**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE**

**ENERGY TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**HYBRID OVER TEAMS AND PHYSICALLY AT THE**

**CITY OF COHASSET, COMMUNITY CENTER**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Energy Transition Advisory Committee met in Regular Session and ETAC Vice-Chair Tamara Lowney welcomed all in attendance, thanked the City of Cohasset and Staff for hosting the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:00am at the Community Center, City of Cohasset, Cohasset, MN. Roll call was taken.

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| Attendee Name | Representation | Voting Status | Status |
| Chair Marshall Hallock | Impacted Community | Voting | Absent |
| Vice-Chair Tamara Lowney | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Michael James Childs Jr | Prairie Island Indian Community Representative | Voting | Present |
| Shelly Christensen | Speaker of the House Appointment | Voting | Absent |
| Richard Evans | Utilities That Operate an Impacted Facility | Voting | Absent |
| Jamie Fitzke | Nonprofit Organization with Expertise and Experience Delivering Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs | Voting | Present |
| Mike Hoppe | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Present |
| Luke Lallemont | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Absent |
| Karin Housley | Senate Majority Appointment | Voting | Present |
| Mary McComber | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Jennifer McEwen | Senate Minority Appointment | Voting | Present |
| Shane Mekeland | House Minority Leader Appointment | Voting | Absent |
| Kristin Renskers | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Present |
| Richard James Sackett | Impacted Worker Employed by Company Under Contract | Voting | Present |
| Joshua Skelton | Utilities That Operate an Impacted Facility | Voting | Present |
| Derek Vetsch | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Abigail Wozniak | Professional Economic Development or Workforce Retraining Experience | Voting | Present |
| Shane Zahrt | Coalition of Utility Cities | Voting | Present |
| Beth Binczik | Governor’s Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Steve Grove | Commissioner of Employment & Economic Development | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Kevin Lee | Commissioner of Commerce Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Craig McDonnell | Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency’s Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Jeremy Parker | Commissioner of Labor & Industry Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Rose Patzer | Colleges & Universities Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Katie Sieben | Executive Secretary of the Public Utilities Commission or Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Jon Van Nurden | Commissioner of Revenue’s Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Will Seuffert | Executive Secretary of the Public Utilities Commission or Designee | Non-Voting | Present |

DEED Staff: Carla Vita

1. Welcome by Itasca Economic Development Corporation, President Tamara Lowney

Lowney started with a moment of silence to respect the very recent passing of Cohasset Mayor Hagy.

Lowney discussed the work that the community and area is performing to attract new business and industry to diversify the economy, bring in new jobs and increase tax base. She stated that some of the projects are complex and bring in a variety of agencies and partners together for the project to proceed. Lowney discussed how important economic development is to the area and to the stability of the economic ecosystem. She stated that economic development is not just business and industry, but includes housing, childcare and many intangibles.

Lowney described the concern of the loss of Boswell to the community. Research has determined that the community would lose 55% of the tax base with the power plant closure. She also discussed the United Way participation from Boswell and its employees and the ripple impact that the employees have on the local economy.

Lowney informed that working together to strengthen the community and region is important and is a guiding star in the work performed in the area.

1. Presentation by Brett Schwartz, NADO

Schwartz presented on NADO (National Association of Development Organizations). One of its focuses is on regionalism. NADO specializes in small and rural communities in the US. They provide grants to their members. They advocate for partnerships and working together, then leveraging the partnerships.

NADO’s work with the Regional Development Commissions (RDCs0. Minnesota has 10 RDC, with a portion of Minnesota without representation.

NADO has been working along with the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities to provide recourse to impacted communities. Schwartz reviewed some resources that are within the presentation deck. NADO’s approach has been building resilient communities thru training and networking. They also advocate for economic diversification.

CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) document that each RDC prepares is important for resiliency and diversification. This document is a structure to assist communities impacted by shock and stress of a loss. It allows them to be better prepared to respond to impacts, “bounce forward.”

Schwartz stated that places that successfully diversify their economy tend to:

-Leverage state, federal and private resources. It is not just about money, but looking for all possible resources to close gaps.

