

President's Commission on sustainability meeting on April 13, 2023

Present: Chair Kovacs, Commissioners: Mary Jane Fallot, Chris Grant, Kate Greenwald, Kasim Korkmaz, Kevin Kucera, Emily McKinnie, Dieter Otto, Ronald Rich, Beth Smith, Mike Valdes, Aurelia Wade, Anke Wolbert, Luke Yates, Guests: Alistair Halton (for Chris Finch), Sam Paul (dining), Jim Riley (Centrio), Meghan Riesterer (Centrio), Leslie Fangman (Centrio), John Givens (Centrio), Darrel Tremaine (Centrio), Anthony Sikora (R-J)

1. Approval of meeting minutes 12-0-0 Commissioner Korkmaz not present for this vote

2. Reports:

- Commission chair report

- 1) Fundraising through crowdfunding platform Scalefunder

The fundraising campaign for electrifying our grounds maintenance as part of our plan to become carbon neutral and combat climate change is live, but not going well. One person has contributed. The campaign suffers from poor marketing.

- 2) Introduction of resolution SC-1-2023 regarding the Centrio Energy Partnership

- Academic report (Ron Rich chair) Working on student-led sustainability flyers, 3 of which were presented. Discussion included using them during SOAR and Flying Home and potentially the staff orientation. Commissioner Kucera also mentioned using them in a booklet that is distributed to prospective students.

- Engagement report (Mary Jane Fallot chair)

Working with HR and Chris Dotson to get some items for the employee orientation and a small paragraph for the upcoming newsletter because it focused on environmental items.

- Operations report (Mike Valdes chair) Testing vehicles for fleet electrification related to Enterprise, which can also help track vehicle utilization to help with EV needs. Checking state, federal, and our utility for rebates. A few comments were provided regarding resolution SC-1-2023 First, regarding transparency and reporting to appropriate input and feedback bodies, the university president met with UBC on three occasions, and the CFO (Commissioner Valdes) met with faculty senate, the provost, student government, leadership and executive councils, associated trades, human resources, two meetings with a subset of the sustainability commission. Second, EMU would benefit from IRA rebates through the partnership. Third, the statement about maintaining control of the physical plant should instead state, "that the university retains approval authority over physical plant operations". Finally, related to the resolution on STARS Gold certification, this is not possible to guarantee because some activities may require other approvals out of Centrio's control. This resolution paragraph would need to be altered to include something like "helping EMU achieve STARS Gold certification in a reasonable period of time, estimated to be approximately 10 years".

- Planning and Administration report (Kevin Kucera chair)

Nothing to report. Commission Chair noted that this was Commissioner Kucera's last meeting due to retirement after 42 years at EMU. The Chair thanked Commissioner Kucera for his invaluable service to the sustainability commission.

4. Old Business

1) EMU Energy production, distribution, and consumption management- Centrio Energy John Givens lead presenter, Megan Riesterer – higher education, Darrell – engineering and higher ed, Jim Riley– engineering and higher ed, Leslie Fangman – development and community relations.

John – Partnership allows an investment in sustainability and operations. The obligation of Centrio is to develop the upcoming technology on EMU's behalf. For example, Leslie previously worked with extracting heat from sewer water. Look for ideas to create a more sustainably efficient campus. The partnership provides EMU \$115 million in upfront capital. \$25 million leads to the retirement of debt and an annual savings of \$1 million. The other \$90 million will reside in a strategic initiatives fund leading to an estimated investment return of \$5 million. There will also be an immediate infrastructure improvement project by Centrio Energy valued at \$25 million that leads to an estimated annual savings of \$1 million. There will also be \$26 million spent on Energy Conservation Measures (ECM), which includes smart metering and better energy management, building automation, and HVAC optimization, building HVAC improvements, LED fixture installations, and water conservation fixture replacements. These are expected to lead to an overall 17.5% reduction in energy use and 40% reduction in water use. Centrio confirmed that the infrastructure improvement and ECM program is paid by Centrio and leads to the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of the 17.5% Energy Use Intensity (EUI) reduction and forms the basis for the annual \$5.3 million payment by EMU. Once the partnership is approved, Centrio will be obligated and will be held to certain Key performance indicators (KPIs). Examples include the availability of systems that are held to current standards and EUI targets (17.5% previously mentioned). Future infrastructure projects mentioned include centralizing the chilled loop, which can achieve better efficiency leading to cost avoidance, conversion of steam to hot water, and other CAPEX Projects developed "at risk" by CenTrio in full collaboration with the University that address lifecycle, expansion, modernization and sustainability. All these projects require approval by the university and an Energy Advisory Committee (EAC) consisting of faculty, students, and administrators will serve as an internal review board that supplies feedback and guidance on rolling 5 year plans to senior leadership. Also, an education component including energy and water use dashboards, university as a living laboratory, student competitions, and student internships all which helps lead EMU to improve their STARS certification toward a Gold Certification.

Commission chair asked specifically how Centrio profits from this partnership and it is in these additional efficiency savings that Centrio profits beyond the annual university payment.

