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Ann Arbor comes to agreement with DTE over carbon neutrality programs

By Juliana Lumaj – April 22, 2021

ANN ARBOR, MI -- Ann Arbor is taking another major step towards achieving its goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.

On Monday, April 19, City Council unanimously approved an agreement with DTE over its Voluntary Green Pricing Program. Council also OK'd working with DTE to explore a potential landfill solar project.

In 2020, Ann Arbor intervened in Michigan Public Service Commission cases relating to DTE's pricing program and its renewable energy build plans for the upcoming five years because the city found the prices to be too high. The city also found DTE's projections of future renewable energy builds to be too low, and the offerings through the program to be too limited and missing strategic programmatic opportunities that customers are interested in procuring, the resolution stated.

The program is a part of [MiGreenPower](#), a DTE Energy program that allows customers to get 100% of their energy from wind and solar for a few extra cents per month per kilowatt hour.

The approved settlement agreement addresses all of the city's priorities within four objectives that concern lowering prices for residents, ensuring that supply of renewables can meet demand, offering programs that effectively lower carbon emissions, as well as offering a community solar plan.

The following are some of the approved criteria regarding the settlement:

- Eliminate differential treatment of residential customers versus larger users in the VGP program by eliminating the prior divisions between projects.
- Commit to explore strategies that will maximize tax credits even for projects built in later years, to keep prices down.
- Commit to increase a build plan to accommodate approximately 400 Megawatts for Ann Arbor.
- Committing DTE to meet and discuss suggested products such as Voluntary Power Reduction Agreements that would allow investments to reduce near-term carbon emissions by lowering demand.
- The settlement requires DTE to create a pilot program that allows "anchor tenants" to sponsor community solar projects, and any DTE customer (residential or business) gets the same deal as the anchor tenant does per kilowatt hour.
- Settlement includes the Ann Arbor landfill being such a program, which would allow Pittsfield Township (and others) to participate in a very simple way. Ann Arbor can decide how much of the project to open to others or reserve.

"In recent filings with the Michigan Public Service Commission, DTE and the City of Ann Arbor proposed working together on a potential landfill solar project," Cindy Hecht, DTE Spokesperson said. "As Michigan's leading producer of renewable energy, DTE looks forward to working with Ann Arbor on this project, pending its approval by the MPSC."

Ann Arbor sent a request to the Pittsfield Township Planning Commission in Feb. 2020, for approval of zoning changes that would allow for a potential \$50 million “solar farm” for the city-owned site off Ellsworth and Stone Schools roads.

“This project, known as the Ann Arbor Landfill Solar Project, is a roughly 24MW solar installation designed on the capped landfill,” a project background document states.

The site was chosen because it has high solar potential, is directly abutting power lines, has minimal disruption to surrounding neighbors and can significantly help Ann Arbor and Pittsfield Township achieve their goals of powering municipal operations with 100% clean and renewable energy, the project background document states.

The site plan has already been approved by the Pittsfield Planning Commission and the final agreements must now go through the Pittsfield Township Board of Trustees as well as Ann Arbor City Council for approval, Pittsfield Township Supervisor Mandy Grewal previously told MLive.

All documents relating to the settlement and the MOU will be available to the public, Missy Stults, Manager of Ann Arbor’s Office of Sustainability and Innovations said.

This landfill solar project is a part of OSI’s solar energy initiative as they attempt to install [11 megawatts](#) of community solar by 2030 to assist the city in achieving carbon neutrality, according to A2Zero’s written plan.

“Just a big congratulations to everyone who has been working on this, this is just huge. Kudos to everybody that’s been involved. What a great achievement, thank you,” Council Member Ali Ramlawi said.

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Washtenaw County law enforcement, leadership issue joint statement on conviction of Derek Chauvin

By Nathan Clark - April 21, 2021

WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI – Law enforcement and elected officials throughout Washtenaw County have issued a joint statement calling the conviction of Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd “a turning point for this country and Washtenaw County.”

