

Commission for a Greener Tomorrow  
Birch Room, City Hall  
Wausau, WI  
January 24, 2011

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Fred Heider at 5:30 PM.
- II. Previous meeting minutes were unavailable so no action was taken.
- III. Fred, Vice Chairperson Debra Weiss, Treasurer Paul Grewe, Secretary Scott Miles, Brian Bushnell, Mayor Jim Tipple and Michael Lotter, Energy Team Chairperson for Marathon County were in attendance.
- IV. Old Business:
  - A. Deb volunteered to attend the Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup> Bike-Ped meeting at 212 River Drive starting at 6:30 PM.
  - B. City web page has not been updated. Facebook page for Commission will be administered by Anne Michelson and Fred Heider.
  - C. Recycling ordinance and special event permit have passed City's Planning Commission and Health and Public Safety Committees. City Council Action is pending.
  - D. UWMC conference on sustainability is still being worked on.
- V. Discussion of regional focus (MPO) was initiated by Fred Heider. He reviewed the Commission's creation as an ad hoc committee of the Wausau City Council in 2007 and the Council's passing of the eco-municipality resolution proposed by the Commission in 2009. One part of the resolution encourages municipal neighbors to follow more sustainable practices. Fred noted that the Commission has been unable to reach other municipalities although there are examples of sustainable practices taking place in the area.. He has talked with Dave Mack, Marathon County Planner, about modeling the Commission after the highly successful Bike and Pedestrian Committee as a blueprint for the Commission. Dave explained that the county's two efforts are in the MPO for transportation and water quality. Dave will investigate where the Commission would be most effective and get back to Fred. Fred also presented two model plans; the LaCrosse /LaCrosse County plan for sustainability and the simpler Stevens Point plan. The eight points or focus groups in this plan include civic involvement and education, land use, green buildings and energy use, parks and tourism, transportation, waste recycling and water and waste water. Fred and Mayor Tipple will pursue discussions with Dave Mack and Brad Karger, County Administrator, on this topic.
- VI. Mike Lotter, Chairperson of the Marathon County Energy Team, explained how the county was able to start efforts to reduce energy use starting with the establishment of his group in 2005-2006. Prior to this time there were no guidelines for energy use in any county building. Their first objective was to establish a plan to save on lighting costs at the courthouse. The County Board approved of the plan and an Energy Conservation block grant was applied for and received. The grant was for \$374,000 with additional funding from Focus on Energy bringing the total to \$450,000. Lighting standards for offices and meeting rooms were established. Baseline heating and cooling uses were also

studied with standards being established for each county building. Windows were replaced at the Social Services building on Thomas St. Since these changes have been made, energy savings have totaled \$50,000 - \$60,000 per year. Several other projects are being planned including installing solar heating/hot water at jail by placing panels on the roof of the building. Also an air mixing system for the courthouse is being designed in 2011 for installation in 2012.

Members of Mike's group include Brad Karger, Dan Zoeller (heating and cooling consultant) and representatives from the courthouse, parks department, sheriff's department and a Focus on Energy representative. They meet once a month and continue to look for ways to save energy in Marathon County.

From the start, savings has been the goal of the group. It has been successful! Mike noted that there has been a zero percent increase in the costs over the last two years. Another area where changes have been made is in vehicles purchased for department use. Mike has downsized his county vehicle from a truck to a Pontiac Vibe. Replacement vehicles in the county now have a higher mileage requirement (MPG) that must be factored into the vehicle cost. Michael said that department heads have been involved in the process and for the most part have bought into the changes that have been made in county buildings.

Mayor Tipple talked about how the city has been involved in a similar plan. Energy costs for the city are about \$500,000 per year. Light sensors have been installed in City Hall, LED bulbs have been installed in traffic lights, fuel for city vehicles is purchased in bulk and service indicators are automatically charted when fueling. In addition, the boiler and windows were replaced and the roof insulated at the Central Fire Station. The Leigh Yawkey Museum also replaced one of its three boilers. Other municipalities have upgraded town halls (Rib Mountain) and Weston is part of the DNR's "green tier" program. The Commission would like to promote and encourage these types of efforts throughout Marathon County. To that end, a plan would be beneficial. Mayor Tipple and Fred H will discuss this further with Brad Karger. Discussion of what could be done with the plan included focusing on one issue much like the Bike-Ped group did and moving forward on that - water? energy? other? Brian hoped that if sustainable choices cannot be afforded at this point, decisions made would not make it more difficult to make sustainable choices in the future.

- VI. DNR pollution credits - Debra presented extensive information gathered in conversations with DNR and other people about water and air quality in our area. Our water is tested for certain chemicals by the DNR. We are in excess of their limits in mercury which is washed out of the air. The 3M chemical site on Thomas is still monitored as toxins leech into the ground water from that site. Our air quality is checked for only six toxins. Ozone is not an issue in our part of the state. (Please contact Debra for more details on this issue. She has done a great deal of research on the topic and has all the correct spellings of chemicals tested for in her notes.) These may be issues we would want to include in any

sustainable plan for our area.

- VII. There was some discussion of project ideas that included replacing lights for the city. Mayor Tipple said that it would not be necessary as city workers are currently making changes as equipment is replaced. Other items included Brian working with Any Gilles on the web page for the Commission. They will try to include an easy access section for Commission minutes.
- VIII. No report on recycled ideas.
- IX. Motion to adjourn was made by Debra and seconded by Paul. The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM. NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.