



## **Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee**

September 18, 2018

### **Summary and Motions**

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Chair Farmer called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members F. Brown, Moloney, Stinnett, Gibbs, Evans, Worley, Mossotti, Bledsoe, and Plomin were present. Council Members Henson and Lamb were also in attendance as non-voting members.

#### **I. Approval of July 3, 2018 Committee Summary**

A motion was made by Mossotti to approve the July 3, 2018 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee Summary, seconded by Evans. The motion passed without dissent.

#### **II. Fiber-Optic Installation (MetroNet)**

Darrick Zucco, General Manager of MetroNet, began the presentation. He said they began this initiative to provide citizens with another option for TV, Internet and phone and he reviewed the advantages of fiber-optic technology. He said they have completed 13 of the 140 miles of fiber backbone installation and they have presold more than 2,000 customers; and completed installations for over 500 customers as of mid-September. David Fritz, Outside Plant Project Manager for MetroNet, continued the presentation. He said they anticipate providing availability to over 100,000 homes and businesses and he explained the four quadrant system used to deploy fiber access. He described the communication taking place prior to construction and throughout the process and he discussed the procedure in place for addressing concerns about construction.

CM Bledsoe commented on the possibility of a resident utility line being cut by MetroNet and asked why the resident would need to call for a resolution. Fritz said it is because the resident is responsible for the line and MetroNet does not have authorization to have a service provider do repairs to the home. Bledsoe asked when they would start working in District 10. Fritz said he would have to look at the schedule and Zucco said it would be summer of 2019 when they start in that quadrant. Bledsoe asked how they prioritize and how decisions are made to determine where to install their infrastructure. Fritz said it depends on growth projections, pole applications, and permits because there are limits to how many pole applications can be submitted per month.

CM Plomin said that some concerns may come from people not understanding that it is contractors who are doing the installations. She asked where people can log a complaint online and Fritz provided the web site and a phone number. Plomin said it has been difficult for residents to determine where they are on the map. Zucco said they are working with marketing to update the map to make it more user friendly.

CM Worley commented about his office's work with MetroNet to resolve installation issues and recommended that they continue to resolve constituent complaints as quickly as possible.

CM Evans commented on MetroNet's early efforts in her district and complimented the work that was done. She asked about the lapse in coverage within her district and when that is expected to be complete. Zucco said they can provide her an estimate if she emails them a sample address.

CM F. Brown asked if MetroNet is running lines along existing telecommunication lines and Fritz

confirmed. F. Brown asked if the installation process is easier with an existing pole and Fritz said it does not necessarily mean it will be easier and he explained the steps it takes to install their equipment. F. Brown asked about the management of subcontractors and Fritz said they have regular meetings and training sessions with them to explain the importance of customer service and job performance.

CM Henson asked about the infrastructure that will utilize the existing poles versus underground. Fritz explained that it is about 65% compared to underground. Henson questioned the reliability when using poles, particularly in older neighborhoods. Fritz explained disruptions in service can happen to both locations of the infrastructure.

CM Mossotti asked about the long term maintenance plan. Fritz explained the shift in ownership once the infrastructure is built and said there is a full time maintenance crew to service the infrastructure. Mossotti asked if they will have additional employees. Zucco said they will add employees as they add users and properties to be serviced.

CM Farmer asked if they had come across anything noteworthy in building new infrastructure for the first time in 40 years. Fritz said the infrastructure here is in pretty good shape, but there is some overgrowth between easements which makes it difficult to install the fiber in some areas. Farmer asked if the utility companies have been cooperative to work with and Fritz said for the most part, they have not had any issues or hold-ups.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

### **III. Solarize Lexington**

Rachel Norton, Energy Specialist in Kentucky, began the presentation. She described how residential solar panels are connected to a grid and used by either the homeowner or the nearest immediate source. Steve Ricketts, co-owner of Solar Energy Solutions, explained the solarize campaign and how widespread their efforts are. He said it is a holistic approach, starting with community engagement and education. He explained that homes are assessed for viability; and if the home meets the standards, solar energy can typically save the consumer 15 to 20 percent. Norton concluded the presentation by explaining their vision for Lexington. She said they are asking for a resolution of support, press releases, an informational page, social media posts, and a city point person to coordinate all of these.

CM Mossotti commented on the cost of the “resident owned and managed city-wide solar bulk buying” and asked if there is a minimum amount of participants in order to receive the discount. Norton said the minimum amount can vary by location, but they estimate it would be about 30 properties. Mossotti commented on residents who decide to move forward with this and asked what the city’s role would be. Norton said *Solar Lexington* will do all of the coordinating said they are looking for support and making information available to residents. Mossotti asked how long this takes from start to finish and Ricketts explained that there is a 2-3 month window during which they encourage people to express interest and request a home visit followed by signing up; he said execution would take about 6 months after that.

