

Citizens for Clean Energy, Inc. (CCE)

www.ccemontana.org

Minutes for November 15, 2023 Meeting

Location: Great Falls Zoom and in-person CCE meeting at the Black Bear Diner, 1400 Market Place Drive, Great Falls, MT 59404 (no-host dinner at 6 p.m. in restaurant meeting room).

Welcome: Rich Liebert, CCE Chair, was on Zoom and David Saslav, CCE Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting since Rich was having problems hearing everyone. David called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Thirteen total CCE members attended the in-person and Zoom meeting (12 in-person and 1 Zoom); a quorum was present. Four guests were present including guest speaker, Brock Cherry, Great Falls City Planning and Community Development Director, Jeff and Sharon Patton-Griffin and Jesse Therien, Yellowstone-Teton Clean Cities. Thank you, David, for setting up the Zoom meeting.

David asked everyone to highlight in a couple sentences what they had done to make their footprint on the planet lighter. Some of the actions taken by members were as follows: Purchased hybrid or electric vehicles, installed solar panels, bought heat pump washer/dryer combination from Eklunds' Appliance, installed wind generators, carefully used electricity/gas/utilities, changed driving patterns to reduce gas consumption, planted trees to cool house, refused plastic bags at stores, super-insulated house, and continued to recycle as much as possible.

David introduced Brock Cherry, Great Falls City Planning and Community Development Director. Brock said he is very lucky to have a job where he can interact with so many fascinating people. He grew up in Idaho and has a degree in Bio-regional Planning and Community Design. Brock explained Bio-regionalism involves social aspects, environmental aspects, sustainability, economics, and how these moving pieces interact. Brock said David asked him to discuss the City's Growth Policy. Brock said initially growth policies were a 20-to-30-year long-range plan to primarily guide land use and later included population growth, educational facilities, work force, and the environment. Some of the highlights of the discussion follows: the current growth policy was written in 2013; the City needs to get more specific in setting goals that can be measured to see if the goal is achieved; invited everyone to read the City's growth policy – a link can be found at <https://greatfallsmt.net/planning/city-great-falls-montana-2023-growth-policy-rfp> or search online for Great Falls Growth Policy; this is the people's plan and a document that serves to help the City evolve in a planned direction; \$300,000 has been allocated to find professional help in updating the growth policy; public engagement is very important to make the growth policy the people's plan; a steering committee will help to provide input to the growth policy; elected officials will resolve any conflict; hopefully, people from polarized groups can learn to like and respect each other; treat others well even when they treat you poorly; civility is needed; future land use consideration is critical so public has an idea how the area they live in might change; single family dwellings eat up open space faster than anything else and are unsustainable economically; the RFP is not finalized because the School District may wish to get involved financially; steering committee needs to be a manageable size and include GFDA, Chamber of Commerce, County, agricultural community, school district, environmental groups, City staff, City Commission, etc.; Brock's staff works well with County staff but there probably won't be a joint planning/zoning group again; ideally have an urban growth interface plan to let the City inform the County where it seems like the City will grow; what is Great Fall's identity? - the usual answer is not to be either Billings, Bozeman, or Missoula; Great Falls is the last sizeable, affordable place in Montana; while people are grateful Great Falls is the best kept secret in MT sometimes GF misses out on programs/tours that the other cities see; Brock suggested people check out <https://www.strongtowns.org/> to see a practical way for cities to grow that does not include unbridled growth; Great Falls lacks EV charging stations; Brock said EV charging station growth needs to involve the fire marshal and the fire chief due to different fire-fighting techniques needed for electrical fires; and as either a large town or a small city, Great Falls has many cultural amenities and a very robust group of volunteers. The group thanked Brock for his presentation.

Kathy Gessaman moved to pay for Brock Cherry's dinner; Shannon Wilson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

CCE Website/Communications: Please visit the active CCE, Inc. website for the latest updates on CCE activities at <https://www.ccemontana.org/>. The original CCE website address continues to be used as a historical archive along with current LENR info at <http://www.cce-mt.org/>. Send articles of general interest and notices about CCE activity to Kathy G. at cce.secretary@gmail.com. Please check out the new website to view links to current events.

CCE Facebook: Shannon Wilson is the administrator of CCE’s Facebook site, and David is a co-administrator. Visit the site at <https://www.facebook.com/Great-Falls-Citizens-for-Clean-Energy-CCE-110217491438621/>. If you get a chance, please send photos of energy efficient appliances, solar installations, wind turbines, or other energy conservation or alternative energy ideas/projects you may see around the city or state to David or Shannon to post on the CCE Facebook page.

The next CCE, Inc. meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7 p.m. with a Zoom connection for remote attendees.

[Unfortunately, the Black Bear Diner has closed and no alternative restaurant could be found at this time.]

Watch your email for Zoom meeting instructions. Please email agenda items to Rich L. at wwranch@3rivers.net.

David adjourned the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Please check your email, CCE website, and/or Facebook Page for additions or updates.

- City and County Commission Meetings at: greatfallsmt.net; cascadecountymt.gov
- 21 Nov – City Commission meeting
- 9 Jan – CCE possible in-person and Zoom meeting at 7 p.m. No-host dinner TBA

“Success is the residue of planning.” Benjamin Franklin