

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 17, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Maria I. Valle, Co-chair; Michelle A. Lyons (6:09);
Scott Burns; Jorge Cruz, Sr.; Eneida L. Martinez.

OTHERS: Dasha T. Spell (6:09)
Chadwick Schroeder Office of Sustainability;
Joseph Katz, Central grants;
Adrienne Farror-Houel, Greater Bridgeport Community
Enterprise.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Valle called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of roll call.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

• **June 20, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING)**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING).**

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

109-23 Grant Submission: re Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program. (#25353).

Mr. Katz shared the grant submission is to reduce greenhouse gasses emissions by using electrical bikes as transportation. This would be a rebate and educational program for all those who purchase an electric bike. The grant requires no match from the city and the allotted amount would be \$2,649,500 dollars.

Council Cruz asked didn't they have trouble with the e-bikes before.

Mr. Schrodeder replied they have set up a program where everyone who is involved with the grant must attend an educational program to learn how the bikes work and they will also be receiving a helmet. They will have tricycles available for senior citizens, cargo bikes for small businesses, electrical bikes for adults, and pedal bikes for the youth. There is an option to receive a bike from the city or request a rebate if they would like to purchase them on their own. This project would differ from the scooters because they will be the property of the one sole owner.

Council Cruz asked if the helmets would be optional or mandatory.

Mr. Schrodeder replied it would be mandatory.

****COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:09 PM****

****COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:09PM****

Council member Burns asked what would be the time frame for the use of the money.

Mr. Schrodeder replied they will first structure the rebate and hire administrators, advertise the program, they will be spending \$80,000 dollars to create bike shelters. They will be purchasing 200 adult e-bikes, 100 electric tricycles, and 100 cargo bikes.

Council member Burns asked about the fire hazard due to the batteries while charging.

Mr. Schrodeder replied they will be including a fire safe bag that allows you to charge the battery which totals \$2,400 dollars.

Council member Valle asked if this would be available to outside residents of Bridgeport and if they will be using a lottery system.

Mr. Schrodeder replied this would be just for Bridgeport residents, during the beginning stages they will figure out the feasibility and how to prioritize those who lack access to cars.

Council member Martinez shared this would be similar to the project the city of New Haven did where they over extended themselves and ran out of funds. Her daughter was on the approval list to receive one and noticed many out of towners were selected. She asked who would be selling the bikes.

Mr. Schrodeder replied they can use the city IDs, working with the senior centers, and council representatives.

Council member Lyons asked in regards to the tricycles, where would they be designated to operate as many areas don't have sidewalks.

Mr. Schroeder replied this would be a compliment to the complete streets initiative. He agreed they do need more designated bike lanes within the city but great locations to ride would be Seaside, Beardsley park, and other trails within the city. This will get the city to fix more of the infrastructure issues due to the increase of bike traffic.

Council member Burns asked if they would be getting the full grant funds or partial.

Mr. Schroeder replied they needed to coordinate with regional, statewide, and other local jurisdictions to make sure they didn't send duplicates of the application so they went with mobility as no one was applying for those funds.

Council member Burns asked if they would be working with Bridgevolt at all since they convert pedal bikes to electrical.

Mr. Schroeder replied they will be supporting the program with \$80,000 as they can support city based initiatives related to mobility. They will also host repair seminars, work with schools, and provide free tool kits.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 109-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

110-23 Grant Submission: re CT Department of Energy Communities Sparking Investment in Transformative Energy (C-SITE) - Clean Energy Training Academy (#25454). **(Note: Items #109-23, 110-23 can be found on the City of Bridgeport's Website: Boards & Commissions; City Council; Meeting Minutes, Agendas & Notices; 2023-2024 Full/Agenda Package; 2024-07-01.pdf)**

Mr. Katz explained the grant was a collaboration with the Workplace to provide certificate training for 270 students for jobs within clean energy. The grant would require a 5% match that has been met by private funds from the Workplace and Bridgeport Regional Business Council. After the 5% match of \$166,788 dollars the grant received would be \$333,757,000. Due to this grant only accepting government applications, the city would be sub granting the money to the Workplace.

Mr. Schroeder added the Workplace and the Bridgeport Regional Energy Partnership brought the grant request to the office of sustainability. Their goal is to train, certify, and create jobs for the residents of Bridgeport.

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT THE BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL ENERGY PARTNERSHIP (BREP) PRESENTATION AS 07-17-2024-A.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Farror-Houel explained the presentation shares their purpose, accomplishments, and what's to come. They currently have 85 members from across Bridgeport including the Workplace and Alliance. They have three committees that include energy efficiency, clean energy planning and development, and manufacturing and energy workforce. They will also have a community benefit agreement for all companies that would like to contribute. They have been working on this initiative since 2022, they plan to use the location of 1010 Atlantic Street for laboratories.

Council member Cruz loves the idea, he gave Ms. Farror-Houel credit for the current work she is doing. He stated the clean energy initiative is great and appreciates the community involvement. He believes they should continue with engaging in the surrounding residents.

Ms. Farror-Houel replied there is a committee for locals to learn about the projects.

Council member Burns added this is a competitive grant and has been involved with the NLC and networking to create a presence. He added the application required a lot of planning as they are creating jobs for an industry that does not exist in the city yet.

Ms. Farror-Houel added United Illuminating is looking at the possibility of a wind site in the south end or near the docks. They have reached out to her organization to provide the community involved.

Council member Martinez made concerns with the list of members due only city council members, city employees, and private business being included. She didn't see any recruitment for the community to be involved, specifically those who live in Bridgeport.

Council member Burns replied many of the members are affiliated to Bridgeport and residents of the city.

Council member Martinez said she would have preferred to see the bulk of the members be residents of Bridgeport, not businesses.

Council member Burns added there were many programs in the city to engage the community and a good number of residents included from Bridgeport.

Council member Valle said she has much respect to Ms. Farror-Houel but when it comes to the list of members, many of them are engaged in the community but do not live in the city. They must engage more with the residents of Bridgeport.

Council member Cruz asked when the deadline for the grant.

Mr. Katz replied the seaside grant was submitted, the resolution is to accept the grant funds if approved.

Council member Cruz said he is satisfied with the list and understands the concerns of residents being involved. He asked to continue the outreach and believes this is something they need.

Council member Spell asked why there aren't more churches, homeowners, residents and the schools of the area not members or endorsing the program.

Council member Burns added if they focus on the application it would be almost \$3.5 million dollars to create a training academy and new industry to establish in the city.

Council member Spell shared that over the years the city hasn't been really transparent, having the community fully supporting the idea is what drives the success. Most of the time residents don't know what's going on and suggest a town hall meeting.

Mr. Schroeder added the list of members does not reflect the engagement between the community, and is separate from the application.

Council member Lyons said what could help is setting up a community meeting in regards to the job training, who is qualified for the program, and ask all the members to attend to explain their involvement.

Council member Cruz shared he is in approval of the project but there is an ongoing issue with the city not notifying council members of what is going to be presented or what is going on in their district. He would make sure the community is involved.

Council member Martinez said she reached out to council member Castillo and he stated he has not been attending meetings, if he knew of the meetings he would have joined the meeting tonight.

****COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 110-23.**

No second was made.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 110-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (BURNS, CRUZ, AND LYONS) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (MARTINEZ).**

ADJOURNMENT

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO ADJOURN AT 7:07PM.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECOND THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vianca Rivera

Telesco Secretarial Service