-Maintain and build local capacity among staff and community leaders

-Incorporate a broad array of perspectives

-Think regionally

-Look and work beyond their own silos traditional Economic Development v. other Economic Development approaches

Schwartz informed that economic development and diversification has 8 forms. All are needed for a healthy community. Missing just one pillar has an impact on the community and work should be made to ensure all pillars within a community exist. The pillars are:

1. Individual – health, well-being, and skills of the population
2. Intellectual – knowledge, creativity, and innovativeness in the region
3. Natural – land, plants, animals, water, and air
4. Built – buildings, roads, telecommunications
5. Financial – cash and financial investments
6. Political – connections and influence of individuals and organizations
7. Social – trust, relationships and networks between people and organizations
8. Cultural – values, traditions, and identity

The anacronym of COAL is used for key actions to support economic diversification:

C – cooperate – working together

O – observe – see other communities, learn from each other

A – adapt – take resources and use to strengthen each other

L – leverage resources including local talents

Schwartz stated that the formation of ETAC and the work we are performing are a foundation towards the success of their communities in transition.

Lowney inquired to any questions. There were none.

1. Presentation by Josh Skelton, MN Power

Skelton welcomed everyone to Cohasset and the overall community. Skelton informed that the region is a unique mixture of electrical needs in MN – homes/people, taconite and communities. He informed that the regional has a large electric distribution grid. Boswell is the largest electrical producer in the region. He informed that 2 units were retired in 2018 and 2 are remaining. Skelton informed that MN Power has been in the region for 118 years.

Skelton educated that MN has a vison called “Energy Forward”. This vision has the company’s goal be being 100% carbon-free by 2050. He stated this goal has milestones. Those milestones are being met with hydro, solar and wind. These changes are to assist in tackling climate changes. Skelton educated that any changes in the electric grid has ripple impacts and those impacts take significant planning. The planning is provided with an IRP (integrated resource plan). When planning for an electric transition, broad stakeholder input is important.

Skelton informed that a change in the electric generation impacts the electric grid. It is important to adopt technologies and solutions for energy. Skelton stated that MN Power works with the MN Public Utilities Commission to reduce the energy costs, sometimes with innovation. Skelton continued that MN Power works with economic development teams and partners. He stated that it is important to collaborate for a successful transition.

Skelton stated that the transition is not only important for a sustainable future, but is also important for customer trust, the employees and the community. For the future, they are using technological advances; continued investing in the power plant, partnered with industrial businesses, and more.

Skelton discussed the employees at Boswell and their contribution to the community and region. Skelton informed that 20 employees are yellow-ribbon “veterans”. He stated that last year that MN Power and employees gave $43,000 to the local United Way. He ended by stated that MN Power is the largest tax payer in the city, county and school district.

No questions were asked.

1. Approve August 30, 2022 Minutes – Roll Call vote

Motion by Vetsch, second by McComber to approve the August 30, 2022, minutes as presented. Roll Call vote passed unanimously.

1. Draft Plan Presentation

Lowney stated that the repetition within the document is intentional and requested. Items such as playbooks are stated numerous times to reinforce the need and to drive the importance to the reader. Sackett stated that some items are missing and would like to add them. Vita stated that she would collect all the outstanding areas to provide to the task forces when they meet next.

Vita provided a history of the ETAC, the task forces and the aggressive timeline. Vita walked thru each section of the draft plan that was written to address the anticipated tax, workforce, and economic effects of the energy transition, review existing programs, and develop recommendations for communities. Vita stated that the ETAC and task forces have completed an incredible amount of work in such a short time.

Vita informed that the draft includes a significant amount of information, and there are many places where multiple task forces have shared similar concerns, ideas, and recommendations. There are still a few more steps needed to put the plan into a form that will encourage lawmakers to read and engage with these ideas. Vita reminded ETAC that she has requested the assistance of DEED’s communications team and government relations staff to review the report for accuracy, clarity, and readability. Vita informed that comments she has been educated upon is that the final report should be concise and in plain language so that elected people and the public alike can engage with its content. Vita stated that the report is extensive and the edits will take time to work through. Vita reminded that this is a draft report. Not a final report. The ETAC still needs stakeholder input, so today and throughout the stakeholder survey process, comments are ardently requested to provide to the task forces. Vita informed that once the verbiage and general form of the report is solidified, the communications team will need to do the design work to make the report really readable – that means probably some more clean-up to ensure the report is concise, adding in pictures, and other design work to make the report very clear and impactful.

Vita stated that the desire to have a plan that is ready to go before the next session begins is known—and can be achieved. However, we’ve got one shot at putting together this plan—and we want to make sure that we get it right. Vita stated that we’ll be updating our schedule and will be reviewing a second draft of the plan during our next meeting in October. Vita reminded that following the October meeting, staff will continue to work on the plan to help put it into a final form that is easy to read and navigate—even by those who haven’t previously been engaged in the energy transition. She informed that the plan then will berecirculated to the committee for their review and finalize the plan before the 2023 session begins.

