



Request for City Council Committee Action From the City Attorney's Office

Date: December 20, 2005
To: Rules Committee
Referral to:

Subject: Proposed Amendment to City Council Rule 11

Recommendation: The Rules Committee recommends that the City Council expand the responsibilities of the Health and Human Services Committee to include energy and environment by amending City Council Rule 11 as set forth in Attachment "A".

Previous Directives: None

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Approved by: _____
Jay M. Heffern
City Attorney

Presenters in Committee: Caro Smith, Intergovernmental Relations Intern
Jay M. Heffern, City Attorney

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- Other financial impact (Explain):
- Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background

It is proposed that the responsibilities of the Health and Human Services Committee be expanded to include oversight of City policies and programs relating to energy and the environment. Such a change is consistent with the health focus of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Factors such as air quality, safe housing, water quality, noise, and toxins in the air, water and soil all have an impact on health. Most air pollution and many airborne toxins result directly from the use of fossil fuels. Physical environmental factors negatively impacting health are

often found in higher concentrations in communities experiencing health disparities. Adding oversight of energy and the environment to the existing responsibilities of the Health and Human Services Committee is a natural extension of that Committee's goals and ensures that energy and environmental policies and programs receive proper attention.

All energy prices are rising and will likely continue to rise for the foreseeable future. At the same time many homes and businesses are not energy efficient, meaning people have to pay for even more energy. Most of this energy use comes from non-renewable resources, which contribute to global warming and create air and water pollution. Eventually these sources of energy will run out. Now is the time for cities across the country to be giving attention to these issues, making decisions and finding solutions for these critical problems. In order to give these questions proper attention, Minneapolis needs a standing council committee. Minneapolis has developed a number of plans and programs designed to address energy, sustainability and environmental issues, but since there is no centralized place in the council structure to develop the ideas and ensure their implementation, they have not been making the progress they should. Some of these include:

- Proposed Sustainability Targets for Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Renewable Energy
- The Daegu Declaration
- The U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement
- Minneapolis Environmental Report: Towards Sustainability (July 16, 2004)
- The Minneapolis Energy Plan (adopted by City Council, May 10, 1996)
- Minneapolis-Saint Paul Urban CO₂ Project Plan (adopted by City Council, December 17, 1993)

A standing committee overseeing issues related to energy and the environment is not unprecedented. The City Council had an Energy and Environment Committee from 1977-1983. In 1983, the Committee was changed to the Energy and Technology Committee and continued until 1988. During these years, the committees considered a variety of issues including:

- coordinating energy and environmental components of the comprehensive plan
- developing an energy action plan for the city
- suggesting and reviewing energy related legislation
- reviewing utility franchise fee negotiations
- reviewing energy plans for city buildings and operations
- developing a lawn chemical ordinance
- developing innovating recycling plans
- studying the expansion of the downtown district heating system
- developing and implementing new utility funded conservation programs
- developing a solar access ordinance
- reviewing and commenting on plans for resources recovery facilities (garbage burners)
- implementing programs to provide guaranteed quality insulation work at fair prices
- developing programs to provide education, energy audits, and free materials to households
- developing financing programs to help residents pay energy bills

A number of other cities have established committees to oversee issues relating to energy and the environment. Seattle has an Energy and Environmental Policy Committee. Its duties are to deliberate and make recommendations on legislative matters relating to Seattle City Light and the City's energy and environmental policies, stewardship, conservation programs and initiatives. Seattle also has an Office of Sustainability and Environment. Its goal is to collaborate with City agencies, business groups, nonprofit organizations and other partners to protect and enhance Seattle's environmental quality and livability. It produces the "Green

Seattle Guide” which suggests numerous ways citizens can improve their environment and reduce energy costs. It also explains and promotes various projects such as the Pesticide Reduction Program and details its efforts to protect the climate. Seattle is listed in the “High Performing Cities: A Guide to Energy Saving Policies for Urban Areas” for its work with green building standards – ensuring city-funded projects are efficient and environmentally friendly.

Chicago has established both a City Council Committee on Energy, Environmental Protection and Public Utilities and a Department of Environment. Chicago has focused its programs at helping residents winterize their homes to save on heating costs, designing a “Green Building” program to help build and renovate homes to meet energy efficiency standards, and providing \$5000 grants to residents to design and install “Green Roof”. Chicago is listed in the “High Performing Cities: A Guide to Energy Saving Policies for Urban Areas” for partnering with 48 surrounding municipalities to purchase green power. The first phase of the project has cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly and saved energy.

Portland has established an Office of Sustainable Development and a Bureau of Environmental Services. The Office of Sustainable Development has several divisions including Energy, Solid Waste and Recycling, Green Building, and Sustainable Technologies and Practices. Portland is listed in the “High Performing Cities: A Guide to Energy Saving Policies for Urban Areas” for its Smart Growth Policy, a long-term plan for efficient land use, a balanced transportation system, a healthy economy and diverse housing options. Portland has cut City government’s energy bills by nearly \$2 million per year, and has helped weatherize 20,000 apartments and 2, 000 low-income homes in the past ten years.

The Proposed Amendment

If the City Council wishes to establish a standing committee on energy and the environment, it is necessary to amend City Council Rule 11. That rule establishes the City Council’s standing committees, the number of members for each committee, and each committee’s quorum requirement. Attachment “A” proposes to amend City Council Rule 11 to expand the responsibilities of the existing Health and Human Services Committee rather than create a new standing committee on Energy and the Environment. Expanding the responsibilities of the Health and Human Services Committee recognizes the connections and interactions between individual and community health, sustainable energy use and a healthy environment.

Rule 11. Standing Committees

A. Standing committees are established as follows and consist of the numbers of appointed members as indicated. Members shall be appointed by majority vote of the council and shall be changed from time to time by a majority vote of the council. Except as otherwise indicated, a majority of the members of a committee shall constitute a quorum. In no case shall a council member serve simultaneously on the Community Development and Ways & Means/Budget committees.

Members Quorum

5	3	Claims
6	4	Community Development
13	7	Elections
6	4	Health and Human Services , <u>Energy and Environment</u>
6	4	Intergovernmental Relations
6	4	Public Safety and Regulatory Services
13	7	Rules
13	7	Taxes
6	4	Transportation and Public Works
6	4	Ways and Means/Budget
6	4	Zoning and Planning

B. When the committee on taxes is serving as the board of equalization to consider applications for adjustment of assessed valuation of property, the chair may designate members of the committee to act as a hearing panel to obtain evidence and make recommendations to the entire committee which shall review the evidence and recommendations for purpose of submitting its report as the board of equalization.

C. Temporary appointments to fill vacancies on committees, including chairs, may from time to time be made by the president pending action by the council.

D. When a license or license application has been referred to the committee on Public Safety and Regulatory Services for action requiring an evidentiary hearing, the chair of the committee may designate three (3) members of the committee to act as a hearing panel, and may appoint one of the members so designated to act as chair of the hearing panel. The hearing panel shall conduct a hearing, obtain evidence, and make a report and recommendation directly to the full council.