

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**

October 11, 2022

**MEETING CONVENED:** 7:01 p.m. Council Chambers/Teams Meeting Hybrid

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mikayla Rypkema (Presiding), Beth Chajes, Andrew O'Donnell, John Mateyko, Lauren O'Connor, Mahi Palanisami, Helga Huntley

**ABSENT:** Sheila Smith

**STAFF:** Jeffrey Martindale, Chief Purchasing & Personnel Officer  
Nichol Scheld, Deputy City Secretary

Ms. Rypkema called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 13, 2022:**

MOTION BY MS. CHAJES, SECONDED BY MR. O'DONNELL: TO POSTPONE THE APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 MINUTES UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 6-0

AYE: CHAJES, O'DONNELL, MATEYKO, RYPKEMA, PALANISAMI, O'CONNOR.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: HUNTLEY, SMITH.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Scheld introduced Don Sharpe, United Auto Workers Community Action Program (UAW CAP), who hoped to convince the Commission to draft a resolution to rebuild the old cider mill. He informed that efforts had been made in the past and the State had \$75,000 to use towards the initiative but it was dropped because of extra costs. He emphasized that the City would not incur any costs for the project; the cider mill was within the City but belonged to the State. He was seeking a resolution from the Commission to City Council to determine if City Council would reestablish its support of the rebuild and issue a copy to Governor Carney, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) Secretary Shawn Garvin, DNREC Parks Director Ray Bivens, Senator David Sokola, and Representative Paul Baumbach. He revealed that two years prior, the UAW circulated a petition in Newark that garnered 2,048 signatures, 1,300 of which he personally acquired. He informed the primary desire on the petition was to rebuild the pond at White Clay Creek State Park which garnered \$2 million in funding in 2021. He briefly explained that a DuPont family member built the pond 50 or 60 years prior, and the family wanted to keep the pond at the location when the property was sold but a pipe broke. DNREC representatives were called and confirmed that the pipe needed to be fixed but no further measures were taken. He revealed that three years prior, \$200,000 from the Bond Bill was granted to perform a study and explained that with the \$2 million, the group wanted to install facilities for veterans and handicapped children. He reiterated that one major desire on the petition was the pond, and another was to fix the road. He emphasized that the park cost \$15 million and would fall into the creek if a section was not repaired. He pointed out that the senior citizen residents who fought for

the park's creation were essentially denied access to it because of its inaccessibility. He detailed the breakdown of the petition: 8 petitioners were against reopening the road, 1 person was against the efforts to restore the pond, and no petitioners stood against the cider mill. He reiterated his request that the Commission recommend that City Council support rebuilding the cider mill and thanked the members for their time.

Desmond Kahn, Ph.D. and former president of the Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, Inc., offered to answer any questions on behalf of Mr. Sharpe. Ms. Chajes clarified that the request did not include any City funds and would only include State funds. Mr. Kahn described the cider mill as a community asset which had been located just after the last house on Creek Road. He noted a sign at the site explained its operation for decades as the Schaen Cider Mill because the Schaen family were the mill's last operators. He referred to an older News Journal article titled "Newark Presses on with Plans to Restore Mill" which explained that the General Assembly set aside \$75,000 for the project that had not yet come to pass. He revealed that the machinery for the mill was safely stored in the State Park and was simply a matter of reassembly, of which, he was sure that labor unions would donate time and effort. He explained that the end result would create a place where residents could bring apples to press into cider and generate a seasonal appreciation of nature while promoting a historical community facility.

Mr. Kahn explained that the Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, Inc., was a fifty-year-old organization that was originally concerned with saving the White Clay Valley from the reservoir and then from development; the Coalition supported a resolution for the mill's restoration. Ms. Chajes asked if there was a timeline for the restoration and Mr. Kahn hoped that the Commission could approve and forward a resolution to City Council in the fall. He appreciated the time and effort that the Commissioners put into the community.

Mr. Kahn asked if the Commissioners were aware of the City's anti-idling ordinance and Ms. Chajes confirmed that the topic was one of constant conversation. Mr. Kahn was shocked at how many visitors to the parks sat in idling vehicles which contributed to global warming. He recalled the ordinance was passed because busses would idle at Downes Elementary School until students were dismissed. He asked that the Commission redouble its efforts and ask City Council to notify citizens that there was a law by requiring any parking lot to post one or more signs indicating that idling was prohibited. He was confused as to why the City lacked notifications when signs were all over the New Jersey turnpike.

