



Policy Committee Meeting

NOTES

Thursday, April 27, 2023 | 10:00am – 12:00am

Present: Rick Horton – Chair, Mike Kilgore, Jim Manolis, Pete Aube, Keith Karnes, Bob Owens, Brendan Jordan, Amber Ellering

Absent: Katie Fernholz

Staff present: Eric Schenck, Sadie Mathison

Guests: Kory Cease, Molly Jansen

MFRC Update (5 min) – Eric Schenck, Executive Director

Eric provided a hiring status update for the vacant Policy Analyst & Administrator position. Interviews are complete and there is a potential hire. Eric has passed the finalist candidate along to HR so they can go through their vetting process.

Legislative Update (20 min) – Rick Horton, Chair

Both houses have passed the Environment and Natural Resources Policy bill that contains the extension of the MFRC sunset clause.

The Environment and Natural Resources Finance bill has passed House and Senate. Possible conference committee meeting Saturday for a walk through before finalizing. This bill contains reforestation, roads & bridges, etc. The House and Senate bills are different.

The bonding bill is still up in the air. This finance bill has funding for reforestation and seed collection.

The senate energy bill included wood waste and woody biomass as a carbon neutral feedstock for energy production. They've combined the bill with the ENR Finance Bill. There was no discussion of biofuels.

Rick brought forward the topic of Tyler vs. Hennepin County. This topic was discussed at the March Council meeting. Should the decision be in favor of Tyler, there are wide-reaching, complex implications.

Kory drafted a rough resolution on the topic to be released at the time of the decision/opinion. Rick and Kory will work on the resolution, bring it back to the committee for finalization before taking it to the full Council at the May meeting. It can then be adjusted as appropriate once the decision/opinion has been released.

Landscape Project Funding (30 min) – Group discussion

Rick opened the discussion with a history on the topic. Jim introduced a proposal for use in requesting additional funding in the MFRC appropriation.

Eric walked the group through the key points of the budget proposal document. He hopes to have a resolution for the July Council meeting to formally express the support of the Council to the Governor and/or Legislature for the next and future sessions.

It was explained that this topic was moved from the Personnel and Finance Committee to the Policy Committee for guidance on how to approach the proposal process.

Following robust discussion, the committee agreed that this item should remain within the Personnel and Finance Committee with agreement on an approach across the Council.

Urgency was expressed as deadlines for supplemental budget requests are due now/soon.

Policy Analysis and Response Procedure (55 min) – Group discussion

Rick presented first Action 4a of the strategic plan which calls for “clear protocols and procedures”; and second the 1996 document “MFRC Criteria and Procedures for Addressing Forest Resource Policy Issues”.

Rick assigned homework for the committee to review this document on their own and either mark it up or keep it as is to bring to the next meeting.

Rick talked about policy position statements and revisited the recurring topic of how to be agile during rapidly changing legislative sessions.

Next Meeting Topic

There was a request to kick the next meeting off with the previous topic of Policy Analysis and Response Procedure. There was a suggestion to preempt the conversation with an analysis of whether this procedure has been followed in recent years.

Meeting adjourned.