

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**February 15, 2024**

<b>Call to Order</b>	The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee of the City of Meadville was held Thursday, February 15, 2024. Ms. Hicks called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Committee members present were Guy McUmbur, Jenny Tompkins, Peggy Mogush, Matt Bethurem, Ian Carbone, and Ashley Hicks. Ms. Brenda Costa was absent. Mr. Grella attended on behalf of the City.
<b>Public Comment on Agenda Items</b>	None.
<b>Approve Minutes</b>  January 18, 2024 / December 2023 & January 2024 Subcommittee Meetings	Mr. McUmbur moved to approve the January 18 <sup>th</sup> meeting minutes; Ms. Mogush seconded; the motion passed unanimously.  There were no December or January subcommittee minutes submitted for approval.
<b>Communication</b>  Methods          Updates	Shared Google Calendar & Recurring Tasks - Ms. Hicks shared that Ms. Mogush created a shared calendar. Ms. Hicks encouraged everyone to use the calendar for key webinars, events, tasks, and more as needed. Ms. Hicks has some recurring chair tasks on the shared calendar currently.  EAC Slack Channel – Currently, Ms. Hicks, Ms. Tompkins, Ms. Mogush, and Councilwoman Vogel are on the platform. Other members can let Ms. Mogush know if they want to join the Slack Channel.  Facebook Page – Ms. Mogush and Ms. Hicks discussed scheduling posts for main and subcommittee meetings. If a meeting is cancelled, it would be best practice to let Ms. Mogush and Ms. Hicks know so the post can be removed from the schedule. EAC members can also share educational information for posts to Ms. Mogush and Ms. Hicks.  Ms. Hicks New Email Account – All EAC members are asked to now include the new email for Ms. Hicks. Ms. Mogush agreed to add the new email to all EAC-related Google items.
<b>Subcommittee Reports</b>  Solar Development	Mr. Carbone mentioned that the community-based solar projects progressed to speaking with city staff about permitting. The quotes for some construction costs came through, and the projects are on schedule to move forward pending approval from one of the two partners (Common Roots or Crawford Heritage Community Foundation) before the summer.  The City DEP Building installation is currently stuck, and Mr. Carbone is not quite sure what the next step should be. Ms. Hicks mentioned that the Shared Energy Manager may be able to assist with the DEP solar project. Mr. Carbone mentioned that the engineering and technical aspects have been established, but the conversation is now a monetary and budgetary one. We need a champion with staff and/or city council to move forward. Ms. Tompkins asked about the solar rebate program, and Meadville may be eligible for up to 50% of project costs. Yes, however, a 40% rebate is more likely given the timing. The State Act 129 program will offset some additional costs. The next step is for Mr. Carbone to request a meeting with Councilwoman Vogel to finalize a proposal for City Council. Mr.

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<p>Weatherization</p>	<p>Bethurem recommended a study session as a possibility for this item. PA Solar Center offered to discuss a new, low-interest financing option with the City to avoid capital fund expenditure.</p> <p>City staff requested some confirmation that the return on investment from the solar array would cover the interest on capital fund expenditure or other financing. More specific information is needed about the interest rates for city debt service and other items.</p> <p>Mr. Bethurem mentioned that the subcommittee did not meet in February, but he is in the process of reaching out to the Allegheny College Community Impact Teams about a weatherization event series. The subcommittee would like to connect with Allegheny about their role in facilitating some collaboration. There is likely to be a delay in coordination with the impact team because of staff turnover. If anybody wants to join weatherization, Mr. Bethurem encouraged others to join.</p> <p>Ms. Tompkins mentioned that the subcommittee has received a commitment for a Weatherization 101 trainer. A tax accountant at McGill, Power, Bell also agreed to do a training on weatherization tax credit opportunities under the Inflation Reduction Act, though it would have to occur after tax season (4/15). The Mobility and Solar Subcommittees could also be involved in a training or multiple as similar provisions exist for EV and renewable energy.</p>
<p>Commercial Energy Efficiency</p>	<p>Mr. McUmbler mentioned his inclusion in two calls with the Shared Energy Manager Program. It is unclear what the city's priorities are for the Shared Energy Manager. There are currently 19 municipalities involved with the program this year, and a lot of communities are involved in EV development.</p> <p>The subcommittee had a few meetings with city staff about energy efficiency educational resources. Rather than go directly to audits, 10-20% energy use reduction can come from turning items off.</p> <p>The subcommittee also spoke with the Green Building Alliance about creating a 2030 District in Meadville. The subcommittee is still planning a May partnership event launch, possibly at Meadville Public Library. The group also hopes to target organizations that can build equity as our first partners – Housing Authority, nonprofits, etc.</p>
<p>Mobility</p>	<p>Ms. Hicks mentioned that the group worked with city staff for a successful February 12<sup>th</sup> active transportation listening session. There were 41 attendees. Ms. Mogush and Ms. Hicks shared their thoughts that the event was successful and included great participation from members of the public. Residents had very specific feedback about improvements that could be made.</p> <p>Mr. Grella offered for others to see a map of a summary of feedback received in addition to known troublesome areas. As a result of this feedback, Mr. Grella intends to complete the WalkWorks application by mid-March with a plan to request engineering and design services related to 4-6 city street corridors for quasi-Complete Streets improvements. Mr. Grella is working around the council schedule to ensure all final approvals are obtained before submission.</p>
<p><b>New Business</b></p> <p>Discussion – Measuring progress to</p>	<p>Ms. Hicks mentioned that for the next meeting, we will do a mini work session to revisit the CAP and the priorities of the group.</p>