Ms. Palanisami was enthusiastic about the mill project. Mr. O'Donnell reiterated that the project already had \$75,000 in funding and would not take much to maintain. Mr. Kahn assumed reassembling the machinery could be achieved through labor union donations and reiterated the machinery was in storage. Ms. Rypkema asked if staffing would be necessary to operate the mill and if the original site had burned down. Mr. Kahn explained the original mill building burned down and that it could be operated various ways, either by contractor or private interest. Mr. O'Donnell explained that when the Commission pitched an idea to City Council, the typical response concerned cost to the City or whether revenue balanced out the cost. Mr. Kahn emphasized that there was no cost to the City but assumed there would be some charge to press the apples. He continued that the State would operate the site and suggested it be rented to a third-party operator. Ms. Chajes suggested the Commission could draft a resolution with Mr. Sharpe's and Mr. Kahn's assistance.

Ms. Scheld read, "a Special Use Permit was granted to allow construction in an open floodway district in order to reconstruct a previously existing building that had been unoccupied for a period of more than one year, known as the Schaen Cider Mill, located at Creek Road", in 2003. Mr. Sharpe assumed the State would conduct a study to determine the cost of the project and reiterated that the City would not incur any costs.

Dr. Huntley asked how the request was in the Commission's purview because the group was specifically tasked with advising City Council on natural resources. She admitted that while the mill might be considered a cultural resource, she was unsure that the Commission had any purview over the consideration. Mr. Kahn understood the concern and admitted he was also not 100% certain; he believed that the same path was taken years ago and recalled that the Commission passed a resolution to City Council which was then approved. He agreed that arguments could be made that the mill was a historical fixture and not a conservation issue but noted the mill was located in the State Park and fostered a seasonal appreciation of nature and the natural harvest cycle. He agreed that the call was one of judgement.

Dr. Huntley explained that if the Commission was not tasked to consider historical heritage and its conservation, then requesting a recommendation was not the proper route. She believed the City had an advisory committee on preservation of historical buildings which came up in the context of the Green Mansion proposal; she did not believe the Conservation Advisory Commission was the proper body to compose a recommendation for historical preservation. Mr. Kahn suggested the Commission could advise Council that there was no objection to restoring the mill from a conservation standpoint and that it was an appreciation of and a symbol of community involvement in Newark's natural history. He thought it would be helpful if Council understood that the mill restoration had the Commission's support.

Dr. Huntley asked Mr. Kahn to justify there were no considerations as far as the flood plain and other natural conservation concerns that might interfere with rebuilding the mill. Mr. Kahn asked if the Commission was familiar with the site and Dr. Huntley was only aware that the site was within White Clay Creek and the flood plain, which raised concerns. She explained that her primary reply was to deny any building in the flood plain unless there was a very good reason. Mr. Kahn estimated that the structure was 20 feet by 20 feet and noted that much of the foundation still existed, so it was a matter of restoration. He read from a newspaper article that "Newark waived the rule that would have prevented the restoration because the building would be located in a flood plain." He reiterated that the City already waived the prohibition regarding the flood plain and the foundation was still in place just a few feet from the creek. He explained mill would take up a small part of the area between the road and the creek. Dr. Huntley reiterated her concerns regarding raising new buildings in the floodplain; she acknowledged the existing foundation but did not support rebuilding in the flood plain at a time when more flash flooding was expected.

Ms. Rypkema agreed with Dr. Huntley and explained that a policy already existed; she reminded that with park plans kept forest area within the 100-year flood plain. She recalled comments on the need for handicap spots and better walkways and doubted the Commission would be supportive. Mr. Kahn clarified that the mention of handicap facilities was Mr. Sharpe's reference to the pond restoration in a different location.

Mr. O'Donnell noted the Commission had a charter document that members should review as part of the new member packet and also to determine if the discussion was within the Commission's purview.

Ms. Chajes wanted to visit the site and investigate further before offering her decision.

Mr. Kahn thanked the Commission for its consideration.

### **3. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON REMAINING CAC FUNDING OPTIONS**

Mr. O'Donnell stated that that Commission was down to its last month or two of deciding on how or if to spend its remaining budget of around \$50,000. He reminded some of the options were Energize

Delaware, which had a fund specifically for Newark, Efficiency Smart, which had a “super efficiency smart” fund that would increase the amount of rebates, and City projects.

