

Minutes

Environment Committee



Meeting Date: November 14, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

Chair, Peter Lindstrom, D10
 Vice Chair, Wendy Wulff, D16

E Tyronne Carter, District 3
 Yassin Osman, District 7
 Anjuli Cameron, District 8

Diego Morales, District 9
E Gail Cederberg, District 11
 = present, E = excused

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Lindstrom called the regular meeting of the Environment Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

Agenda Approved

It was moved by consensus to approve the agenda. Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by CM Wulff, seconded by CM Morales to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2023 regular meeting of the Environment Committee. **Motion carried.**

Consent Business

None at this time.

Non-Consent Business

1. **2023-267: 2023 Municipal Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program** (Matt Gsellmeier, 651-602-1802)

It was moved by CM Wulff, seconded by CM Morales, that the Metropolitan Council approves the Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) grant program guidelines and authorizes the Regional Administrator to award and execute grants and grant agreements pursuant to the guidelines outlined in Attachment A.

Discussion

CM Wulff asked: What was the tone of the feedback at these sessions?

Staff responded: Overall the feedback was positive and we received several thank you messages from communities. We also held an information session on the private I/I grant program recently. That session also had positive feedback, but we did receive additional questions since that is a new program.

CM Lindstrom asked: The equity component with the net tax compacity built into the legislation or something we came up with?

Staff responded: We came up with the equity component after 3-4 months of collaborating with Integrated Servant Leadership Team (ISLT), Patty Nauman, Council Member Wulff, and

several internal staff.

CM Lindstrom asked: Early 2024 is the next time we can expect the next round of applications?

Staff responded: That is correct. We expect to receive applications in late 2023/early 2024.

Information

1. Water Efficiency Grant Program (Henry McCarthy 651-602-1946, Judy Sventek 651-602-1156)

Henry McCarthy, Environmental Scientist, presented on the Water Efficiency Grant Program. The objective of the grant program is to improve water efficiency in the metro region. The Metropolitan Council's Water Efficiency Grant Program is funded through the Minnesota Legislature's appropriation of Clean Water Funds. Cities and townships served by municipal water systems are eligible for funding and operate their own programs.

Current eligible expenses are as follows:

- Toilet replacement with an EPA WaterSense labeled toilet
- Irrigation controller replacement with an EPA WaterSense labeled smart controller
- Irrigation spray sprinkler body replacement with an EPA WaterSense labeled spray sprinkler body
- Irrigation system audit conducted by an Irrigation Professional certified by an EPA WaterSense program
- Clothes washing machine replacement with an Energy Star labeled clothes washer
- Residential dishwasher replacement with an Energy Star labeled dishwasher

The current grant program has 37 participating communities with 32 returning from previous years. Halfway through the current grant program, an estimate of nearly 40 million gallons of water is saved each year. A new two-part piolet project with Saint Paul Regional Water Services was launched. The two-part piolet includes a toilet efficiency program as well as a leak audit program. The community application for the 2024-2026 Water Grant Program will begin in early 2024.

Discussion

CM Wulff asked: Do you think they feel like it's overly burdensome to have a long list eligible items?

Staff responded: I'm not sure. I think having conversation with communities would be useful to gain better understanding of why they pick certain items verse others. It would helpful in regard to not duplicate efforts.

CM Lindstrom asked: Early 2024 is when we can expect the next round of applications?

Staff responded: A call for applications will be put out in early 2024 with awards for communities announced in early April to be able to start the program on July 1st.

2. EPA Annual DBE Report (Ashanti Payne, 612-349-7660)

Ashanti Payne, Assistant Director of the Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity, presented on the Federal Fiscal Year 2023 EPA Report Summary for Environmental Services. The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program applies to projects that are administered in whole or in part by federal funds. Annual goals for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises are set every 3 years. The Council has achieved 9.42 percent utilization on Environmental Services projects this reporting period. Spending with Women Business Enterprises (WBE) and Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) was more evening distributed than in past years. Spending with Asian Pacific Americans has also increased from 6.73 percent in 2022 to 16.31 percent in 2023. Future implementation of process improvements are as follows:

- Targeted Outreach-MBE firms/MBE Female owned firms

- Meet and Greets
- Mentor Protégé
- New DBE Orientation Event planned for Early 2024
- OEEO Intake Form Fully Implemented
- Collaboration with Engagement and Development Unit

Discussion

CM Morales asked: When you were doing the outreach specifically for the DBE event did you reach out to the National Association of Woman Business Entrepreneurs and the Association of Woman contractors (AWC)?

Staff responded: We have reached out to the AWC and have a good partnership with them. The National Association of Woman Owners is a new one, and we will reach out to them.

CM Osman asked: Has a date been set for the new orientation next year?

Staff responded: I am not sure, but I will circle back with the answer once I check with my team.

Reports

General Managers Report: No report.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Environment Committee meeting of November 14, 2023.

Council Contact:

Nneka Onah, Recording Secretary
Nneka.Onah@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-8101

