



## Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee

July 11, 2023

### Summary and Motions

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Chair Sheehan called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Committee Members LeGris, Wu, Fogle, Lynch, Gray, F. Brown, and Sevigny were present. Committee Members Monarrez and Worley were absent.

#### I. Approval of May 23, 2023 Committee Summary

Motion by Gray to approve the May 23, 2023 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee Summary. Seconded by Wu. Motion passed without dissent.

#### II. Annual Energy Improvement Fund Update

James Bush, Energy Initiatives Section Supervisor, provided a status update on energy initiatives. He reviewed FY22 utility expenses for a total of \$20.5M. He spoke about lighting projects with an Energy Improvement Fund (EIF) investment of \$23,216, cost avoidance of \$4,491/year, and estimated energy avoidance of 36,297 kWh/year. He reviewed solar projects which include Fire Station #9, Police West Gym, and Versailles Rd. Building #2 which have an EIF investment of \$124,403, year 1 cost avoidance of \$6,259/year, and estimated energy avoidance of 53,077 kWh/year. He provided a project comparison for lighting and solar PV. He reviewed the EIF balance as of 6/26/23 and he noted that EIF projects compete with normal workload of other divisions who manage the facilities. He closed with an overview of conclusions and comments.

Speaking about payback on solar and life of the equipment and if we have thought about bonding to move along quicker, Bush said they have not considered this and the scale has not been that high - it is smaller than the bonding scale. When asked about the rate increase, Bush confirmed it reflects that increase. Speaking about mitigating costs for FY22 utility expenses and street lights, Bush said they primarily lease street lights and it is not an asset the city owns so those cannot be modified. An exception to this is the Granville street lights which have been converted to LED to save energy. Most lights are owned by Kentucky Utilities or Blue Grass Energy. When asked if we prioritize solar, Bush explained they have found that a bolt-on system after installation is less costly, but it is higher cost if they design up front. No action was taken on this item.

#### III. Annual Urban Forestry / Street Trees Update

Jennifer Carey, Director of Environmental Services provided the annual update on Urban Forestry / Street Trees. She reviewed the ordinance chart pointing out changes previously made but noted there have been no changes since last update. She provided the definition of a street tree which is the responsibility of property owners. She spoke about Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program and provisions in place for that and she displayed a chart to explain hazardous street tree removals/replacements by district. She reviewed charts to explain the expenses incurred for removal of hazardous street trees and the species removed with pear being highest. For replacement trees, the tree used most was black gum. She explained sometimes you remove 4 of same species but replant with 4 different species. She spoke about success stories and opportunities for improvement. She spoke about the street tree pruning clearance program. She mentioned success stories from the street tree pruning and she highlighted opportunities for

improvement for the street tree pruning. She noted the proposed 8 year pruning schedule to work their way around Fayette County. She closed by speaking about the path forward and future initiatives.

Speaking about the Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share program and how to increase the number of participants qualifying for the 100% grant, Carey said those guidelines just changed in February because they were too rigorous. Since then, we have seen more people qualify. They are looking at locations and will see if they can do more outreach. If 25% isn't used, does it rollover? Carey confirmed the guidelines allow for grant funding to be used until February. When asked how many applicants there were versus how many were granted, Carey said it wasn't a large number. Speaking about the FY23 cost per tree appearing higher, Carey explained the cost for everything has increased and the replanted tree cost has increased as well. Addressing the fluctuating numbers and who decides where pruning takes place, Carey said it is the neighborhoods with full service trash collection. It is focused in areas with city services and where it hasn't taken place in a while. Speaking about removing and replanting, Carey said it is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. When asked if it is solely for vendors to do the work, Carey said the property owner gets 2 quotes and they are reimbursed 50% of the lowest quote. When asked if we have a marketing plan to improve Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share numbers rather than relying on Council Members, Carey spoke about promotions and marketing. Speaking about pruning, Carey said the property owner is obligated but the city provides the service in areas that need it most. When asked about diversity of the team, Carey said the focus of diversity was on the Tree Board but it is based on people who apply and are appointed. She said this is something they are concerned about and they are looking for opportunities to diversify. Speaking about the new application, Carey confirmed the new application was sent to district offices. When asked how someone gets on the vendor list, Carey said it is a 1-page acknowledgment form and the package has been revamped. She added that they would love to add more people to the list. When asked how long applications are kept on file when funding is exhausted, Carey said they have never thought to rescreen applicants when they don't qualify. It is rare that they don't move forward when one qualifies. Addressing street trees that are removed but not replaced and how that is monitored, Carey said to call 311 and ask for Urban Forestry and they can provide this information so DES can look into it. They have 1 year to replace. No action was taken on this item.

#### **IV. Environmental Commission – Ordinance Updates**

This item was postponed to the September 12 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee meeting.

#### **V. Items Referred to Committee**

*The Capacity Assurance Plan Audit was moved to a periodic item, taking place every 5 years*

Motion by Sevigny to adjourn at 2:15 p.m. Seconded by Fogle. Motion passed without dissent.