asked Mr. Athey to clarify the change in the plan showing a change from previous versions of 16% down to 13% under the number of current renewable portfolio in DEMEC. Dr. Huntley stated that a figure was replaced. Mr. Athey stated that they were asked to update the exhibit. Dr. Huntley did not recall the date of the previous figure but questioned if in 2018 it was less than before. Ms. van Boekhold explained that it was always a percentage of sale and it is possible that the sales increased but have not actually brought on board new renewable energy which could cause a drop.

Ms. van Boekhold wanted to go on the record to say when considering how to bring renewable energy on board, think about how to get to the targets equitably while also keeping in mind the community’s various income levels and how it will affect their cost and rate. In the plan there is a recommendation for Community Solar. It is a revenue process to incorporate how low income would be able to get renewable energy. There needs to be a group of people who understand electricity markets, renewable energy and how everything works together to help the Commission on more specific questions regarding the right pilot projects. The Steering Committee felt that it would help the CAC to have a small group of experts to help on more specific energy infrastructure, energy policies, and renewable technology.

Mr. Irvine asked how the group would be formed. Ms. van Boekhold stated that the Steering Committee felt that it was needed to have one or two specific people that understand electric infrastructure and technologies to assist with the complicated processes.

Mr. Irvine understood the point to have experts and like the name the “Newark Energy Transition” because it was a trajectory from one state to another. Mr. Irvine believed that the CAC could systematically work through the plan over the next five years in addition to items that may come up from the community or when working through the plan. He asked if Ms. van Boekhold envisioned the CAC’s involvement with the plan. Ms. van Boekhold has always wanted the CAC to own the plan. When there are conversations about budget and infrastructure growth the CAC should push the plan to remind everyone that this is where the City wants to go.

Ms. van Boekhold added that the hope would be to eventually, with the success of the plan and milestones for there to be an opportunity to hire a planner where half of their role would be sustainability planning. Other organizations making headway in this area have staff.

Mr. Irvine asked if anyone on the Commission agreed with the vision. Ms. Smith did and added that the plan is a guide. If issues were to arise, the plan could be referenced for direction. Dr. Huntley believed it to be a great advantage of this plan that the CAC exists to take ownership of the plan rather than relying on staff to build it into their busy schedules. Ms. O’Halloran liked the idea of the CAC owning the plan and having a reference to the decisions the Commission can make because the ideas have already been thought through and they can refer further questions to people have already researched the ideas. Ms. Matsumoto agreed and felt that it was good to refer to the plan even during implementation of the plan. Ms. Chajes also agreed and believe the plan to be a great guide to refer to when taking on something new or needing to check the process of something. Ms. Chajes was also interested in the process of updating and how it would work.

Mr. Irvine stated that this was a broad agenda to take on since the CAC meets 11 times in a year. Annual reports could help stay on track. They would in some way be crafted around the Sustainability Plan. The challenge would be that not all the plan could be done within a year. He believed that five years may or not be enough time so they should set too slow of a pace. Ms. Smith suggested to look at what should really be worked on first or what the community is really motivated to improve or push forward. Mr. Irvine stated that would be a notation of prioritization. He added that they could use the Community Day poll for feedback and from other community meetings.

Mr. Irvine had a question pertaining to when the grant was received from DNREC to construct the plan, there was a possibility of follow up implementation money and wanted to know if that still existed. Ms. van Boekhold stated that it would need to be verified. It was the intention as the source of the grant was Regional Greenhouse Gas Emission Funds within DNREC. The plan would be the first step and then follow up by implementation. There is a meeting scheduled for October 24th, 2019 in Dover and it would be a great question as there would be a presentation from the City. It would be a good time show the plan and request more funds. Ms. van Boekhold has worked for DNREC for six years and developed the grant the Steering Committee reached for. Through her experience working with the State and later working for a non-profit obtaining grants, she has come to realize that there is always money. What was really needed was good ideas and a group of people that push through to be granted the money.

Ms. van Boekhold encouraged the Commission to take notes every year to have annual comments on the plan to track all the recommendations. She also suggested to identify three to four community leaders to put together resources to obtain grants. Ms. van Boekhold stated there are a lot of unallocated funds at the City level. Ms. van Boekhold suggested that when the CAC beings to prioritizing the items they should identify which are easiest, which ones can be funded, and which eventually have funding.

Mr. Irvine asked if any there was a way to use the dashboard to reflect progress related to the four themes. Mr. Fortner stated yes but it would be something that they will develop and probably bring it back to the CAC for feedback before going live.

Mr. Irvine added that there was an effort made with Dr. Sarzynski with the School of Public Policy at the University of Delaware to create a scope of work to build a Green Energy dashboard roughly three years ago but they never received City funding or the momentum to bring in a graduate student intern to do the work under Dr. Sarzynski guidance to create the framework. Since it was now in the plan, the CAC can now revive that scope of work.

Ms. van Boekhold suggested to encourage the graduate student to go after funding to create dashboards for projects instead of trying to solve hypothetical questions, now there are perfect ideas for grant writings.

Mr. Irvine asked Mr. Fortner if he was seeking a recommendation at this meeting from the CAC. Mr. Fortner responded yes.

Ms. Smith stated that she still had issues with the fourth theme. She believed that they were never addressed at the Sustainable meetings and she was not part of the discussions. Ms. Smith wanted to go on the record to say that theme 4 under Goal 4.4 needs work. Mr. Athey stated that it was fine, but he was not sure how that would affect a motion. Dr. Huntley asked for Ms. Smith's specific changes.

Ms. Smith stated that she sent an email to Mr. Athey ahead of time with two items under Goal 4.4. Ms. Smith read her recommend "To promote and provide public education regarding preservation of residential trees through programs available through organizations such as Tree City USA and Complete Streets". Ms. Smith then read what placed in the final version of the plan as, "Promote and provide public education regarding preservation and care of residential trees and planting through organizations such as Delaware Forest Service, University of Delaware, and the International Society of Arboriculture". Ms. Smith wanted to know why Tree City and Complete Streets were removed because both organizations were referred to in the plan. The City is a partner with Tree City which has a public education program that is highly accessible to the public. Complete Streets has been referenced several times in the plan as a model program for transportation as well as having models for green infrastructure.

