HISTORIC FRANKLIN TENNESSEE

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City of Franklin

Meeting Minutes

Sustainability Commission

Friday, August 9, 2024 | **8:00 AM** | **Development Services Room**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cassity called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Commissioners Present: Mike Cassity, Jon Brevard, Brian Stone, Christina Christiansen, Eric McElroy, Anna Timme and Al Pramuk

Commissioners Absent: Alderman Beverly Burger and Keith Gordon

Staff Present: Blake Harper, Andrew Orr, Mark Hilty, Tia Holden, Eric Conner, Emily Wright, and Dillon Gaster

Other: Ron Merville and Ned Dannenberg

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Open for citizens to be heard on any issue or concern, including those related to items on the agenda. Please submit a Speaker Card at the beginning of the meeting if you would like to address the Commission. If you would like to speak on an agenda item, the Chair will hold your comment until the public comment period associated with the item. As provided by law, the Commission shall make no decisions or consideration of action of citizen comments for items not on the agenda, except to refer the matter to the Planning Director/Staff for administrative consideration, or to a schedule the matter for consideration at a later date. Those addressing the Commission are requested to come to the microphone and identify themselves by name and address for the official record. The Chair may restrict the period for public comment, including the length of the public comment period, the number of individuals who can speak and the length of time each individual may speak. When time allows, the standard individual public comment time is two minutes.)

Chair Cassity asked for citizen comments. There were none.

Comments on agenda items may be made in person at city hall or by emailing planningintake@franklintn.gov before noon on the day of the meeting. Emailed comments will be provided to the Commission and included in the minutes, but not read aloud in their entirety during the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Consideration Of Approval Of Minutes**

Sponsors:

A motion was made by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to approve the Minutes from the July 12, 2024, meeting. The motion carried 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

2. **Consideration of Solar Expansion Options**

Sponsors:

Ron Merville, Energy Source Partners: Mr. Merville quickly recapped what happened at the July meeting. He has since created a comparison of the solar project income. The current solar array project at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) is ground-mounted 200 kW and has an existing contract with TVA which ends in 2032. The City of Franklin currently

pays over 1.5 million in energy costs per year for electrical power at the WWTP. Mr. Merville has made his assumptions on the current cost of energy and hopes to reduce the costs from half a million to a million. By replacing the current solar panels, cost savings can increase. He then displayed the existing solar project production report for April 2024. A solar panel does not work off light waves, but works off photons. Therefore, panels will still collect energy on a cloudy day. Rain is what causes the treatment plant to use the most energy. Months with most rainfall will use the most solar power. He then explained demand charges as a 30-minute period of the month when the most electricity is used. Battery storage would be an added option with a long duration and provide 12 hours of energy. Mr. Merville then displayed a solar and battery report from Heila which showed 19,932 kWh of solar production and an offset of 50.7% of energy consumption. If no action is taken, the existing 200 kW solar panels will continue to produce under the current contract, with the city sharing 80% of the original revenue with an income of roughly $216,000 in 9 years. Mr. Merville then showed the solar project income based on 1, 2, or 3 MW solar improvements. He also discussed the breakeven analysis which is right at 9 years after installation of new panels. Finally, he showed the 250 kW solar with 500 kW long duration batter storage breakeven analysis. His overall estimated cost savings ranged from 1 MW at 1.9 million in savings to 3 MW with 5.7 million in savings. Mr. Merville then asked the commission to choose an option based on MW and cost savings.

Mr. Orr commended that a contract has not yet been found for this project.

Chair Cassity asked if the current contract is found or not, would they expect to reduce costs by half?

Mr. Merville responded not necessarily, it depends on the age of the contract.

Commissioner McElroy asked how many acres are available to use at the treatment plant.

Mr. Hilty responded that there are about three acres to use.

Commissioner McElroy questioned if three acres would be enough space.

Mr. Hilty responded that they can accommodate three acres. He feels comfortable saying there are at least three and a quarter acres. He added that there is a lot of open space to the left and right of the current project. Plus, there is a CHV engine that is not online yet. Where the new project would go will need to be flexible.

Commissioner Pramuk asked if the treatment plant will ever be without solar power while the project is being completed. He also wanted to know what would happen to the older solar panels.

Mr. Merville responded that the treatment plant will not go without solar power during the transition. Additionally, he has offered the city to use older solar panels. If the city does not use them, Mr. Merville will donate them to a nonprofit who wants solar power.

Mr. Hilty added they are still coming up with new ideas for using the older solar panels.

Commissioner Brevard asked if any of the three acres were in a floodplane.

Mr. Orr responded no.