Mr. Martindale revealed the Commission did not have to spend the entirety of its funding because staff was still in the budget process and the Commission was set to receive the same amount of funding in 2023 as it had in 2022. He explained that Tom Coyle, Efficiency Smart, and Scott Lynch, Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), were forced to postpone their meeting with the Commission that evening and explained staff’s major concern with the option was that it was easier for the City and the Commission to simply offer funding. He felt that DEMEC was more inclined to inform staff when to issue rebate check which would present a substantial administrative burden on the Finance Department. He hoped to have a discussion with the team and come to an agreement that would work for both parties but did not think the timeline would work for the 2022 funding. He informed that the Energize Delaware option was available and was easier from an administrative standpoint. He wanted to make sure that the funding would be used for goals that aligned with the Commission and needed to consider how staff could report on the support once a check was issued.

Mr. Martindale reported the Commission still had \$85,000 available and that a \$1,000 allocation for tree planting at the reservoir and around \$10,000 for the fall tree giveaway program were not yet included in the total. He revealed that staff was investigating repaving the City’s municipal lot and installing a gate around the Police Department; he wanted to perform a solar feasibility for the parking lot to determine what could be tied into the project. He explained if the parking lot was paved over, there would be no chance that staff could retrofit for solar because the repaving project had been a request for decades. He postured that if staff was able to prepare the groundwork for potential future solar power, then the timing would align with the repaving efforts. He informed that Pennoni was working on the proposal and design for the parking lot and gate project and quoted \$7,500 for the solar feasibility study which was quickly calculated to be 150 kilowatts. He reminded that the \$7,500 was strictly for the study and did not guarantee that solar would be installed but, if staff proceeded with paving, the opportunity to install solar would pass.

Ms. Chajes informed that Mike Smith, a young member of the community, recently began a new non-profit that leveraged funding from the State and Energize Delaware to help residents make energy efficient purchases including electric lawn equipment. She explained that Mr. Smith had limited funds so his boundaries were confined to certain neighborhoods, but she assumed Mr. Smith could expand his efforts with the Commission’s partnership to help residents trade in old gas-powered equipment.

Dr. Huntley revealed that she recently read an article about outlawing gas-powered, handheld lawn equipment thought the Commission should pursue the avenue; she supported Mr. Smith’s program as an incentive to offer residents assistance in purchasing electric equipment. Ms. Chajes informed that Mr. Smith demonstrated the equipment at Community Day. Mr. O’Donnell noted that by buying back equipment, the Commission would lose track of the money. He suggested to offer a rebate or discount for electric lawn equipment. Ms. Chajes likened the situation to Energy Smart where residents would trade in refrigerators and receive discounts on new purchases through a supplier. Dr. Huntley agreed with Mr. O’Donnell that there be a stipulation that money be used to purchase an electrified replacement. Mr. Martindale supported all of the suggestions but emphasized that the tracking component was imperative because the funding was governmental; every dollar that was put into a program had to be reported back at some level to verify it was spent on the intended purpose. Ms. Chajes suggested that Mr. Smith could present at the next Commission meeting. Dr. Huntley suggested the rebate program be similar to the solar rebate program and asked if the administration would be too burdensome on the Finance Department.

Mr. Martindale's main concern was putting the funding towards a use that would be a new program that would take a substantial amount of time to initiate. He doubted it was possible to immediately allocate the funding and then create a proper tracking program by the end of the year. Ms. Chajes believed Mr. Smith's organization, Powering Our Future, would be appropriate to receive funding and run a program within the City for its residents. Mr. Martindale emphasized that Mr. Smith would be required to report back to the City how the funding was spent and how many rebates were issued per month. He noted that Efficiency Smart was already following the City's reporting standards and wondered if Mr. Smith had the capacity to create a reporting system by year end.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if Efficiency Smart could start offering rebates for electric lawn equipment. Mr. Martindale assumed the request was feasible because Efficiency Smart had other rebate programs in which the City was not a participant, but he was unsure if the group's knowledge base included the equipment. He confirmed that City staff could mimic the process in-house but reiterated the time it would take to initiate given that staff was currently embroiled in budget season.

