



COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

City Hall Council Chambers, 10722 SE Main Street
& Zoom Video Conference (www.milwaukieoregon.gov)

MINUTES

JULY 12, 2022

Council Present: Councilors Adam Khosroabadi, Lisa Batey, Desi Nicodemus, Council President Kathy Hyzy, and Mayor Mark Gamba

Staff Present: Kelly Brooks, Assistant City Manager
Dan Harris, Events and Emergency Management Coordinator
Ann Ober, City Manager
Nicole Madigan, Deputy City Recorder

Mayor Gamba called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

1. Milwaukie Leadership Academy Debrief – Report

Harris introduced the Milwaukie Leadership Academy (MLA) co-facilitator Stephan Lashbrook and presented background information on the program, what a typical class consisted of, how recruitment occurred, the background of those who applied, and ideas for diversifying recruitment further. **Councilor Batey, Harris, and Lashbrook** discussed reasons why applicants did not participate in the program, how many YouTube views the recorded classes received, and how a majority of the participants had recently moved to Milwaukie.

Harris reviewed the results of the MLA survey issued to participants who had completed at least one class, six participants responded. **Council President Hyzy, Harris, and MLA participant Richard Nepon** commented on participants involvement in local forms of government. **Harris and Lashbrook** discussed proposed changes for the MLA, explained what worked well and what needed improvement, and provided insight on the MLA reading group.

MLA participants **Amy Miller and Nepon** shared insights on what led to participation with the MLA, how they have applied their knowledge since participation in the program, and thoughts on what changes could be made for future years. **Council President Hyzy** volunteered to answer any lingering questions MLA participants had and **Councilor Batey** believed that Clackamas County offered a similar program to the MLA. **Nepon and Mayor Gamba** discussed class ideas structured around how the city interacts with outside agencies such as Clackamas County. **Mayor Gamba** thanked **Miller and Nepon** for their participation in the class and having shared their experiences.

Harris asked Council if there were any final thoughts and **Councilor Nicodemus** suggested that the MLA also be offered exclusively in Spanish, the group discussed the idea. **Council President Hyzy** thanked Harris and Lashbrook for their work. **Lashbrook** noted that the program was successful due to dedicated city staff.

Mayor Gamba recessed the meeting at 5:50pm.

2. Natural Gas – Discussion

Mayor Gamba reconvened the meeting at 6:07pm and mentioned Milwaukie's climate action plan (CAP) goals and noted that the predominate form of energy used, beyond electricity, was natural gas. **Mayor Gamba** shared that representatives from NW Natural would present on the natural gas discussion first, followed by an advocacy group. **Nina**

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Carlson, government affairs and economic development manager for NW Natural, introduced Kellye Dundon, NW Natural environmental policy manager, Chris Kroeker, NW Natural hydrogen project manager, and NW Natural as a company and the current services they provide. **Carlson** stated the purpose for NW Natural's visit and presentation was to provide information, listen to concerns, answer questions, and determine how NW Natural could help the city meet its climate goals.

Carlson provided a timeline of what NW Natural had accomplished including replacing old pipes to reduce fugitive emissions. **Dundon** presented NW Natural's carbon neutral goal called Destination Zero, Vision 2050, and shared other programs they have and will utilize to achieve their goals. **Carlson** added that as NW Natural is a regulated utility, new plans and ideas used to make natural gas more sustainable are tied to passing legislation and that with assistance from Council, legislation could be passed more quickly. **Councilor Batey** asked NW Natural representatives to clarify what renewable gas is. **Dundon** explained that renewable gas (RNG) is methane captured from waste sources, that NW Natural owns their own RNG production facility, and what NW Natural's minimum RNG volumetric targets are over the next 23 years.

The group discussed how RNG is not limited to use within the region it is produced in, that one regional waste water treatment plant is already connected to NW Natural's network with another soon to be added, how RNG is molecularly the same as traditional natural gas which allows it to be used interchangeably in the pipeline system, that Carlson would have NW Natural staff follow up with precise information on production of RNG at the Columbia waste water treatment plant, and NW Natural's ideals for RNG procurement.