CM Gibbs said he would take the lead as a point person to coordinate a resolution and provide support; he suggested that the Division of Environmental Quality and Public Works handle the press releases, information page, and social media posts. Gibbs commented on the net metering legislation that failed and asked if solar would be secure. Ricketts said he has met with KU/LGE regarding HB 227 and they are keeping options open to come back a third time in the next session.

CM Plomin commented on the annual marketing outreach and asked about the issuance of the RFP. Ricketts said the RFP would fundamentally look the same every year, but the price would be lower. Plomin commented on the price and asked what a typical house would cost to have solar. Ricketts said after the tax credit, an average house would be about \$15,000. Plomin commented on the less viable homes due to tree coverage or roofing and asked what percentage of the total those homes would include. Ricketts said there are about 20% of homes they look at and determine solar is not the best option.

CM Moloney asked if the RFP is to solicit for someone to put solar panels on the roof. Ricketts explained how the RFP is typically outlined and they make the decision based on experience, quality, and pricing; and the team narrows the selection based on those criteria. Moloney asked Norton about her background and Norton explained that she is a residential energy specialist and she works all over eastern Kentucky doing home energy inspections.

CM Evans expressed concern about the homes that have the financial ability versus the homes that need the support and mentioned the idea of focusing on specific neighborhoods. Norton said they do not have a specific marketing strategy yet and explained that she is working on how to address situations when consumers may not be able to afford the initial installation. Ricketts added that they will have an ability to target certain areas particularly in year two and three, when the price starts to go down.

CM Henson commented on the government money that goes into energy efficiency for low-income families and suggested a portion of those funds be used for this program. Norton said this is a great idea.

CM Moloney questioned the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for homes in low-income housing and asked what the cost would be for a solar panel on one of these homes considering it would not be very big. Ricketts said that you often have to spend \$9,000 to \$11,000 on smaller homes before considering tax credits.

A motion was made by CM Mossotti to consider a resolution of support, seconded by CM Plomin, the motion passed without dissent.

CM Farmer asked James Bush, Program Manager for Energy Initiatives, if he would be the point person for the city. Bush said that would be up for discussion as they are experiencing resource constraints from other programs. Farmer asked if the organization could provide examples of press releases, informational page, and social media posts at next month's meeting. David Butler, founder of Solar Kentucky, said they could provide these examples.

#### **IV. Capacity Assurance Program (CAP) Update**

Charlie Martin, Acting Commissioner of Environmental Quality and Public Works, presented the item. Martin explained the Capacity Assurance Program (CAP), highlighting the consent decree requirement and how we moved forward with the CAP program before the EPA approved it so we could provide clarity to the development community and explain the new rules as far as sewer capacity and future connections. He described the Capacity Tracking IMS tool which allows anyone see how much capacity is available on a given parcel. He said the CAP task force began work in April 2012 and they brought forward 19 recommendations that became the framework of the program moving forward. Included in

those recommendations was an audit of the CAP program to take place every two years and this became a requirement under our code of ordinances. He outlined the structure of the audit to ensure each applicant followed the same process. Martin emphasized that this program is working exactly the way it was designed to.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

**V. Snow/Ice Control Plan Annual Update**

Charlie Martin, Acting Commissioner of Environmental Quality and Public Works, presented the item. He first reviewed the snow season expense comparison for contract plows and sidewalks from FY16 through FY19 and the status of salt currently available, and he pointed out the extreme rise in cost of salt for FY19. He reviewed the route rankings including four ranks across Fayette County and described each of those in detail. He explained the difference in service levels due the amount of snow and the plan of action for those areas. He reviewed changes to the 2017-18 snow plan and the sidewalk snow removal, emphasizing the timing difficulties relative to snow plow clearings. Lastly, he explained staffing in four divisions that contribute to snow removal and he reviewed the Snow Plan Finalization Schedule.

CM Gibbs commented on the \$25,000 for sidewalk snow removal and the drop from FY18 to FY19. Susan Plueger, Director of Environmental Policy, explained that most of the cost for sidewalk snow removal is for staff. She said previously the cost was high because we needed equipment and the reason it went down is because we now have the necessary equipment. She said the \$25,000 budgeted is specifically for viaducts because the snow has to be completely removed in those places.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

**VI. Division of Water Quality Projects Update**

Charlie Martin, Acting Commissioner for Environmental Quality and Public Works, presented the Water Quality projects update, highlighting a few specific project areas.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

**VII. Review of Items Referred to Committee**

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

A motion was made by CM Plomin to Adjourn, seconded by CM Mossotti, the motion passed without dissent.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

KT 9.20.18