Dr. Huntley recalled that the Commission originally suggested that a solar roof be installed over a lot at the new park at White Clay and asked if Mr. Martindale was requesting a solar feasibility study for the municipal building parking lot. Mr. Martindale informed that Old Paper Mill Park was still on the table; he tried to identify a few spots around the City that were suitable for solar canopies with sun orientation and the size needed. He revealed that solar canopies typically cost \$2.40 per watt compared to \$1.50 for ground mounted solar; he was looking forward to a new energy savings performance contract and identified Old Paper Mill Park, City Hall, Folk Park, and one or two others as suitable for solar canopies. He noted that there was sufficient grass at Old Paper Mill Park to allow for electric infrastructure installation to not be impacted by any paving. Dr. Huntley asked when the municipal building lot was scheduled for repaving and Mr. Martindale hoped the summer of 2023.

Mr. Mateyko asked if there was an option to increase the density of the shade from the panel; he considered the increased cost of the canopy worthwhile given its deep shading capabilities. Mr. Martindale would investigate but was more concerned with visibility for the Police Department; he noted that Old Paper Mill Park would also block the roadway to some extent. He stated the municipal lot was not oriented perfectly east to west so only certain spots would be perfect for installation but informed that there were different types, and one could be placed onto a structure similar to a ground mount; he would investigate the options. Mr. O'Donnell pointed out that a suboptimal location made the 60% increased cost worse. Mr. Martindale reiterated that the 150-kilowatt number was only an estimate and would be three times the amount that was currently on the municipal building roof. Mr. O'Donnell revealed that the Elkton Library had a solar canopy with electric vehicle (EV) chargers and Ms. Chajes added that DelTech's Stanton campus also had a canopy. Mr. Martindale noted that a local JP Morgan site recently paved its parking lot and was now paying millions to retrofit the space for a solar canopy. Mr. O'Donnell relayed that there was now an above ground installation process and would forward the information to Mr. Martindale.

Ms. Palanisami informed that the Newark Housing Authority was seeking to replace oil heat in some of its properties. Dr. Huntley asked if Ms. Palanisami was proposing a rebate program for replacing oil furnaces. Ms. Palanisami clarified that Jim Purcell from Energize Delaware presented at the last meeting and had a grant to provide energy efficiency on many levels to various parties. Mr. O'Donnell stated that the Newark Housing Authority should meet with Energize Delaware to address its needs and surmised that Ms. Palanisami was suggesting that the Commission offer further funding to Energize Delaware. Mr. Martindale explained that the Commission would give funding to Energize Delaware that

could then fund projects for the Newark Housing Authority and provide the City with a clear report of its expenditures.

Mr. O'Donnell supported donating to Energize Delaware barring another compelling organization or action.

Ms. Chajes agreed with Mr. O'Donnell and asked that \$7,500 be used for the solar feasibility study. She suggested that the Commission address spending for electric lawn equipment early in 2023.

Ms. Rypkema and Ms. Palanisami supported spending \$7,500 for the study.

Dr. Huntley considered the feasibility study an immediate high priority item. She reviewed the minutes of the last meeting but was still unsure how Energize Delaware would work; she appreciated the idea in principle and looked forward to further details.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested the group consider options until the next meeting and support a few small projects and fund one large initiative. Mr. Martindale reminded that Phase II of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory was forthcoming and understood that there was enough funding from prior authorization to complete some level of additional detail and recommended that some funding be preserved until he spoke to Mr. Coleman. He suggested that Mr. O'Donnell meet with Mr. Purcell from Energize Delaware to provide the Commission with a report on how the funding would be used so the Commission could determine its level of investment. Mr. O'Donnell recalled that Mr. Purcell welcomed any limit. Mr. Martindale was concerned with what best leveraged the Commission's funds and Mr. O'Donnell agreed.

Dr. Huntley suggested that if the Commission wanted to work on the equity angle and climate change, then it could concentrate on making the Renewable Energy Program more affordable for residents in the lower economic scale. She suggested some of the Commission's funding could be dedicated to subsidizing going 100% renewable for lower income households in Newark. Mr. Martindale had a similar thought and held discussions with Mr. Coleman and Mr. Del Grande who were concerned with the administrative front as staff would have to create a monthly reconciliation for each customer and verify availability of funds. He was unsure if the City's current utility billing system allowed for building a rebate so IT staff would need to be involved. He continued that if the system could not provide rebates, then staff would have to issue one-time vendor checks which was burdensome. He noted the checks could be issued manually but he was concerned that residents might have to wait until year end to receive the funding. Dr. Huntley was confident the City's billing system was capable.

