

Hewitt E&E Meeting 1

December 6, 2021

Present: Alex Weego, Jim Walker, Erica Bjelland, Brendan Lee-Gilligan, BJ Allen

Meeting started around 7:15pm, as we were waiting for others to join.

We discussed how we will be conducting Energy & Environment Planning with the City of Hewitt. Introduced funding for projects and level of funding available. Projects must be completed by June 30, 2022.

Everybody introduced themselves. Erica is a Planner at Region Five. Brendan is a GreenCorps member at Region Five, he just recently started. BJ owns JBJ World, working on E&E Planning with Region Five.

Jim has lived in Hewitt for many years. He is interested in the river. Wing River doesn't seem to have fish, and nobody fishing anymore, used to be lots of people fishing, spearing when the suckers ran. Over 45 years there has been quite a change, sometimes the river completely dries up now. There used to be spots for fish to hide in when water levels got low, but now the fish would just die. MN Gov't. entities don't seem interested in small rivers, focusing their efforts on the larger rivers. Impact to town.

Jim is interested in another potential project: Wayside rest bathroom at the local park right on the river, right off Hwy 71. It's an outhouse and would like to have hooked up to city sewer and water. Doesn't get used as much because the bathroom isn't well cared for.

Alex has been on the City Council for a number of years, very interested in energy. City Hall has solar electricity. Converted other buildings from electricity to natural gas. Couple projects interested in, a company had a plan to install wind gennies, 24 on each ridge. Only one has been built. Jim indicated that the environmental review has lapsed on the project, so it would have to start from scratch at this point.

Alex is also interested in Solar lights for the ball field. There aren't any lights on it right now. It gets used quite a bit and could get used even more if lights were added.

Alex also expressed an interest in heating for the Museum, it's the old school. Old water radiator pump system. Cost is astronomical to get it up and running. Beautiful museum, 2 floors, just goes from heat to freezing cold. There's a room that's been set up for a community library. The community center is in the old gymnasium. Roof of the community center. Don't know if the building could structurally support solar installed on the roof. Lions also have built another attached structure.

We reviewed the survey line by line and some excellent changes were made. The survey will be available online from December 15, 2021 through January 15, 2022 via QR code or weblink: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Hewitt_EE or <https://www.regionfive.org/hewitt>



Alex and Jim did not feel that prizes would increase the number of people completing the survey. We will work to collect 50 surveys.

Alex said he will work on getting more people out for the next meeting. Two folks didn't show this evening due to conflicts.

There will be three future meetings: Mondays, 6-7:30pm, January 24, 2022, February 28, 2022, March 28, 2022.

Meeting adjourned around 8:35pm.

Additional details regarding the City and surrounds:

100-year flood plain, removed from the list at least ~15 years ago

Re: wind gennies. MN Power has pulled out because they would have to build new lines. The wind genny hasn't been running for a long time. Wadena Co-op buys the power. See if it could run Bertha-Hewitt. The construction wind company was German: Nordex.

City compost: They dump limbs etc., out at the old dump, natural refuse only. No food waste.

They planted thousands of acres of hybrid poplar trees, these are going out, being taken out. They use them for paper, and for pallets. Lots of boondoggles.

They just re-finished the interior of the water tower. \$50k to re-paint. Needed resurfacing too. Every 20-30 years. Took about a month. Had a pumper truck onsite.

Pond Sewer system works well.

They have an agreement with MN Power that they should replace the streetlights with LED when they go out but it can take a really long time to get lights replaced.

Took a couple of outbuildings in wastewater, replaced electric heating with gas and save money.

They have automatic power back-up for water and sewer.

Pickle days is Hewitt's summer celebration.