Mr. Athey stated that he knew the hardest part of the job with the Steering Committee would be crafting a plan that the Steering Committee could be prove of, have staff endorsement, and approval from the City Council. He explained that Ms. Smith's comments were given to the Parks Department who suggested some edits. He believed the current version reflected the Parks Department edits. Ms. Smith still wanted to know why Tree City and Complete Streets were removed from the recommendation. She asked how the University of Delaware was added because she did not believe them to be a model and do not have a public education program.

Dr. Huntley suggested that Tree City should be placed back into the plan. She thought "Complete Streets" was a concept rather than an organization. Ms. Smith stated Complete Streets has a website with a model. Mr. Fortner said that there might be an organization, but he knew of a Complete Streets as a concept, they are following the Complete Community model at the University of Delaware in the planning section. Complete Streets is part of that, and part can have trees. Ms. Smith stated that it was not just about trees. Mr. Fortner said this was the Steering Committee's report and Tree City could be added as part of the recommendation. Then the Parks Department can explain why they do not want it or go with the

recommendation.

Dr. Huntley stated that the University of Delaware was added because they have experts who do outreach programs to build natural landscapes. Ms. Smith would like for the programs to be named. Mr. Irvine provided examples of programs within the University of Delaware such as Master Gardeners, Agriculture and Natural Resources College. Mr. Irvine added that Ms. Smith's point was valid to add something that they worked hard to obtain, which was a designation as a Tree City and a Backyard Habitat. Mr. Irvine felt that they were things to be highlighted because for a decade their predecessors have worked on them.

Dr. Huntley thought that the action item should be under Goal 4.3 the Tree Canopy rather than the open spaces goal. Ms. Smith read Goal 4.4, "The City of Newark conserves and improves its existing green spaces and seeks to increase them as opportunities arise". Dr. Huntley stated Goal 4.3 was about trees.

Ms. Smith stated there were reasons for why she became part of the CAC and the Steering Committee was because of the biodiversity question within the City's parks and green infrastructure. Ms. Smith read her recommendation as, "Increase biodiversity by planting native trees shrubs and perennials in City parks and facilities landscaping at a rate of no less than 75% in new and replacement plantings". Ms. Smith acknowledged that her recommendation did show up in some place and combined with another one. Ms. Smith read Goal 4.4 Action item D. Her thought process as wanting to see the section read a specific way because the City of Newark is a certified Habitat City. An essential component of that distinction is the use of native plants, trees, shrubs and perennials to improve habitats for wildlife. It should be maintained and increased. Ms. Smith wanted to point out that in May of 2018 by executive order, New Castle County has made the use of native plants in County parks and facilities the law. She continued to read that the "State of Delaware Native Species Commission has recommended that in order to prevent the decline of the local plant and animal species, Government leads by example that all State parks, facilities and departments to incorporate into land and management practices. Municipalities adopt native landscaping in their code."

Ms. Smith continued to read, "last year the precipitant decline of insects worldwide was reported by the Journal of Biological Conservation and recent studies indicated that bird numbers in the United States have dropped by 3 billion since 1970. This is all related to habitat loss which includes loss of native trees, plants, shrubs and perennials. The State and the County has moved to preserve and protect the native species by facilitating the reestablishment of the fundamental and vital link of native plants back into the food chain".

Mr. Zaleski stated that the Parks Department tries to do a 70%/30% at least. He believed the problem with that line of thinking is that insects and diseases are imported and exported all the time. Trees in those native areas have evolved over thousands of years and have a resistance where the native trees in Newark do not. Mr. Zaleski believed that if the City were to stick with 100% native trees, there will not be any trees left in 50 years. The City needs to have other trees that are non-native and non-invasive to have a forest. He provided several examples of current issues happening to the City's trees:

- Spotted Lantern Fly
- Asian Longhorn Beetle
- Emerald Ash Borer
- Dutch Elm Disease
- Chestnut Blight

Mr. Zaleski continued to state that the City needs to have mixture of trees as the City's trees have

not evolved over thousands of years with these insects. Bacterial Leaf Scorch is wiping out a large number of trees in the red and black oak group in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Newark has had a large loss of oak trees. Some white oaks have been resistant but have recently started to succumb to the disease. Mr. Zaleski stated there needs to be a diversified mixture of trees. Ms. Smith stated it was a diversity of 25% to 75%. Mr. Irvine asked if it was 70% native and 30% non-native. Mr. Zaleski explained that is what he goes by when he does a landscape plan. Or he would use a mixture where one parent of a tree is native and the other is a non-native as in the example of the Bloodgood London Planetree.

Mr. Zaleski stated that he has planted that type of tree up at Curtis Mill Park as they are highly resistant to anthracnose. He believed that if he had planted a strictly native tree, he would be yearly spraying four fungicide sprays every Spring to control the anthracnose. He stated that he must think about the safety of the park users, his technicians and the environment. He added that the entire picture must be looked at.

Ms. Smith wanted to make her point that if the City does not use native plants there will be a loss of insects and birds. Ms. Smith agreed to the 70% to 30% split and that there are many families of trees that could be used not just oaks and ash. Mr. Fortner stated to recommend the 30% to 70% . Mr. Irvine preferred not to write the CAC's edits in a recommendation to the City Council. Since the CAC has shared its feedback with the Sustainability Plan still in the draft stages, Mr. Irvine asked if it could be incorporated in some way or would he need write it in the recommendation. Mr. Fortner said for the recommendation to include a section on the economic development benefits and then the Tree City inclusion. Mr. Fortner believed the Parks Department Director went through some of changes.

Ms. van Boekhold recommended for Ms. Smith, Mr. Athey and the Parks Department to meet to make a recommendation to improve that specific recommendation based on consensus. Dr. Huntley believed that they had reached a consensus. Mr. Fortner stated that if the CAC would like to have it added then they can make the recommendation to have it in the plan. If staff goes against it, then they could explain to Council as to why they would want a change to the goal.

Dr. Huntley wanted to add a recommendation to go over the bullet point "Reducing the City's carbon footprint will reduce the cost of waste removal". She did not see the link between the two. Dr. Huntley added that this was the same portion of the plan where they wanted to work in the economic benefits.

Mr. Irvine read a draft of the recommendation as, "The CAC recommends that the City Council accept and embrace the report Sustainable Newark: The City of Newark's Plan for sustainability. The CAC looks forward to using the report as a guide for its future work and updating the Council on the progress of implementing the plan. Minor edits to the plan include:

1. Emphasize the economic development benefits of the Sustainability Plan.
2. Include the fact that the City is a Tree City USA designated city and a Backyard Habitat which are important to maintain.
3. Clarify the bullet points on page 2 and 4.
4. Include the aspirational goal of planting 70% native plants and 30% non-native but non-invasive.