Mr. O'Donnell explained that when signing up for the 100% Renewable Energy Program, one was required to fill out a form and manually opt into a monthly charge. He suggested that there be an honor system where an applicant disclosed their income level and be charged a different rate based on the level provided. Mr. Martindale was unable to provide a precise reply without further investigation but believed the suggestion was feasible. He reminded that the Commission also funded the Dickey Park Community Garden in 2022 and revealed the City received a \$15,000 grant from the Department of Public Health for the garden the day prior.

Ms. Chajes informed that Mr. Purcell indicated that weatherization and appliance replacement would provide the largest impact in the program. She assumed heat pumps were included and Mr. O'Donnell would investigate. Dr. Huntley pointed out that both initiatives were already funded for Newark residents by Efficiency Smart and did not think the Commission needed to put more money into replicating

services already provided. Ms. Chajes wondered if there would be efficiency gained by working with Energize Delaware to deal with a specific community rather than trying to educate the community on how to use the existing program. Ms. Palanisami interjected that Energize Delaware was extremely well-versed in its knowledge whereas she had to personally research her needs to work with Efficiency Smart. Mr. Martindale suggested to choose Mr. O'Donnell's option and reach out to adjacent groups in the community to advertise the programs. Dr. Huntley suggested funding an outreach effort to work with low-income households to take advantage of the existing programs; Mr. Martindale believed Energize Delaware was capable of outreach efforts in-house. Ms. Palanisami confirmed Energize Delaware focused on low- to moderate-income household education.

Ms. Rypkema asked if Mr. Smith should be invited to the next meeting and Ms. Chajes suggested he be invited in early 2023.

MOTION BY DR. HUNTLEY, SECONDED BY MS. CHAJES: THAT THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION EXPEND \$7,500 FOR A SOLAR FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE CITY OF NEWARK.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 7 - 0

AYE: HUNTLEY, CHAJES, O'DONNELL, MATEYKO, RYPKEMA, PALANISAMI, O'CONNOR.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: SMITH.

#### **4. ANNUAL REPORT ASSIGNMENTS**

Ms. Scheld provided each member with a copy of the previous year's report and explained that the tasks were divided among the members.

Dr. Huntley informed that Ms. Smith wrote the report the previous year and Ms. Matsumoto reviewed the minutes to compile a list of topics; each member then chose a topic and wrote a paragraph summarizing the Commission's efforts. Dr. Huntley suggested that all new members be exempt from the report as a matter of fairness and that the discussion be postponed until Ms. Smith was able to participate. Ms. Rypkema agreed and added that she joined the Commission as the 2022 annual report and goals were being crafted and assigned; she suggested that members provide updates on assigned goals.

#### **5. MONTHLY CONSERVATION ARTICLE WITH THE NEWARK POST – SHEILA SMITH**

- October – AECOM GHG Inventory – Beth Chajes
- November – Tick Species in Delaware – Lauren O'Connor
- December – Undecided Topic – Mikayla Rypkema
- January – Soil and Leaves Cooling – John Mateyko

Ms. Chajes informed that her article was nearly finished, and she hoped to submit on Friday. She noted that the schedule was a little off and asked that efforts be made to get back on track. Ms. O'Connor asked for guidelines and Ms. Chajes said to aim for 500 words by the last Friday of the month. Dr. Huntley would forward Josh Shannon's instructions. Ms. Rypkema was still undecided for the December article but was wavering between a yearend wrap up or ways to make holiday festivities more sustainable.

#### **6. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORTS - DEVELOPMENT PLANT LISTS - SHEILA SMITH**

None.

**7. OLD/NEW BUSINESS – CITY LANDSCAPING – SHEILA SMITH**

None.

**8. OLD/NEW BUSINESS – GREENING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Mateyko would offer recommendations in December as he would not be at the next meeting.

Ms. Rypkema asked for an update on the solar tour. Ms. Chajes revealed that she was unable to organize a tour in 2022 and preferred to wait for warmer weather. Ms. Rypkema suggested the tour take place around Earth Day. Mr. Martindale agreed.