Commissioner Stone gave appreciation to Mr. Merville and asked when the breakeven point would be. He then asked Mr. Hilty if he's comfortable with three acres.

Mr. Merville said he feels confident it will be in 9 years.

Mr. Hilty responded yes, he's comfortable with three acres.

Commissioner Stone asked what Mr. Hilty's opinion was on battery versus no battery.

Mr. Hilty asked what the difference is between 3 MW with and without a battery.

Mr. Merville said more money is made with the battery.

Mr. Dannenburg asked if option 3A on the chart was an addition to option 3.

Mr. Hilty said yes. He feels like its worth discussing option 3 and 3A.

Chair Cassity asked for the practicality of meeting the deadline for option 3A.

Mr. Merville said they only need to complete 5 percent of the entire project before the end of the year to qualify for tax incentives.

Commissioner Stone reiterated Mr. Merville's comment.

Mr. Merville said the IRS does not allow an access road or general grading to account for 5 percent of the project. It must be related to equipment and American made. He will get the racking and wiring up and panels second.

Commissioner McElroy asked how long the total project would take to complete.

Mr. Merville said it would take around three months.

Commissioner Timme asked what Commissioner Stone's opinion is on the project.

Commissioner Stone said his company has not felt comfortable maintaining the life of a battery for 25 years. A project requires a guarantee that the batteries will be maintained. His engineers have not felt comfortable using batteries.

Mr. Conner questioned Mr. Stone on what type of batteries his engineers did not feel comfortable using.

Commissioner Stone responded it was flow and lithium-ion batteries. However, they have not used the Lockheed Martin batteries Mr. Merville proposed.

Commissioner Pramuk asked Commissioner Stone which option he was comfortable with.

Commissioner Stone responded option 3. However, he is not uncomfortable with 3A. If the federal government is using the Lockheed Martin batteries, then they must be good. It is not the city's risk if the batteries fail. He has more confidence moving forward with 3A.

Commissioner Pramuk questioned if the system would operate without batteries.

Mr. Merville responded that full use of solar panels would still be available. Demand charges would be handled better with flow batteries.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Brevard, to recommend option 3A to BOMA, contingent upon acreage approval and the breakeven point happening within 10 years.

The motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Orr said staff would brief BOMA on the recommendation for option 3A in August.

3. Bee City USA Update

Sponsors:

Mr. Orr discussed the internal Bee City group did a site visit and recently had another meeting. Annette Dalrymple, staff landscape architect, had identified Franklin fire stations as potential spots for pollinator gardens. Once the station is identified, a planting plan will be created for the grounds. The downtown main street area has also adopted using local pollinators and vegetation. The streets department is starting to integrate more native plant species into the downtown area.

Battle Ground Academy might be the group's next site visit as the school has planted native species in their stream barrier.

Chair Cassity asked about signage.

Mr. Orr responded that there will be pollinator signs, with the Bee City logo, in well-seen areas.

Commissioner Timme asked for clarification on signage.

Mr. Orr responded that the signs would have the Bee City logo and City of Franklin association detailing what the project is about.

Commissioner Pramuk asked if Nissan headquarters could be a potential location for pollinators.

Mr. Orr responded that the city is currently focusing on improving pollinators on municipal land, but Nissan could be a future project. It is important to have outreach with local businesses.

Commissioner Pramuk stated the Bee City program might be something to display at the Williamson County chamber meetings, which has a lot of business leaders.

Commissioner Stone asked if the city could make suggestions to new developments for include native plant species in their project.

Commissioner Brevard said he has a contact which could help with that. Other cities have a requirement of 50% native plants in landscaping.

Mr. Orr mentioned Mr. Merville would work to incorporate new grasses and native plants in the solar panel project.

Commissioner Pramuk asked if any progress had been made with the Tennessee Department of Transportation for pollinator gardens on highway interchanges.

Mr. Orr said there has not been any progress, but he will continue to pursue them.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Cassity asked if there was any further business.

Mr. Harper commented that there was a recent training for voting commissions on Robert's rules and other helpful information for committees. He gave packets to each commissioner which included slides from the training.

Mr. Dannenburg said he saw brick samples for the new city on the public square and asked if any brick reclamation will be done when the old city hall is demolished.

Mr. Orr responded no.

Mr. Wright stated the Alderman might allow citizens to take a brick after demolition, but nothing has been confirmed. She then said there are two streetlight options being tested in front of city hall. One is a zero cutoff, dark sky option. The other looks similar to streetlights downtown but has less light shining updward. She recommended the commissioners to see the options at night before they are taken down.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to Adjourn. The motion carried 7-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:01 AM.

Chair

9/13/2024
Date