

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF June 19, 2019

Item No. 1 being:

ROLL CALL

The Environmental Control Advisory Board of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session at the City of Norman, in the Study Session Room, Norman Municipal Building, 201 West Gray Street on June 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. Notice and Agenda of the meeting were posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT Amanda Nairn (Chair)
 Matthew Rom (Vice-Chair)
 Larissa Balzer
 Eli Bridge
 James Harp
 Aaron Pilat

MEMBERS ABSENT Patricia Edge
 Dane Heins
 Andrew Sartain

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT Chris Mattingly, Capital Projects Engineer
 Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Manager
 Michelle Loudonback, Stormwater Program Specialist
 Gay Webb, Administrative Technician

Item No. 2 being

INTRODUCE GUESTS

Karen Blasier, Ready For 100, Solar Schools
Bruce Prescott, Ready For 100, Solar Schools
Tod Hanley, Delta Energy
Pieter Huebner, Off Grid Enterprises
Justin Huebner, Off Grid Enterprises
Lee Fithian, Ready For 100
Tom McCurdy, Oklahoma Gas and Electric (OG&E)
Clint Givens, Citizens' Climate Lobby

Item No. 3 being:

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2019 MEETING

Rom made a motion to approve the May 15, 2019 minutes. Pilat seconded. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS Amanda Nairn
 Matthew Rom

Larissa Balzer
Eli Bridge
James Harp
Aaron Pilat

NAYS None

The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 0.

Item No. 4 being:

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR US MAYORS' CLIMATE PROTECTION AGREEMENT REPORT

Rom said the subcommittee met last week and one of the conversations was renewable energy. He invited Pieter Huebner with Off Grid Enterprises to speak to the board and give an overview of the renewable sector and what are some of the offerings available and potential implementation challenges.

Huebner explained Off Grid Enterprise is a Norman based renewable company with four employees. They are a Texas licensed electrical contractor. Most of their work is not in Oklahoma. They work in Texas, Alaska, North Carolina, and Florida and have done work in Canada and Belize. They focus more on projects that involve renewable energy and energy storage. They install small commercial systems involving typical solar and energy storage for load shifting and backup power offset. They work with about a dozen partners nationwide.

He said solar equipment can be purchased in stores, online or through contractors. Off Grid can provide assistance to those who have purchased solar equipment and need help with installation. He said Oklahoma has 16 known renewable energy companies, which includes engineering, manufacturing and contractors, compared to Texas which has 2,800, Kansas 1,800 and New Mexico has about 3,000.

One of the challenges they face, particularly in Norman, is getting information in terms of what submittals are required for permitting. They have found it difficult, not very transparent and on the surface seems to be inconsistent. He said a document outlining the city's requirements, standards and what the inspectors want to see, in terms of permitting, would be helpful.

He said solar system prices have dropped about 47% the last five years; but soft costs, which are things like wet stamp engineering drawings, are increasing. Requiring a wet engineer stamp on a residential system could cost a client an extra \$2,500 on a solar installation. He explained there is a difference between an engineered system and a wet stamped engineered system. A wet stamp requires an engineer to analyze a system and put their professional engineer stamp on each specific project. He said if you install an identical system on the neighbor's house, you have to go through the same process and pay the fees all over again.

Nairn asked Huebner what he has experienced with the permitting process in other cities in Oklahoma. He said they have not done a lot of work in Oklahoma. Last year they installed about twenty systems in eastern Oklahoma for the Cherokee Nation. Some were rural installations and did not require permits, those in city limits required electrical permitting.

He said Off Grid installed two solar systems in Norman a few years ago, an electrical permit was required; the process was straightforward. He has learned, after recent inquiries, the permit requirements have changed. He has been told building permits requires wet stamp engineering

on the structure as well as require electrical permits. In over three decades working in the renewable business, the only time he sees wet stamp requirements is on large scale commercial projects, never in the renewable residential section.

Fithian suggested requiring a licensed electrical contractor to install solar systems.

Pilat asked the cost of an average system. Huebner said the average cost is \$12,000 - \$15,000 installed plus an additional wet stamp fee.

Nairn asked if anyone knew when the requirements changed to include a wet stamp. Hanley said around 2017 they started requiring structural analysis for a roof mount.

Huebner would like a document outlining the city requirements, He would like to know what National Electrical Codes the inspectors want them to focus on and what is important to them. He agrees there should be reasonable oversight, scaled to the size of the project.

Evenson asked if there is a model city for solar installation. Huebner could not think of one but said he would be happy to provide information for guidance with pros and cons of adding engineering and licensing cost to permit requirements. He said if they protect the public and provide better quality systems, that may be a good thing but not if it doesn't bring value to the table, they are doing nothing but increasing costs.

Nairn thanked all for attending and said it was a very productive conversation. She said ECAB will continue to pursue this conversation.

Item No. 5 being:

APPROVE WATER'S WORTH IT PROCLAMATION

Nairn asked if the board would like to submit the Water's Worth It Proclamation for the July 9th Council agenda. If approved, she will attend the meeting and accept the proclamation from the Mayor. Harp made a motion to approve, Bridge seconded. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS	Amanda Nairn Matthew Rom Larissa Balzer Eli Bridge James Harp Aaron Pilat
------	--

NAYS	None
------	------

The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 0.

Item No. 6 being:

DISCUSS REDUCTION OF HERBICIDE USE ON CITY PROPERTY

Bridge prepared a draft response to the letter from Interim City Manager, Mary Rupp regarding the use of herbicides on city property. Nairn pointed out the board cannot take action tonight on the letter since an action item was not included on the agenda but they can discuss the item.

Members discussed pilot project possibilities to include a no mow zone, rain garden and pollinator garden. Rom recommended submitting a proposal to the new City Manager rather than asking for permission to create a proposal. Nairn would like to speak with city staff about what kind of pilot project might work best and will have more information at the next meeting.

Item No. 7 being:

DISCUSS SOCIAL MEDIA TOPICS

Balzer asked if the new submission guidelines for the sustainable yard of the month were approved. She noticed you currently cannot nominate a sustainable yard of the month or Water's Worth It landscape award on Green Norman.org. Nairn said Debbie Smith did forward a Water's Worth It landscape nomination. The board agreed to review the new guidelines next month and award a winner next month.

Pilat mentioned the sewer replacement work going on in the Mercedes/Crestmont area. He said it might be a good opportunity for the city to acknowledge important infrastructure projects through a sign or social media post explaining the purpose of the project. Nairn said she could send an email to Annahlyse Meyer suggesting a post to acknowledge the work. Mattingly explained the project is funded through the \$5 a month sewer maintenance fee.

Item No. 8 being:

DISCUSS LANDSCAPE AWARD

Will nominate landscape award winner next month.

Item No. 9 being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

None

Item No. 10 being

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

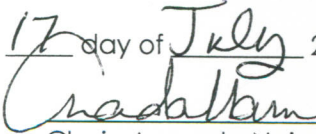
None

Item No. 11 being:

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Passed and approved this 17 day of July 2019.



Chair, Amanda Nairn