CAC commends the work of the Sustainability Plan Steering Committee."

Mr. McDowell asked to change “Backyard” habitat to “Community” habitat. Ms. Smith added that the City of Newark is a “Habitat City”.

Ms. Smith clarified on page 42 under Goal 4.4 she would like the wording “Tree City” placed back in Section E. Then break down Section D into two to add “increase biodiversity by planting native trees”.

Mr. Irvine read the draft of recommendations with the modifications as, “The CAC recommends that City Council accept and embrace the report Sustainable Newark: The City of Newark’s Plan for sustainability. The CAC looks forward to using the report as a guide for its future work and updating the Council on the progress of implementing the plan. Our minor edits to the plan include:

1. Emphasize the economic development benefits of the Sustainability Plan.
2. We acknowledge Tree City USA as a partner in public education programs under action item 4.4 E.
3. Clarify the bullet points on page 1.
4. Include the aspirational goal of planting 70% native plants and 30% non-native but non-invasive plants.

CAC commends the work of the Sustainability Plan Steering Committee.”

Dr. Huntley asked to change the wording to “The CAC recommends that City Council adopt and embrace...”. Mr. Irvine agreed.

MOTION BY MR. MCDOWELL, SECONDED BY DR. HUNTLEY: THAT THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDS COUNCIL ADOPT AND EMBRACE THE REPORT SUSTAINABLE NEWARK: THE CITY OF NEWARK’S PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY. THE CAC LOOKS FORWARD TO USING THE REPORT AS A GUIDE FOR ITS FUTURE WORK AND UPDATING THE COUNCIL ON THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN. OUR MINOR EDITS TO THE PLAN INCLUDE:

- 1. EMPHASIZE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN.**
- 2. WE ACKNOWLEDGE TREE CITY USA AS A PARTNER IN PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER ACTION ITEM 4.4 E.**
- 3. CLARIFY THE BULLET POINTS ON PAGE 1.**
- 4. INCLUDE THE ASPIRATIONAL GOAL OF PLANTING 70% NATIVE AND 30% NON-NATIVE BUT NON-INVASIVE PLANTS.**

THE CAC COMMENDS THE WORK OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

AYE – IRVINE, CHAJES, HUNTLEY, MATSUMOTO, MCDOWELL, O’HALLORAN, SMITH, WESSELLS.

NAY – 0.

ABSENT – HAZELWOOD.

4. HELP HOMEOWNERS ADDRESS EMERALD ASH BORER IN TREES – HELGA HUNTLEY & TOM ZALESKI

Dr. Huntley stated that she brought this topic to the CAC because she was aware of the issue and had heard that the City was making efforts to protect City trees. She wanted to see if the City could do something to help homeowners and invited Mr. Zaleski to provide input from the City's perspective.

Mr. Zaleski stated that the City has taken some steps over the last 3 to 4 years. Last year there was workshop for the EAB (Emerald Ash Borer) and one in 2017. The workshop in 2017 occurred before the issue hit the Newark area to inform residents of options and what to do when they see the insect.

Four years ago, Mr. Zaleski had spoken with the previous Parks Director, Charlie Emerson, who agreed that they should perform a tree inventory. Mr. Zaleski was able to identify 36 Ash trees, primarily Mountain Purple and two large White Ash in Rittenhouse Park to be treated. He contacted the City of Chicago's Park Forester who has had a lot of experience dealing with EAB to see how they dealt with the situation and treatment. At the time Chicago was performing trunk injection on a three to five-year cycle. Chicago had recorded control even after a five-year period.

Mr. Zaleski chose to work on a three-year cycle. There is a reapplication scheduled for 2020 which would be three years over a twelve-year period. This path totals four injections. He hoped that the trees that the City is protecting, in parks or traffic islands and near Rittenhouse Park, that those trees would be an active seed source to pass through to regenerate the forest with the green ash in those areas.

The City has provided handouts to the public. They have also cooperated with Dr. Dhawan with the USDA Emerald Ash Borer Project. Dr. Dhawan oversees the entire country Ash Borer control. The City has also released three different types of bio-parasites to control the issue.

Mr. Zaleski added that Dr. Dhawan communicated that the City of Newark has been the most aggressive community to work on planned preservation. Dr. Dhawan had suggested that within a 15 to 25 mile radius of Newark those trees would be treated. Mr. Zaleski felt that the City has done all that it could do. If he receives any calls about dying trees, he inspects the trees and provides a recommendation.

Ms. Smith asked the percentage of treated trees. Mr. Zaleski stated that he had selected 36 trees throughout the park system and on the traffic islands to start to treat within the 15 to 25 mile radius. There was a tree inventory completed approximately eight years ago. He believed that an estimated 8% of the Ash trees were compromised in the Urban Tree Canopy. The US Forest Service and the International Society of Arboriculture recommend that no more than 10% of one tree genus compromise the total Urban Tree Canopy in a community. The following trees were at least 14% or more in White Pine, Maple and Oak. The tree inventory did not consider any trees on private lands.

Mr. McDowell asked if any residents have noticed them on their property. Mr. Zaleski stated that did notice some trees located at the Woods of Louviers were affected. Three homeowners of affected trees were notified and in a separate notification homeowner in a block with White Ash trees were notified. Once resident did reach out to Mr. Zaleski and he advised them on what needed to be done as well as how to do it.

Dr. Huntley asked what Mr. Zaleski would recommend for homeowners with ash trees. Mr. Zaleski recommend for residents to call an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Arborist. Residents should look for the IAS logo or go to the ISA website to find a certified arborist in their area have their trees evaluated. Some trees can still be saved if they are between 25% to 30% infected. From what Mr. Zaleski has read and heard, any more than 30% needs to be removed.

Ms. Smith asked if the pamphlet was available through the Parks Department and on the City's website. Mr. Zaleski stated that it is located right at front window of City Hall and believed that there was a link added to the Parks and Recreation Department page. Mr. Zaleski added that most of the residential calls he has responded to for investigation have shown more Bacterial Leaf Scorch. There was one EAB where Mr. Zaleski recommended that the homeowner contact an ISA Certified Arborist.

Dr. Huntley asked if Mr. Zaleski wanted residents to have their trees evaluated. Mr. Zaleski said that is should be done. He added that many people do not know what type of trees they have, and he is more than willing to look at the property to let the homeowner know the type of trees on their property. If they do have ash trees, he would tell them that they should have someone evaluate the tree.

