

CITY OF ST. ANTHONY
PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING
APRIL 2, 2025
7:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Fee called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL.

Commissioners Present: Chair Lily Fee, Commissioners Yaacoub Hark, Kristen Peterson, and Natalie Synhavsky.

Absent: Commissioner Jessica Swiontek

Also Present: Assistant City Manager Ashley Morello and Sustainability Coordinator Minette Saulog,

III. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 2, 2025, PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA.

Motion by Commissioner Hark, seconded by Commissioner Synhavsky, to approve the April 2, 2025, Parks and Environmental Commission agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 10, 2025, WORK SESSION PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.

Motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Hark, to approve the March 10, 2025, Work Session Parks and Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. PRESENTATIONS.

A. Climate Plan Overview: Energy Focus Area

Sustainability Coordinator Minette Saulog reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, "Climate Plan Overview Energy Focus Area". Ms. Saulog provided the background:

- The Energy section is a Climate Plan focus area for the City in 2025, along with the Transportation section.
- PEC will be most focused on supporting action items and strategies that are policy-oriented, which are being covered tonight. The Climate Plan includes the full list of strategies that include these as well as education and operations-oriented strategies being owned by staff.

- The previous PEC group completed a ranking activity in Dec 2024 to provide input on how the City should consider prioritizing the pursuit of these strategies (*=highest priority actions).
- The Energy Action Plan has several strategies mirroring those in the Climate Plan, creating parallels and stronger initiative for the City to make progress in those areas. (**=Energy Action Plan mirror strategy).

Ms. Saulog reviewed the Energy Initiatives along with actions and current status.

Energy Initiative 1 – Improve efficiency of homes, businesses, and public facilities in St. Anthony Village.

Energy Initiative 2 – Increase usage of renewable energy.

Energy Initiative 3 – Increase the purchasing of electric devices and appliance alternatives.

Commissioner Peterson asked about fuel switching and would those switches to electrification be incorporated into Initiative 1. Ms. Saulog stated that focus would be more on building usage – City facilities.

Commissioner Hark asked who conducts the energy audits, and is there a plan for that. Ms. Saulog stated the home energy audits are done by Xcel Home Energy Squad. Commissioner Hark asked if it is a one-time audit, and Ms. Saulog stated it is a one-time visit.

Chair Fee shared her experience when a home audit was done.

Commissioner Synhavsky asked what the potential funding sources are to provide the home audit for free. Ms. Saulog stated a cost-share program could be set up through the City, possibly through a grant program. It is important not to make it just a one-time thing. It should be a resource that will be around to continue efforts to improve sustainability and education efforts.

Assistant City Manager Ashley Morello stated Xcel also has programs available for no cost audits for individuals. Ms. Morello stated Staff wanted to update the Commission on what is being done.

VI. COMMISSION REPORTS.

Ms. Morello suggested doing Other Business before Commission Reports on the agenda.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS.

A. Sustainability Building Policy Discussion

Sustainability Coordinator Minette Saulog reviewed as part of the Climate Plan, an identified action item under the Energy focus area is to “Consider adopting a sustainable building policy for all new and remodeled construction projects.” This is a policy-coded Climate Plan action

1 that will eventually require a recommendation from the PEC to move forward with the City
2 Council.

3
4 Sustainable building policies are those that establish minimum sustainability criteria beyond
5 existing state code for new constructions or significant renovations, targeting pollution
6 reduction, resource conservation, and environmental responsibility. These can also be referred
7 to as green building policies.

8
9 This evening the Commission is requested to have discussion to begin outlining what criteria
10 would apply to a potential sustainable building policy in St. Anthony Village, the types of
11 projects for which it would apply, and other possible requirements. The City has no existing
12 policy aside from a brief section for sustainability considerations in the language for general
13 regulations for R-4 zoning district multi-family developments.

14
15 The Center for Energy and Environment and Hennepin County published a sustainable
16 building policy guide in 2021, with recommendations for policy frameworks and best
17 practices. There are three approaches that may be considered: a mandatory approach, scoring
18 approach and suggestion approach. All three have been used in other Minnesota cities.