Carlson presented how natural gas is stored for later use compared to electricity and the difference in associated storage costs. **Councilor Batey** asked what the gas is stored in, **Carlson** and **Dundon** replied that the gas is stored in an underground system and within the pipe network.

Kroeker presented NW Natural's plans on how to make, utilize and store low carbon hydrogen, noted that it is less expensive to store than electricity, and **Kroeker** and **Carlson** stated that hydrogen is already being used globally. **Kroeker** shared that NW Natural had been testing a 5% blend of hydrogen at their Sherwood facility and would be rolling out a program in Eugene with 2,300 customers receiving a 10% hydrogen blend. **Carlson** added that NW Natural is taking it's time to ensure safety for NW Natural's system, its customers, and its customers' appliances. **Kroeker** cited where hydrogen and hydrogen blends have successfully been used.

Council President Hyzy, Kroeker, and Carlson discussed the United Kingdom's movement toward hydrogen, why the transition takes so long, and an invitation for Council to see NW Natural's facilities.

Mayor Gamba asked why NW Natural sued the state to stop renewable/green initiative bills. **Carlson** and **Dundon** responded that NW Natural believes in and supports good policy, and that their Destination Zero goals go beyond what has been proposed. **Carlson** summarized that NW Natural wants to work with the city to support carbon neutral goals, to provide a reliable energy source, and shared statistics of those who oppose a ban on natural gas.

The group discussed the discrepancy between leakage rates in homes as measured by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and independent studies, how NW Natural

offers a free yearly inspection to its customers to check for efficient equipment, how to incentivize replacements for newer more efficient appliances, and cost controls.

Bryan Emanuels, with Climate Solutions – a climate advocacy nonprofit operating in Oregon and Washington – commented on the impacts of climate crisis that our region has already experienced. **Emanuels** presented how buildings contribute about a third of the state’s climate pollution, and how emissions from buildings have increased about 50% since 1990. **Councilor Batey** asked Emanuels to point out which line on slide’s graph was for buildings. **Emanuels** noted that the orange line, which represented residential and commercial emissions, had almost reached similar levels to that of transportation as the number one source of climate emissions.

Emanuels presented the Oregon Climate Action Plan goals, which policies have been enacted to help achieve those goals, and what policies Climate Solutions believed were needed. **Emanuels** shared what an all-electric home looks like with plans to replace gas and oil furnaces with electric heat pumps, what appliance us the most natural gas, and the health risks and impacts of cooking with a gas appliance. **Councilor Batey, Emanuels**, and **Council President Hyzy** discussed testing for pollutants from a gas appliance in a residence. **Emanuels** noted how Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and those with lower socioeconomic status are unfairly subjugated to poor air quality and the health risks associated with poor air quality.

Emanuels presented safety risks of using gas in a home and stated that it takes up to 30 times longer to restore and repair gas lines than electricity after a natural disaster.

Emanuels shared information from recent studies that discussed the cost benefit and reduction of carbon emissions by switching homes to all-electric heat pumps for space and water heating and stated that now is the time to take action to achieve climate goals and reduce the impact of retrofit costs in the future. **Emanuels** commented on how gas utilities advertise and have pushed back against climate initiative bills, that RNG and hydrogen are not sustainable sources for decarbonizing the building sector, and provided examples of policies, building codes, resolutions, and legislation that have been enacted to reduce the use of natural gas in buildings. **Emanuels** presented policy options that can be enacted on a local level.

Councilor Khosroabadi and **Mayor Gamba** discussed RNG. **Gamba** stated there will be more natural gas discussions at upcoming meetings and thanked Emanuels for their presentation.

3. Adjourn

Mayor Gamba adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



 Nicole Madigan, Deputy City Recorder

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