Mr. McDowell asked if there was any data on the release of the "beneficial". Mr. Zaleski stated that he has not spoken to Dr. Dhawan or Jonathan Schmude since the August release. They were released in the Valley Stream area off Barksdale Road and Coleman Park. Ms. Smith asked when an impact would be expected to be seen. Mr. Zaleski stated that if there is a decrease in trees succumbing in the next three to five years, then he would say the steps taken have been successful. Mr. Zaleski will be reaching out to Dr. Dhawan or Jonathan Schmude after the New Year for an update.

Dr. Huntley wanted to know the cost of treatment. Mr. Zaleski explained that the City does a trunk injection with a special system. The system had originally cost \$2,600 four years ago and another \$1,600 for the materials to inject. Ms. Smith asked that if a resident were to contact an ISA Certified Arborist how much would that cost since they may already own a system and materials. Mr. Zaleski stated that when he had worked for a private nursery, they had based the cost off the size of the tree. Ms. Smith felt that it may be useful to add to the education to residents, an estimated cost for treatment.

Dr. Huntley asked if it would make it cheaper for homeowners if there was a group program where the City could hire a company to perform the work and then homeowners could opt in. Mr. Zaleski stated that in his experience, if multiple residents within a certain radius to agree to treatment, they could receive a discount. Mr. Zaleski added that his experience was just with one nursery over 28 years ago.

Ms. O'Halloran asked how would or could landlords be made aware of the problem. Mr. Zaleski stated that there are a number of proactive landlords and developers in the City. Mr. Zaleski has received calls from residents next to a rental property or calls from Code Enforcement to inspect trees. If he found there to an issue, the landlord would be contacted. Mr. Zaleski added that all the cases that he has been a part of have had responsive landlords.

Mr. Wessells reminded the Commission of the Reforestation Day approaching and that it would be a good opportunity to distribute the Parks handouts to courage the volunteers to help spread awareness. Mr. Zaleski stated that he and Mr. McDowell will need some volunteers at least one to two members from the CAC to staff the desk to sign in volunteers. The plan for the day has been decided to have three groups with Mr. Zaleski, Mr. McDowell and Ms. Smith as the crew leaders. Reforestation Day has been scheduled to be held up at the Newark Reservoir by recommendation from Jim White with the

Delaware Nature Society. This year they will have larger, quality material with a better-established root system of both trees, shrubs and ground cover. Mr. Zaleski researched ground cover that was deer resistant, drought tolerant, shade tolerant and native. This will help to get ground cover reestablished in the forest.

Mr. McDowell added that Reforestation Day is November 9th. Also, protective tubes will be placed around some of the already established plantings. Mr. Zaleski stated that there would be more of a diversity with those trees that did survive the last planting which were Hickory and Black Gum. It may take 15 to 20 years to reap the benefits, but it will help since so many Oak trees are being lost to Bacterial Leaf Scorch. Mr. McDowell will have a handout to illustrate how to properly plant a tree with clear pictures from the CAC for the volunteers to have with them as they are participating in the planting.

Ms. O'Halloran asked the start time of the event. Mr. Zaleski believed that the previous year the time was scheduled for 9:00 am to 11:00 am but they were there later planting. Ms. Smith asked how many holes were going to be dug. Mr. Zaleski noted the following:

- 18 trees in 3-gallon containers
- 18 shrubs in 3-gallon containers
- 30 herbaceous ground covers in 1-quart pots

The ground covers and the existing Beech and Oak trees will need to have protective sleeves added. Water will also need to be hauled to the location. Mr. McDowell stated that they would have 3 water carts to use. Mr. Zaleski said that Brandywine Nurseries has been scheduled to water the location for a total of five times next year through the summer. Mr. Zaleski explained that he currently does not have the staff to do the watering. The price of the watering is more of a gift from Jamie Jamison of Brandywine Nurseries.

Mr. Irvine asked if anyone else on the Commission would be able to volunteer. Dr. Huntley, Ms. O'Halloran, and Ms. Matsumoto. Ms. Matsumoto would like to be a planter. Mr. Zaleski suggested for there to be a fourth planting team headed by Ms. Matsumoto. Mr. Zaleski felt that with only 60 out of over 300 planted last year not a ratio. However, a representative from Delaware Nature Center said it was a great result. Mr. McDowell believed that watering after planting will be a big benefit.

Mr. Irvine recapped the items addressed so far. Suggested to have subcommittee formed to come up with ideas to address the Emerald Ash Borer. He suggested for the issue to be pushed to the Newark Post for an article, have it addressed in a flyer available at reforestation day, advertised on the City website as well as the City television station. Each communication should educate and provide information on who to contact.

Mr. Irvine asked if Dr. Huntley, Ms. Smith and Mr. McDowell would volunteer to collect some ideas pertaining to the Emerald Ash Borer for a public education campaign to be presented to the CAC for recommendation. Dr. Huntley asked if they should also possibly pursue the idea to offer a group service for treatment. Mr. Irvine stated that it could be added to the recommendation to Council.

Ms. Smith asked the current extent of the problem within the City of Newark. Mr. Zaleski believed that the City responded to quickly and it may be contained from what he has observed. However, a tree could have an EAB for one to two years without any obvious symptoms. It could be worse than expected but it may not come to full term until 2022-2023.

Mr. Zaleski stated that he is always looking for potential signs of any issues. He inspects every park in the Valley Stream four times year. He has noticed when the oaks die out, they are replaced by hickories naturally. Whenever he reviews plans for landscape developments (residential, commercial, industrial) if there are Green Ash, White Ash, or anything in the red or black oak group he asks for them to change them. He provides recommendations on other species such as Yellowwood, Coffeetree, Hickory, Coaltree or Raintree.

Dr. Huntley asked what the problem was with Oak trees. Mr. Zaleski stated that they have Bacterial Leaf Scorch, anything in the red and black Oak group. White Oaks seem to be more resistant to it but have started to succumb to the disease out in the mid-west. The disease is spread by leaf hoppers which is an insect with a piercing sucking mouth part to suck out the juices from leaves. In doing so, it is transmitting the bacteria.

There is no cure for Bacterial Leaf Scorch. It can be treated with anti-biotics which slows down the process. The disease clogs the xylem (the equivalent to human blood vessels) of the tree which prevents the tree from getting an nutrients or water from the roots up to the “crown”. This means that an infected tree slowly starves to death.