Sacket stated that the ETAC needs to determine who are the subject matter experts for each area within the plan to speak to the legislators. McComber agreed that ETAC members communicating to the legislators is important. Lowney directed Vita to bring the request to each Task Force in October for them to self-identify which task force members are willing to volunteer to represent their area to the legislators. Fitzke stated she would like more direction on testifying on legislation. Know to whom to defer questions to when they emerge.

Vetsch stated that he would like the Xcel Energy handout regarding what they paid in taxes and valuations as an addendum to the plan.

McEwen stated that she is troubled by the lack of response by the impacted communities. She further stated that she would like it more clearly written in the plan – “this is what I need, this is my fear”. McEwan also inquired if the survey was anonymous. Lowney informed that Vita sent the survey out to the entire ETAC multiple times requesting it to be forward to stakeholders. Vita stated it was an anonymous survey, but from what people self-identified, Prairie Island Indian Community and Itasca County had good response rate in comparison to other locations.

McEwan stated that she would like more specificity to what infrastructure means in the plan. She stated that some consider it roads and bridges, others all components of the community. McComber discussed that in Oak Park Heights they will need water, sewer and other infrastructure to redevelop that site.

McEwan stated that she really appreciates the one-page handouts that are within the document.

Childs stated that his appreciates the history section of the document. He stated that he would like to see information on the extraction of materials used for the creation of the new methods of energy transition. Childs stated that extraction of materials impacts Native Americans, their way of life and their food sources. He stated that energy has an impact on the environment, including Prairie Island Nuclear facility with the waste it stores at the location. He stated that the Cohasset location impacts the Native American wild rice beds. Childs educated that no native American community is losing tax base or workforce. He stated that the dominant society is impacting the Native American communities. Childs stated that re-use does not always include rebuilding.

Childs stated that the plan discusses State Statute 1065. He stated that it is important.

Childs informed that he sent Vita an article from the Pioneer Press dated September 4, 2022 in which it states that producing clean cars and green energy has other impacts, including those to Native Americas. He stated that he does not understand how nuclear is clean energy with all the long term impacts it produces. Childs stated that he believes that the plan needs to have a consultation.

Childs stated that he will send his edits to Vita. Lowney stated that the concerns of Childs has been parroted in many parts of the document.

Lowney brought up a concern from Lee. Vita stated that DEED’s Dannen has written language to propose to the Workforce committee for their consideration regarding Lee’s concern. Lee indicated that bringing it to the task force versus the overall meeting was adequate.

McEwan stated that she agrees with the conversation to have an expert from each task force to be available for the legislative session.

* 1. Consensus to move forward

Consensus of the ETAC to move forward.

* 1. Next steps

Approved as detailed earlier in the minutes

1. Survey Analysis Team

Wozniak presented for the Survey Analysis Team consisting of herself, Lowney, Hallock and Vita.

* 1. August Stakeholder Survey Analysis

Wozniak reviewed the memo from the stakeholder survey that went out in August. She stated that the group was disappointed that we did not receive much input, especially from the impacted workers. Wozniak asked all ETAC to encourage workers to voice their comments on the next stakeholder survey.

McEwan agreed with ETAC efforts to obtain Native American input regarding the draft plan.

* 1. ETAC Draft Plan Stakeholder Survey and survey dates – Consensus

Vita presented the survey and discussed the questions being proposed. Lowney stated that the survey has areas in which people can make comments to further explain their thoughts. Wozniak stated that a week turnaround is tight, but asked all to encourage others to complete. Wozniak stated that people can complete just one section, if they desire to not complete the entire survey. McComber stated she would educate everyone at her City Council meeting later in the day.

Consensus was agreement for the stakeholder survey questions and timing.

1. Old Business Discussion

None.

1. Public Comment

None.

1. Oak Park Heights APA Award

Lowney congratulated Mayor McComber and the community of Oak Park Heights for the award from the MN American Planning Association for their Partnership in Planning Award for the Allen S. king Plant Reuse Advisory Panel.

1. Next meeting – October 25, 2022 at 11am, Prairie Island Indian Community
2. Adjourn – Roll call vote

Motion by Vetsch, second by McComber to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.