2) Discussion of resolution SC-1-2023 regarding the utility partnership

An Energy Advisory Committee (EAC) would be formed, and would include faculty, to serve as an advisory committee on project scope. These additional efficiency projects would be in Centrio's and EMU's best interest because of the cost savings and emissions reductions. The sustainability commission recommended that we provide a member to the EAC in our resolution. KPIs also include minimum performance standards of all facilities and all employees have the option to remain EMU employees. We also recommended that EMU retains approval authority over all plant operations.

With time for the meeting running short a motion was made to electronically vote on resolution SC-1-2023 by Monday April 17, 2023 after incorporation of all recommendations mentioned during the meeting. The motion included the following timeline: Commissioner Kovacs would provide a copy of the resolution after many of the recommendations were in place by Friday April 14 2023 and Commissioner Valdes asked to work on the physical plant resolved paragraph on Saturday April 15, 2023

Motion approved 13-0-0

5. New Business

Commissioners Smith and Wade presented on Chartwells composting efforts- At the end of the 2022 calendar year, a pilot project was established to compost all green scraps (i.e. veggies, fruits, breads, grains, coffee grounds, etc. from Eastern Eateries in collaboration with a composting facility run by Woodland meadows in Wayne County. In 7 weeks we composted over 1000 lbs, which was 40% of total waste. The composting facility closed for the winter and Chartwells decided to partner with My Green Michigan in Wixom. In March the program was expanded to include Eastern Eateries, commons, and student center. During the Winter semester (as of April 13) 1.8 tons was composted (53% of total waste). Also, 1500 lbs of wasted food was donated in the winter semester (as of April 13) through the Food Recovery Network and Swoops Pantry. During March and April 2 table events at the commons showed students the amount of food wasted. The second event showed less waste demonstrating the potential that the waste audits help reduce waste. Going forward in the Fall semester kitchen staff composting training, partnership with orientation, SOAR, and ENVI courses, and expansion to Chick-Fil-A, Children's Institute, and Crossroads Online. Beyond that, compost and donations become main options for the waste and composting program extended to the Convocation center with a zero waste catering initiative.

Commissioners suggested that signage during SOAR this summer where food is served can help with engagement to new students.

Motion to adjourn 5:20 PM

Appendix: Resolution SC-1-2023

Resolution SC-1-2023 addresses the president's commission on sustainability's recommendations regarding the utility partnership with Centrio Energy. This resolution states:

WHEREAS, the Sustainability Commission has adopted the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System \(STARS\)](#) as the framework for fostering sustainability defined by our working definition of sustainability found on our website (www.emich.edu/sustainability); and

WHEREAS, our definition of sustainability includes, "promoting ecologically sensitive economic development"; and

WHEREAS, Centrio Energy has presented written emission reductions through efficiency improvements in the university's fossil fuel burning energy production systems; and

WHEREAS, the partnership with Centrio Energy involves an approximately \$120 million upfront payment to EMU; and

WHEREAS, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the annual payment of approximately \$5.3 million to Centrio Energy are largely determined by efficiency improvements to fossil-fuel burning systems;

BE IT RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office that considered partnership agreements with Centrio Energy be made transparent to all input bodies and appropriate commissions, councils, offices, and associated trades in the university community; and that the president's office seek input from input bodies and feedback from appropriate commissions, councils, offices, and associated trades in the university community to said agreements; and that the conditions of any signed partnership agreement with Centrio Energy be made available to the university community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office that it provides all details of the final agreement to the University Budget Council (UBC) and allows the UBC reasonable time to consider all financial risks of the partnership, including, but not limited to the risks regarding the approximately \$5.3 million annual payment to Centrio Energy, and the risk that the cash flow generated by the upfront payment to EMU may be insufficient to meet the financial obligations of the agreement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office that it ensures that any agreement with Centrio Energy in no way harms the ability of the university to benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act nor any future incentive programs to reduce emissions nor harms the university's ability to pursue additional emissions reductions whether that harm comes directly through the partnership agreement or through a conflict with partnership performance KPIs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office to continue to pursue reductions in emissions and sourcing of renewable energy outside any partnership with Centrio Energy, including, but not limited to, use of the U.S. federal Inflation Reduction Act that might lead to considerable savings through direct rebates on purchases of renewable energy and additional renewable energy and carbon emission reduction investments consistent with the MI Healthy Climate Plan supported by the State of Michigan executive and legislative branches.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office that it ensures that the university retains approval authority over university physical plant operations including facilities, planning, maintenance, construction, custodian, motor, and grounds services and that all employees that support such operations maintain employment with EMU if they so choose.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office that any agreement with Centrio Energy includes KPIs that lead to the development of projects that best achieve net zero emission by 2050 and that agreement in no way harms the retirement of our cogeneration and other fossil fuel burning energy sources at end-of-life or harms our ability to achieve net zero energy by 2050.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That the president's commission on sustainability recommends to the president's office that the partnership agreement with Centrio Energy includes a requirement that at least one member of the sustainability commission, appointed by the sustainability commission chair, serve on the Energy Advisory Committee, and and that Centrio Energy provide expert consulting services to the sustainability commission, and that Centrio Energy commit to helping EMU achieve STARS Gold certification in a reasonable period of time, estimated to be approximately 10 years, and that Centrio commit to helping EMU collect all emission, and energy and water consumption data needed to complete the STARS reports every three years.