Signs of Bacterial Leaf Scorch are random dead branches, early leaf drops and on some of the leaves there will be yellow halo on the outside of the leaf. When Mr. Zaleski observes the oaks that have it, he is taking off the dead limbs off as much as he can within reason for use of funds. If the tree gets to a certain point the trees are completely removed and replaced. Between 2018 and 2019, 9 Oaks were removed from Dickey Park which were replaced with Maples and Yellowwood.

Dr. Huntley asked for clarification on Mr. Zaleski’s comment that the EAB was contained. Mr. Zaleski explained that he has not observed any more outbreaks, but it still could take one to two years for symptoms to show. As soon as the issue was identified in the Valley Stream area, Mr. Zaleski, Dr. Dhawan and Mr. Schmude they went looking throughout different areas of the City. This included Wilmington Way where they found the houses with the three trees. He treated one tree on the southside of Barksdale Road, one on the northside and on one tree that did not have any signs but did so anyway in Coleman Park in the northwest side of town. They did so because it appeared that it was the location of where the EAB were coming in. Where it was private residences, the USDA does not do private lands, the City notified those residences by letter that they had the EAB and to call if they had any questions. One residence did contact Mr. Zaleski and he went to their home to show them the infected tree. Trees on public land were treated for a second time in August. Newly infected trees were identified in May which was also the first release of the parasites to counteract the EAB.

Dr. Huntley asked if that possibly stopped the spread. Mr. Zaleski stated that as a professional arborist, probably not but he hopes that it is helping to contain it. He added that a lot of the parasites can “sense” the EAB beneath the bark. The parasite pierces the bark and inject an egg into the larva. As the larva lives, the egg grows and eats the larva alive.

Ms. Smith asked if Mr. Zaleski was aware of the connection between English Ivy and Bacterial Leaf Scorch. He stated that he was not aware. Ms. Smith explained that the bacteria lives in the leaves of English Ivy so removing ivy could be an important step to control Bacterial Leaf Scorch. Mr. Zaleski added that another host for the Bacterial Leaf Scorch is the Willow Oak even though it is in the red oak group. He stated it was discovered by a forester in the state of New Jersey. As a carrier, the tree is not affected however as a carrier, Mr. Zaleski is not allowing any more Willow Oaks to be planted in Newark.

Mr. Irvine suggested that by Mr. Zaleski's projected retirement date, that the City hire someone to work with Mr. Zaleski because Mr. Irvine feared that all of Mr. Zaleski's knowledge would be lost. Mr. Zaleski stated that he would recommend that the person to replace him to work side by side for at least a month. Because they would need to know about current issues with the City's Urban Forest but also playground inspections are also a very important part of his job.

Mr. Irvine stated that a subcommittee made up of Dr. Huntley, Ms. Smith, Mr. McDowell would come with ideas for the public education campaign and the CAC would make a recommendation at the next meeting. This will need to be an agenda item.

5. PRESENTATION – CLEAN POWER TO THE PEOPLE – ANDREW O'DONNELL

Andrew O'Donnell, District 3, stated that this presentation supports a sustainable plan. Mr. O'Donnell requested that the CAC bring likeminded people together with resources to work quickly for Newark contribute to the fight against Climate Change. The City Council requested the CAC to rewrite a plan on how to use the Green Energy Fund. This presentation was meant to provide actionable content and discussion to assist the process. Council requested the rewrite to be presented at a November Council meeting.

Mr. O'Donnell believed there to be several challenges with the current Green Energy Fund. One being, Climate Emergency. He believed the climate has not become a mainstream concern and most of the population is ready to make changes that they may not have done in previous years.

The second challenge was believed to be Economic Inequality. The Green Energy Fund is funded by a small fee of an estimated \$0.30 per electric bill. The allocation for residential solar photovoltaic (PV) grants helps residents who have in a high economic mobility. A typical PV project could be more than \$30,000, even with a maximum grant of \$7,500 offered from the Green Energy Fund, only high-income homeowners can afford the project. City Council has asked the CAC to find a fair and more equitable way to use the fund. The opportunity to take advantage of the grant was expected to end on November 1st or as soon as the number of applicants has been fulfilled.

The third challenge is the budget. The most recent accounting of the fund reported a balance of \$170,000. Mr. O'Donnell stated that there are three allocations to the fund and provided an example for each:

- Grants – residential PV projects
- Community Projects – McKees Solar Park
- Community Efficiency – LED streetlights

Typically, the fund receives \$160,000 per year from automatic electric bill fee (\$0.30 per month per household). The Mayor and the City Manager were open to a full reallocation of funds.

Mr. O'Donnell felt that the Green Energy Fund need to be more effective. He presented three goals:

1. Be more effective at fighting Climate Emergency
2. Benefit everyone as much as possible
3. Use a catalyst to amplify a chain reaction

The current allocations comply with DEMEC's Green Energy Fund program guidelines; however, the City does have the option to do other things.

Mr. O'Donnell presented a map representing how much energy flows from all energy sources in the United States for 2018 and where the energy ended up. Most of the energy was generated by fossil fuels which ended up wasted due to inefficiency. The wasted energy contributes to air pollution and Climate Change.

Mr. O'Donnell explained primary targets as electricity generation, electrification and efficiency. A second map outlined what the Nation's energy system would look like without fossil fuels. The goal would be to grow the renewable energies to where they displace all fossil fuels while simultaneously improve efficiency in order to reduce waste.

Mr. O'Donnell addressed some options for discussion:

- Enhance existing Energize Delaware and Efficiency Smart programs
- NetZero New Buildings
- Enhance Electric Vehicle and Charging Station Rebates
- Municipal Solar
- Customer Choice Electricity Supply
- Distributed Energy Storage Rebates

One easy and effective way to dramatically reduce energy use and conserve energy budget is by directly contributing funds to the Energize Delaware Organization within the Delaware Division of Climate and Energy. There should be a stipulation on place that the funds are to only be applied to the City of Newark residents. Energize Delaware has several different programs for improving energy efficiency for different income levels. There is a Weatherization Assistance program which provides weatherization services to low income households. Some other programs offered are an Affordable Multifamily Housing and Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star for Homeowners. All services start with a comprehensive energy audit conducted by a trained professional.