19
20 A city can activate its existing sustainable building policy due to the following triggers:
21 funding incentives, land use incentives, process incentives, and building size. Staff is
22 considering enforcement of the policy and how to ensure compliance as part of the
23 development process.

24
25 Third-Party Rating Systems – To encourage standardization across the region, compliance
26 with a third-party rating system is recommended. These rating systems are well-known in the
27 construction industry and allow for developer flexibility to meet policy requirements.

28
29 Ms. Saulog provided a table showing an informational overview of the most common and
30 recommended third-party rating systems for a sustainable building policy. These systems are
31 comprised of sustainability criteria and prescriptive pathways for meeting the criteria. They
32 are generally broad and cover different sustainability areas (e.g. water, energy, waste,
33 materials). Rating systems are often similar but not identical and each system has strengths
34 and weaknesses relative to one another. Making different systems acceptable for various
35 projects can help the city address priority impact areas being targeted in the sustainable
36 policy.

37
38 Ms. Saulog reviewed the St. Anthony Village Overlay. The PEC has the opportunity to
39 provide input on criteria for the St. Anthony Village overlay. An overlay describes the criteria
40 specific to the City and is typically in addition to the third-party rating system. A list of
41 recommended overlay criteria and rules were provided. These are the most common city
42 overlay criteria as seen in other cities' policies and demonstrates recommended rules that
43 would fulfill those criteria. Cities are advised to prioritize criteria for adoption that balance
44 needs for implementation with city goals to ensure policy success.

45
46 Ms. Saulog provided the specific items for discussion and feedback:

1
2 Chair Fee asked if there is a timeframe for presenting this to the City Council, and Ms.
3 Morello stated the timeframe is TBD, depending on the conversation from this meeting. It
4 would most likely go to a Council work session when appropriate.

- 5
6
 - Which type of approach would work best for St. Anthony? (Mandatory approach,
7 scoring approach or suggestion approach).

8

9 Commissioner Peterson asked if a mandatory approach would apply to all buildings, and Ms.
10 Saulog stated that is correct in the way it is defined.

11
12 Commissioner Hark asked how this differs from the scoring method, and Ms. Saulog
13 reviewed the scoring criteria. The scoring approach is ranking.

14
15 Commissioner Peterson noted that buildings in Minnesota are not allowed to exceed the State
16 building code and asked if this is the reason additional criteria would be allowed to be
17 mandatory. Ms. Saulog stated the State building code is separate from the Sustainable
18 building policy. There cannot be a City building code that is not in alignment with the State
19 building code. Commissioner Peterson asked if the suggested approach would also require a
20 change in ordinance or would that just be for the mandatory option. Ms. Morello stated she
21 could not really answer that. More information on that will be forthcoming.

22
23 Chair Fee noted the mandatory approach was recommended, and from a sustainability point
24 she would like compliance. If there is more standardization, it helps everyone in terms of
25 competition and cost control. She would not want to turn off and have developers reconsider
26 developing within the City.

27
28 Commissioner Peterson asked which neighboring cities have something similar to this. Ms.
29 Saulog stated in the Appendix provided there is a summary of policies within the State of
30 Minnesota. There are no policies in directly adjacent cities to St. Anthony. The difficulty is
31 that other cities policies are very specific and would not apply to St. Anthony. Ms. Morello
32 stated that we do not want to deter any development within the City.

33
34 Commissioner Synhavsky noted some standardization is taking shape and asked if there is a
35 boilerplate language we can work from for St. Anthony. Ms. Saulog stated they are referring
36 to that structure in the guide. Commissioner Synhavsky stated developers generally prefer a
37 straightforward policy that is clear. It is less confusing if something is written in Code and
38 mandatory. Ms. Saulog stated she has been spending more time on the mandatory approach
39 rather than the suggested approach. There are opportunities to provide outreach and education.

- 40
41
 - What priority impacts do we want to target in a City overlay?
 - What types of projects do we want this policy to apply to? (such as zoning and/or size
42 of building.

43
44

45 Chair Fee stated she does not know how many new buildings or renovations would be done in
46 a year and how big of an impact would be created from this policy. Ms. Morello stated we do
47

1 not know the impact as St. Anthony is a fully built-out City. If policy is set, we will be
2 prepared for any development in the future.