Dr. Huntley informed that Mr. Martindale contacted several members to provide a letter of support for a grant application that the City was submitted for electrifying part of its fleet. She explained that she drafted a letter with Ms. Smith and Mr. O'Donnell expressing the Commission's strong support for the City's efforts to increase EV representation in its fleet. She pointed out that the submission deadline was earlier that day which was why it was not discussed during a full meeting.

Mr. Martindale continued that there was a \$5 million grant program from Energize Delaware specifically for the electrification of municipal and County fleet vehicles. He emphasized that the grant was specific to EVs, and one could not submit an application without having an EV in the grant which accounted for feasibility studies, training programs, infrastructure, and improvement of charging stations. He continued that the City had five pieces of equipment as part of the grant application and specified two EV pickup trucks with one going to the Police Department. He hoped to pilot a police patrol vehicle which had been a long-standing push for the Commission and explained that cost and hot swapping had been concerns which was why there was no 1:1 car match for officers. He revealed the truck would be a standalone vehicle designated for one shift a day, after which, the officer would complete a survey to track mileage, charge spent, weather conditions, the amount of time emergency equipment was operated, heating and air conditioning, et cetera. After the three-month evaluation period, staff would meet with the Department for discussion and compile the data for further determination on what to do with the fleet moving forward. He revealed the cost exceeded the \$80,000 limit per vehicle at \$112,676 for a Ford F150 Lightning which was based off of the 2023 cost. He informed the 2023 order window had passed so staff used the 2023 information as a base for the 2024 request and included a higher margin for any price increases. He continued that the upfitting for a new vehicle was around \$32,000 and staff opted for the pickup because it eliminated the size concerns held by NPD as sedans and SUVs were not large enough to support the rear cages, full laptop, and radio display. He noted that the fleet had another pickup patrol vehicle, but it was not an EV. He revealed the second EV, an F150 Lightning, was for the water plant operators who actually put more miles on fleet vehicles than police as the operations ran 24 hours a day.

Staff was currently specifying an EV Chevy Equinox for the Electric Department, which had no pickups or SUVs in the fleet. He continued that the City had two Toro electric grandstand 52-inch mowers that had a run time of seven to eight hours a day which staff hoped would eradicate any concerns about run time for the Parks and Recreation Department. He informed that the EV portion amounted to \$298,023.65, or 60% of the grant, and staff was pitching eight new charging stations, but the grant

indicated that the stations could only be used for the fleet. He explained that the decision was made to remain with the charge points which had fleet-only options; there would be two in the maintenance yard, two in the police lot, one at each one of the water treatment plants, and one commercial station at City Hall and one in Parking Lot 1. He continued that staff was seeking the commercial stations because there were no dedicated spaces for fleet vehicles at City Hall and Lot 1 and spots could not be removed specifically for fleet charging from a public/employee shared lot. He revealed the expansion at the water treatment plants, City Hall, and Lot 1 would cost nearly as much as the charging stations; the infrastructure was already in place for the locations but not for the NPD parking lot and the maintenance yard. Staff was requesting \$114,808.08 for the infrastructure but between staff time allocation, DNREC rebates, and Energize Delaware requests, the full project was \$565,699.73, of which staff was requesting \$496,111.53 from Energize Delaware. He informed that the grant application opened that week and staff wanted the City to be the first to continue leading the charge. He stated that he worked with DC Feeney and DC Farrall on the project and had NPD's full support.

Dr. Huntley contested the complaints about hot swapping EVs and reminded that even gas vehicles needed time for refueling and the time for modern EVs to charge was not much longer than for a gas power vehicle to be fueled. Mr. Martindale agreed that the program would serve as a pilot and Dr. Huntley supported the measure. Mr. O'Donnell agreed and suggested that staff investigate the availability rate by hours because gas powered SUVs broke unexpectedly and took weeks for repair while EVs were only down for charging during a predictable time; the overall hours of availability favored EVs. Mr. Martindale informed there was a two-year order window on the requests and staff was formally requesting a waiver because the soonest an order could be placed was for 2024.

Ms. Chajes pointed out that UD had electric motorcycles and asked if NPD had investigated the option. Mr. Martindale confirmed that staff explored the option but there was currently no support. He shared that Energize Delaware indicated that if its funding levels continued and the grant was a success, the operation would continue; there would be nothing to preclude staff from submitting another \$500,000 request next year.

MOTION BY MS. PALANISAMI, SECONDED BY MR. O'DONNELL: TO ADJOURN.

**9. NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Nichol Scheld  
Deputy City Secretary

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