Efficiency Smart is an existing program created by Newark. The main benefit currently is substantial rebates from energy efficient appliances listed on the Efficiency Smart website. The program is not an income dependent program, meaning any income level can qualify. Rebates have been offered in the amount of \$250 for Energy Star water heaters and \$750 for heat pumps. Residents can also purchase discounted LED lightbulbs, smart power strips and smart thermostats from Efficiency Smart directly at a discount. A resident could also borrow a "usage" meter. This device is used to check the usage of appliances in the home. A check list can be filled out with the readings which can be sent back to the Efficiency Smart for them to provide recommendations on how to save energy in the home.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested to use the Green Energy Fund to enhance the Efficiency Smart program to increase the rebates for Newark residents. Mr. Irvine asked who heads Efficiency Smart. Mr. O'Donnell stated Efficiency Smart is the name of the program which is based out of Ohio.

British Columbia has a NetZero plan for new construction. They are using a combination of financial incentives and building code requirements to push all new construction to have NetZero energy usage by 2032. The Green Energy Fund could be used as an incentive or pass stricter building codes.

The Delaware Clean Transportation Incentive Program offers vehicle rebates up to \$3,500 from the State. Also, some manufacturers have up to \$7,500 to offer from the Federal government. Rebates can also be obtained for charging equipment and workplace charging stations to benefit businesses and employees. The CAC could provide a stipulation that addition rebates could be obtained to Newark residents only.

Mr. O'Donnell discussed having solar panels on municipal buildings. This idea would require an initial large amount of funds but would help with reducing operating costs for the City. Pre-requisites would need to be met first. Such as weatherization, air sealing, insulation, LED lighting, and Energy Star appliances in the selected municipal buildings. The McKees Solar Park could be used as a business model. There are additional funds which could be applied for through Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE).

Mr. O'Donnell added that there should be an option for residents to have the option to "buy into" the municipal solar plan. The plan could provide credits back to the resident through rebates on their electric utility bill. Mr. O'Donnell stated that for a \$50 "buy in" with McKees Solar Park a resident could receive \$250 back over five years. Ms. Bensley stated that the correct rebates is \$1 a month for 10 years and comes out to \$120. If a resident paid in \$50, they could buy up to 2 shares (\$100) and then \$1 per month per share for 10 years. It would be \$120 for 1 share and \$240 for 2 shares.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested for the City to switch to 100% RECs (Renewable Energy Credits) until the City can make its own renewable electricity from municipal energy and other sources. The clean power does cost a little more, but the price does continually decrease. The Green Energy Fund and Time of Use rates could be used to incentive energy conservations while keeping rates low. He continued to explain that PJM (Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland) which also has spread to Illinois, South Carolina and most of the Central Northeast other than New England. They are an energy market where brokers buy and sell for utilities and suppliers. They are also a dirty power region due to inexpensive fracking and undeveloped renewables. PJM is controlled by the FERC (Federal Energy Regulation Committee). Under previous governments they were able to drive a lot of clean energy. Currently the cheapest way possible is driving the energy.

The Green Energy Fund could also be used to help homeowners have Energy Storage Units installed. A homeowner would pay an electrician to install a large battery that would be connected to the electrical panel or solar panel system of the home. It benefits the electrical grid by reducing the influx of power used at the first part of the day to the end of the day to use saved up power instead of peak time of day power which costs more. The battery also provides backup power if the electric is interrupted by storms knocking the power out. Units use Time of Use rates by buying electricity at a lower rate and selling the energy back to the grid when the cost increases. This helps the homeowner to recoup some of the cost of the installation of the battery. Vermont currently has a rebate program to assist with the installation of the home batteries.

Mr. O'Donnell's recommendation to the CAC was to use a "waterfall" technique to work through several phases. First would be the municipal solar project and use some of the Green Energy Fund to help with the expense. Second, use funds to close the gap between clean and dirty energy until the prices are even. Third, help enhance existing programs such as Energize Delaware and Efficiency Smart for City residents. Finally, consider rebates for Distributed Energy Storage units when they become more cost effective. Currently they cost an estimated \$8,000 for a battery.

Options that would not require funds would be to follow the British Colombia program which has

raised standards for new construction. Also, ban the sale of oil and natural gas appliances such as furnaces, pipelines, stoves and water heaters. Lastly, push the State to increase all fuel taxes up to counter subsidized levels and apply proceeds to the program while reducing electricity rates.

Mr. Irvine asked for an explanation of DSIRE. Mr. O'Donnell stated that it was a list of money available to fund projects. Mr. Irvine asked if Municipal Solar was the idea to place solar panels on City owned buildings and Mr. O'Donnell stated yes. Mr. Irvine questioned the process to obtain funds from DSIRE. Mr. O'Donnell explained that there was a website where a resident can enter their zip code for the site to provide a list of funding or grants available for the area.

Mr. Irvine wanted to know Mr. O'Donnell's thoughts on a PPA (Purchase Power Agreement) financing model to finance the Municipal Solar recommendation. Mr. Irvine explained that with a PPA, a third-party investor pays the initial cost with an agreement stating that the City would purchase the system from the third party at a set amount over a set period of time. Mr. O'Donnell agreed with which ever option moves the project forward sooner rather than later.

Dr. Huntley stated that she was not aware that the CAC was charged with deciding at this meeting for how to reallocate the Green Energy Fund. Mr. O'Donnell said that Ms. Smith attended the September 16th, 2019 City Council meeting where they had a discussion and suggested for the idea to be presented to the CAC. Ms. Smith added that they did at the last minute as the last meeting which prompted her going to the meeting.

Dr. Huntley asked for the CAC to be notified as soon as possible of when the City Council has assigned a task to the CAC. Ms. Bensley stated it was added to this meeting's agenda under item 6. Dr. Huntley had believed this to be a discussion item to be discussed over multiple meetings. Ms. Bensley said that Council was not going to consider the item again until their December 2nd, 2019 meeting. Ms. Smith recommended for the CAC to review the City Council minutes from the September 16th, 2019 meeting to prepare for another discussion.

Ms. Bensley offered to also forward the CAC's original 2017 recommendation. Council has asked the CAC to revisit the 2017 recommendation. Ms. Bensley provided a brief overview of the CAC's recommendation at that time which suggested for the grants to be reduced from \$7,500 per project to \$3,500 per project. At the time the program was not receiving a lot of applications, so Council elected to not change the level. Since then, there has been an increase in grant applications. Now the concern is that if it continues to increase at its current rate, there will be more applications than money.

City Council requested for the CAC to revisit the recommendation to either put forward the same level as 2017 or some other version. The motion that Council made at the September 16th, 2019 meeting was to have the program be paused as of November 1st, 2019 or at the point where the City receives enough applications that the existing balance of the grant funds was \$0. As of September 16th, 2019, with the applications currently in the queue all provided for the was an estimated \$38,000 left.