3
4 Commissioner Hark asked if this has been discussed before, and is there a benchmark. Ms.
5 Morello stated there has not been a policy discussion.

6
7 Chair Fee stated it seems evenly split between industrial, commercial, and residential.

8
9 Commissioner Hark suggested multi-family may be a target since that has been the
10 development the City has been seeing recently. He would prioritize multi-family zoning over
11 the others, then commercial and industrial. The residential homeowners would have access to
12 the audits.

13
14 Commissioner Peterson agreed with Commissioner Hark's comment on multi-family and
15 thinks that would be key.

16
17 Chair Fee asked if there is a way to create policies that relate to the different zones. Ms.
18 Saulog stated that is an option that can be considered.

19
20 Commissioner Hark asked if the policies would be regardless of the funding source, and
21 would this apply to privately funded projects. Ms. Morello stated if a mandatory approach was
22 selected it would not relate to funding.

23
24 Commissioner Synhavsky stated she does not want to leave single-family out of this. She
25 wants to make sure sustainability is taken into account for renovations. If it's a full knock-
26 down rebuild would the policy apply versus a renovation of a portion of the home. Ms.
27 Morello stated a policy on new construction could be considered. She suggested size of the
28 building be discussed.

29
30 Chair Fee asked if other cities include single-family homes. Ms. Morello stated Staff will do
31 more research on single-family residential and multi-family. Staff will come back with a
32 suggested approach and research on other cities' mandatory approaches. Multi-family is the
33 highest priority from a mandatory approach.

34
35 Commissioner Peterson referred to the policy triggers – PUD Development and the incentives
36 (page 18 of the PDF provided).

37
38 Chair Fee highlighted five as a higher priority as she felt they are more impactful. The
39 recommended criteria seemed like retroactive or passive criteria. She reviewed the five she
40 had selected.

41
42 Commissioner Hark agreed. If a project followed the guidelines, it would be close to
43 becoming a LEED-certified building. He especially likes the EV Charging capability. Ms.
44 Morello stated at the next PEC Work session EV Charging will be discussed. Commissioner
45 Hark stated water and energy monitoring in multi-family housing is also important.

Chair Fee stated if monitoring is done, and it is above the estimate what happens. Ms. Saulog stated that it is part of the compliance aspect. Some buildings are required to report to the City their monitoring results. If the results are more than expected the developer can research.

Commissioner Hark stated he was thinking of requiring some sort of monitoring to be done so the owner of the building can incentivize himself to make corrections to address.

Commissioner Peterson agreed that emissions and charging are high priorities. With Climate Change in mind, stormwater management is important.

Chair Fee referred to the water criteria and was unclear how that would be achievable. Commissioner Hark suggested that may relate to predicted use. Chair Fee referred to the landscaping criteria and relates to the types of landscaping on a particular site.

Ms. Morello stated she and Ms. Saulog will do research and come back to the PEC with suggestions. Commissioner Synhavsky asked them to consider what triggers a mandatory policy. Commissioner Peterson asked what the timeline will look like as far as responsibilities. Ms. Morello stated Staff will take the lead to research and provide next steps.

The Minnesota Municipal Sustainable Building Policies Guide and appendix of local sustainable building policies was provided for Commission review.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Peterson stated she has been doing a lot of trash clean-up along Silver Lake Road.

Commissioner Synhavsky stated she has been talking about the grand rounds trail with neighbors, and she is very excited about that.

Chair Fee stated regarding partnering with CFS for park cleanup and Earth Day. She got some balls started in cleaning some of the areas. They are targeting April 26 for clean-up.

Commissioner Hark had no report.

VIII. COMMUNITY FORUM - NONE.

No one appeared to address the Commission.

IX. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Commissioner Hark, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to adjourn the April 2, 2025, Work Session Meeting of the Parks and Environmental Commission at 8:30 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

X. NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Parks and Environmental Commission will be a Worksession held on May 21, 2025 with a Regular meeting scheduled for June 2, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wolfe

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

APPROVED