

5.03: Update on Water Efficiency Grant Program

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He provided an update on the grant program which began in May of 2020 noting that to date, 39 households have participated in the program with the majority of upgrades focusing on smart irrigation controllers. There is still approximately \$21,000 available for reimbursement through June of 2022. He noted that per the grant agreement, the City had to contribute 25 percent which is being provided through the City's Water Fund account and the remainder of the program is reimbursed through the Metropolitan Council.

Chairperson Valentine commented that it makes sense to go forward with something like this but would not want to see the funding dried up with a few large projects. He stated that perhaps some limits be developed for the bigger projects to ensure adequate funding for residential applicants.

Acting Chairperson Hiatt agreed. He recognized that associations have different funding sources and agreed that a subcategory could be created for those types of projects.

City Planner Anderson stated that also he did not delve into the specific details, he would still recommend a cap for commercial/multi-family projects to avoid the situation where one or two large projects use all the funding. He stated that there is a wide spectrum of what has been allowed by other municipalities using the funds from the Metropolitan Council.

Acting Chairperson Hiatt stated that perhaps an association could submit a proposed percentage for reimbursement with a not to exceed amount of perhaps \$2,500. He stated that would acknowledge the larger cost of those projects but still allow those funds to be used by as many residents as possible. He commented that he would want to see the program dollars used rather than return them to the Metropolitan Council at the end of the agreement period.

Board Member Little asked if the full purpose of this program was to save water or boost moral while increasing efficiency.

City Planner Anderson stated that the grant itself is meant to find ways to be more efficient with water use, therefore a resident must be a City water customer. He stated that ideally the hope would be that additional opportunities could be found to increase efficiency for those on private wells too, as everyone pulls from the same aquifer.

Board Member Little stated that if the purpose is for efficiency, it would make sense to provide that efficiency to the biggest users and therefore he would support opening this program to associations.

Board Member Fetterley asked and received confirmation that the funds must be expended by June 2022. She stated that it is great that people are reaching out about the program and this option should be considered. She suggested adding a limitation in the beginning for association reimbursement with the option to increase reimbursement if funds are still available towards the end of the program period, rather than returning unused funds to the Metropolitan Council.

Acting Chairperson Hiatt stated that he would agree with that flexibility.

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Board Member Little to recommend modifying the water efficiency rebate program to include a separate rebate for commercial/multi-family irrigation controller updates.

A roll call vote was performed:

Board Member Moore	aye
Acting Chairperson Hiatt	aye
Board Member Fetterley	aye
Board Member Little	aye
Board Member Covart	aye
Board Member Bernard	aye
Chairperson Valentine	aye

Motion carried.