Ms. Smith added that there was also discussion about the allocations as they stand are inequitable because not everyone has access to sunlight or finances to pay their share of installing solar. Ms. Bensley stated that the December 2nd, 2019 meeting will cover other green topics such as the CAC's solar recommendation from July, the revisit of the photovoltaic grant levels for the Green Energy program and discussion about larger scale municipal green energy projects that could potentially be done.

Ms. Bensley believed that the questions Council was looking to have answered are first, are the current grant levels appropriate or does the CAC have a recommendation for a different grant level. Second, if the distribution between the three groups is where it should be, or should it be distributed proportionately in one way or another. To either be based on fairness to individuals versus the community or provide incentives to different groups to have enough to fund projects with the rate of accumulation of funds.

Mr. Irvine said that the CAC did give the issue a lot of thought in 2016 – 2017. Two members who were on the subcommittee are no longer with the CAC. The thought was in line with what Dr. Huntley had stated, that if someone could not afford the capital for taking a grant to get the \$7,500 to offset the cost of solar on their house that they would benefit from the larger amount of money put forth to support community projects like McKees Solar Park.

Mr. Irvine believed that Mr. O'Donnell has presented a way of thinking that would leverage other monies to have a greater impact and more equitable impact beyond the thought of just thinking that there is \$170,000 to spend.

Mr. Irvine suggested to discuss the four ideas and work through how to implement each and then have a thoughtful debate at the next meeting. This will give everyone time to look at the ideas presented and to review the minutes from the City Council meeting held on September 16th, 2019.

Mr. Irvine requested a clarification for the term "ToU". Mr. O'Donnell explained that it stood for "Time of Use". The curve is what happens naturally when people use electricity during the day. The Time of Use rates are meant to counter that. When the peak plants come on during the high peak Time of Usage, the most expensive electricity generated for use and to use.

Dr. Huntley wanted to know how the ToU tied into the Green Energy Fund. She understood that there was an electric rate study currently being done by the City and variable rates for times of day would be a part of the study. Mr. O'Donnell stated that Time of Use rates could be started now and adjusted after the results of the audit. Dr. Huntley suggested to wait for any changes to the rate schedule for after when the rate study is released from the consultant as to what would be a fair rate schedule.

Mr. O'Donnell believed that both paths can be worked at the same time by having City Council agree to ToU rates because there are savings to doing so. He explained that currently, it is more expensive to purchase RECs. For 100% there is an increase of \$6.75 per month or \$81 a year (the figures were posted in the Newark Post). For the 50% rate it is \$2.68 per month or \$52 a year. The more expensive REC rate is going to be a challenge for a large number of people that are going to download anything that costs more. To counter that more expensive rate, ToU strategy saves money. By "social" engineering to conserve the peaks could come down which would save money and completely pay for the RECs.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that in the proposed ideas, all of the money goes to Customer Choice Subsidy because he felt that it was the most important thing to spend the money on. Mr. Irvine asked how the money would be spent if they were to incentive behavior based on pricing. Mr. O'Donnell explained that if the City just buys RECs it would be increased by the amounts he just spoke about. By using by \$0.30 per household and with the \$170,000 to offset or subsidize the expense to bring the cost per household down temporarily. It may naturally level out in an estimated two years. After that time less money could be spent there and be focused on another project.

Mr. Irvine explained that it would be making the cost cheaper for the residents by applying the

proceeds of an existing fee, the Green Energy Fund, to decrease future fees and make it less expensive. Especially for those households who may not because it would be \$2 to \$6 a month depending on the purchase. Mr. O'Donnell stated that \$2.68 per month for 50% some people are going to down vote that because of the cost. Mr. O'Donnell believed that the average electric utility bill in Delaware to be \$138 per month which would be a less than 4% increase.

Dr. Huntley asked why give people a choice to buy dirty energy. Mr. O'Donnell stated that at the last City Council meeting, the discussion was to have RECs to fund 100% or 50% whichever is approved. That would be a step beyond what he has proposed. Dr. Huntley said that if Council does stay on that path to buy green energy and supplying green energy to the residents, then that is not something to spend Green Energy Funds on. They could come up with additional methods for improving the City's green energy. Mr. O'Donnell stated that as of the previous night, only one council member supported the idea to increase the rates to purchase RECs. Ms. Bensley added that Ms. Wallace was the only member who supported the 100%. It was a 5 to 1 vote to support 50%.

Dr. Huntley did not agree with charging someone to pay to subsidize another person to afford more expensive energy. The Green Energy Fund is something that everyone pays into on their electric bill. Mr. Irvine stated that in this case, it would not be the choice of the customer. The City would be saying that it has made the decision to purchase it. Dr. Huntley agreed to say that the City supplies the green energy but to also state that there could be an option in addition to the 50% to go to 100% then have it subsidize. Mr. Irvine explained that the City would achieve 100% by using the Green Energy Fund as a subsidy to decrease the cost per household. It would not be inequitable if everyone has to participate. Mr. Irvine believed that from the City Council meeting held on the previous night that Council may mandate or just deciding to purchase RECs outright to fund the whole the City's electricity. Mr. O'Donnell added that Ms. Bensley made the comment that Council would like to increase the Green Energy Fund to pay for the RECs. Ms. Bensley stated that was correct. She also pointed out that one of the other things noted at the City Council meeting was that the first 50% is cheaper than the second 50% because 16.5% would already be incorporated that the City already have as part of it so it would only be raised by 33.5% to get to 50% as opposed to a full 50% for the second 50%.

Dr. Huntley asked if the proposal is to use the Green Energy Funds towards the purchase of the RECs. Ms. Bensley stated yes. Dr. Huntley asked if that was the discussion had by Council. Ms. Bensley explained that there would be an increase in the cost of the Green Energy Funds to cover the cost to purchase RECs to have the City be at 50% renewable energy. Dr. Huntley asked if the base rates of electricity stay the same, but they are increasing the Green Energy Fund portion of the rate to cover RECs. Ms. Bensley stated yes. Mr. O'Donnell added that there is a gap 4% gap between the dirty energy and clean energy. He believed it was a high priority because to cover the 4% it can encourage the City to become greener. Dr. Huntley thought the idea was to increase how much was in the Green Energy Fund to cover the additional cost, not to use what was currently in the Green Energy Fund to cover the RECs, Ms. Bensley that Dr. Huntley was correct. As of August 31, 2019, there was \$170,000 in the Green Energy Fund, Ms. Bensley knew of other projects being discussed. One of the community projects being discussed was to replace the HVAC system to a more energy efficient system in the municipal building. The funding has changed, and the money may not be needed from the Green Energy Fund as there may be opportunities for money from other sources but those are the types of projects that the money has been considered for.