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<p>date against CAP timelines</p>	
<p><b>Old Business</b></p> <p>Discussion – 2/24/24 EAC Network Conference</p> <p>Discussion – EPA Community Change Grants Program</p> <p>Discussion – Shared Energy Manager Program</p>	<p>Ms. Tompkins received approval for a member of the City of Erie EAC to join the Meadville registration for the conference.</p> <p>Ms. Tompkins apologized for and explained the confusion surrounding prior correspondence from the DEP Office of Environmental Justice about the EPA Community Change Grant Program. Unfortunately, there was a mistake, and DEP was awarded funds under a different EPA program called, Government-to-Government. The total \$1 million award to DEP is meant to provide \$50,000 awards to 12 community-based organizations around PA to facilitate environmental justice trainings under a framing of illegal dumping and litter prevention. Therefore, there is no funding currently outlined to come to Meadville or the EAC, more specifically.</p> <p>Ms. Hicks attended a first meeting, but there is going to need to be additional information about narrowing the focus of this person. City staff provided some insight into two potential priority projects of the Shared Energy Manager. Ms. Tompkins asked, can we ask the Shared Energy Manager come to a future EAC meeting? Ms. Hicks agreed to coordinate to ask if staff and the Energy Manager can attend our next monthly meeting.</p>
<p><b>Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items</b></p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Chair’s Comments</b></p>	<p>Ms. Hicks recommended everyone to complete the Statement of Financial Interest to the city by May 1<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>Ms. Hicks also received a pamphlet from Bike PGH as a member welcome. The welcome packet included a brochure, a pocket-sized incident report, a sticker, a membership card, and more information. Ms. Mogush mentioned Bike Erie, a community-based and advocacy group and asked about an equivalent for Meadville. Mr. Bethurem mentioned that there is an Allegheny Bike Share.</p>
<p><b>Committee Member Comments</b></p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Agenda for Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>Mr. Bethurem mentioned a need to be thinking about the greenhouse gas inventory. At the end of 2025, it will be 5 years old, but we want to be able to reference up-to-date data. When Mr. Bethurem worked on the first one, the DEP LCAP Program had proprietary software, and that was a massive timesaver and streamliner. The EAC can do an inventory without that access, but it will be much more difficult without it. Mr. Bethurem is happy to do it again.</p> <p>Mr. Grella asked the EAC for a letter of support for the full WalkWorks application. He will also request one from the Planning Commission. This information is requested within the next couple of weeks. Ms. Hicks agreed to do the first draft for others to review and provide feedback on. Ms. Mogush agreed to reach out to community members for letters of support, specifically those that did so for the pre-planning grant.</p>

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	Mr. McUmbler asked Ms. Hicks about reporting to city council. There is a requirement for an annual report in the by-laws and state statute. Ms. Hicks has the intention of providing quarterly updates to council but agreed to review the language about the annual report in the by-laws.
<b>Adjournment</b>	Ms. Hicks called for a motion for adjournment at 6:52 pm. Mr. McUmbler made the motion and Mr. Bethurem seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maryann Menanno, Interim City  
Clerk