Dr. Huntley asked if they were only to discuss what to do with \$170,000 for the rest of 2019 or is the CAC to discuss what to do for the estimated \$250,000 that will be provided in 2020. Ms. Bensley stated that there were two different discussions for the CAC. Ms. Bensley thought the first would be that Council would like a recommendation on what to do with the photovoltaic grants and if the money should be at a different

level or reallocated. The second would be to have broader discussion of the program as a whole as opposed to just the small portion that Council has asked for with the photovoltaic grants. She thought that the money that Mr. O'Donnell spoke about is what is there now, not the future money that would be accumulated but it could potentially change depending on the decisions made by the CAC and if Council adopts them.

Ms. Bensley said that she would have to see the final budget as the first hearing has been scheduled for November 4th, 2019 because there were discussions for potentially using the Green Energy Funds to fill the gaps in prices with starting to purchase electric vehicles for the City, installing charging stations, and several other ideas. She was not sure how the ideas presented by Mr. O'Donnell have been incorporated into what is being worked on. Mr. O'Donnell felt that Tom Coleman, City Manager, was in favor to use the Green Energy Fund to subsidize the municipal EVs (electric vehicles).

Dr. Huntley did not agree to allocate more funds to the purchase of EVs. Ms. Bensley explained that the City has a sinking fund to purchase vehicles. Every year the City put aside the percentage of the value of the vehicle that was purchased in order to be able to replace it later. If a vehicle is being replaced with a more expensive replacement than what the original vehicle was, there is a gap that the City must figure out how to fund. It could be by using the Green Energy Funds or other funds. The three vehicles being replaced for 2020 has been proposed to be replaced with EVs are in stormwater, parking and electric.

Dr. Huntley did not like the idea to spend Green Energy Funds on municipal EV purchases. She did not believe there to be any kind of catalyst potential to do so. If the money were to be invested into charging stations that would be different.

Mr. Irvine stated that there were a number of issues to be discussed and that City Council was moving faster than he had anticipated in regard to reforming the current distribution of Green Energy Funds. The two questions:

1. Are the grant levels appropriate?
2. Should the distribution be changed?

Mr. Irvine said that the CAC, over the next month, should think about the two near term questions in the current way they do the Green Energy Fund could the CAC give guidance to Council, yes it can be done by next month. In the process the CAC can assure in the near term the allocation of the funds and share long term ideas.

Mr. McDowell asked if Mr. O'Donnell knew that when the City installed new smart meters in homes to be able to wirelessly check the electric meters and that those meters would also have some sort of feature where a homeowner could monitor the meter for time of use. Mr. McDowell thought that if the smart meters could be used to know when usage is down, that would be when a homeowner could schedule to use large appliances like a dryer. Mr. O'Donnell stated that residents could go to PJM.com, the Pennsylvania New Jersey Maryland website that the City is part of. In a real time, a resident can view the mix of what is being burned and the demand curve.

Dr. Huntley knew that on the City's customer portal the daily usage but was not sure if hourly usage was available. Ms. Bensley explained that on Customer Connect, the City's utility interface shows the daily usage over the past month. She was not sure if it showed hour by hour, but it does show electric and water usage. There is also a green, yellow and red system for each day to see where usage was at peak times. Ms. Bensley added that the first 250 kWh is one price, the next 750 kWh is another, and then above the first 1,000

kWh is a third rate.

6. REVIEW OF PHOTOVOLTAIC GRANT LEVELS FOR GREEN ENERGY FUND REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

(Discussed under Item 5)

7. ANTI-IDLING DISCUSSION – SHELIA SMITH

Ms. O'Halloran stated that she is doing a case study in one of her classes. She may present the study on how the City compares to other cities with similar laws. Ms. O'Halloran stated that she would share the study with the group. Mr. Irvine requested for Ms. O'Halloran to share the study with the City Secretary a week in advance of the meeting.

Dr. Huntley would be interested in Ms. O'Halloran give the CAC a short presentation.

Mr. Irvine stated that this would be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Smith added that she would be sharing her discussion with the police.

8. MONTHLY CONSERVATION ARTICLE WITH THE NEWARK POST – SHELIA SMITH

Ms. Smith stated that she had emailed the CAC a list that she received from the Newark Post of criteria of acceptable articles. Dr. Huntley requested to wait to send articles until they have the discussion on how frequently they would like to send articles.

Mr. Irvine suggested for Ms. Chajes to share with the CAC the article she has ready to possibly be posted.

Mr. Irvine asked for this item to be added to the next agenda.

9. CHANGE TO ANIMAL SHELTERING ORDINANCE – HELGA HUNTLEY

Tabled.

10. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Ms. Smith stated that 0 Paper Mill goes back to the agenda for the City on October 28th. Ms. Bensley stated it will be for the final hearing of City Council.

Ms. Matsumoto asked Ms. Bensley if there was a change to the plan where variances would not need to be requested. Ms. Bensley stated that there was a tree mitigation plan that has been submitted and approved as part of the plan. Originally the proposal was to pay a fee in lieu of and now the developer is going to propose a tree mitigation plan with plantings. It will all be posted with the agenda for October 28th on October 21st, 2019.

Mr. Irvine added that as a commission, the CAC is limited to express their "voice" as a commission by the City Charter on such matters. As individuals, he encouraged them to share their perspectives at the Council meeting. Ms. Bensley said that if they were not able to attend the Council meeting, they could submit

something in writing in advance it could be sent to the City Secretary's Office and it would be distributed to Council as late as the day of the meeting.

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

- **2019 Community Day Recap – John Wessells**

Tabled.

- **2019 Reforestation Day Updates – Bob McDowell & Helga Huntley**

(Updates provided under Item 4)

- **Discuss Installation of Solar Panels on Roofs of select City of Newark Buildings**

Mr. Irvine stated that this would be discussed December 2nd, 2019 at the City Council meeting. He stated that the CAC will need to think about who would be doing what in anticipation of the meeting and who would be prepared to represent the CAC.

12. NEXT MEETING – November 12, 2019

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Renee K. Bensley, CMC
City Secretary

/dmp