“This verdict will not bring Mr. Floyd back to his family, but it does bring some form of accountability,” the joint statement issued Wednesday reads.

The statement, released April 21, was written on behalf of every law enforcement agency in Washtenaw County, as well as the Prosecutors Office, Public Defenders Office, each local municipality and U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Dearborn.

Chauvin was convicted Tuesday, April 20, in the May 25, 2020 death of George Floyd, whose neck he kneeled on for more than nine minutes, sparking the largest civil rights movement in decades.

A jury found Chauvin guilty of second-degree unintentional murder, punishable by up to 40 years in prison; third-degree murder, punishable by up to 25 years in prison; and second-degree manslaughter, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

“(The verdict) recognizes that no one is above the law, that police should serve and protect all of us, regardless of the color of our skin or our station in life,” the statement reads. “But, the murder of George Floyd, is not just an isolated incident. It is part of a pattern of racial injustice that permeates our society. Policing must do better. This country must do better.

“We must acknowledge the decades of racism and discrimination towards African Americans and other people of color in the name of justice. Now is the time for a thoughtful and courageous re-imagining of the policing profession and the larger criminal legal system.”

In July 2020, the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office announced the creation of the 21st Century Policing Compliance Initiative and Commission, the Police Reform Academy and a police hiring committee that will include non-police members in the hiring process.

There are currently 42 community members and 32 sheriff’s office staff members on the commission, police said.

“There must be no more George Floyds who die needlessly, or Derek Chauvins who violate the law, their sworn oath of office, their duty to protect, and the principles of fundamental decency,” the statement reads.

“We support the outcome of this case and hope it serves as a turning point. As we continue our work to make this county more just and equitable, we must not focus only on policing. We must work intentionally to change hearts, minds, culture, and institutional structures. This is a time to renew our commitment to racial justice throughout this country and here in Washtenaw County.”



Washtenaw County Media Release

Washtenaw County Government and Law Enforcement Leaders Join Sherriff Jerry L. Clayton and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell in Response to the George Floyd Murder Conviction of Derek Chauvin

4/20/2021

The verdict in the Derek Chauvin Case is in. He has been found guilty of murdering George Floyd. We believe that people of good will have been praying that justice would be done and hoping that this tragedy will be a turning point for this country and Washtenaw County.

This verdict will not bring Mr. Floyd back to his family, but it does bring some form of accountability. It recognizes that no one is above the law, that police should serve and protect all of us, regardless of the color of our skin or our station in life. But, the murder of George Floyd, is not just an isolated incident. It is part of a pattern of racial injustice that permeates our society. Policing must do better. This country must do better.

As part of the much-needed self-examination to move us forward to a more just society, we must be honest with ourselves and each other. We must acknowledge the decades of racism and discrimination towards African Americans and other people of color in the name of justice. Now is the time for a thoughtful and courageous re-imagining of the policing profession and the larger criminal legal system.

This does not mean that all police are bad or that the work police do is not honorable. Many police professionals in this county and nationwide are willing to sacrifice themselves for strangers, in order to keep others safe. However, it does mean that the communities and

people we serve must have a voice in how that service is provided. It means that all people are entitled to equal and respectful service and protection under the law. We must make the changes that are necessary in police service agencies so that respect for and recognition of the sanctity of all human life is their highest priority. No one should be afraid to interact with the police because the color of their skin.

Let us all come together to make sure that true systemic change happens. Policing must change. There must be no more George Floyds who die needlessly, or Derek Chauvins who violate the law, their sworn oath of office, their duty to protect, and the principles of fundamental decency. We support the outcome of this case and hope it serves as a turning point. As we continue our work to make this county more just and equitable, we must not focus only on policing. We must work intentionally to change hearts, minds, culture, and institutional structures. This is a time to renew our commitment to racial justice throughout this country and here in Washtenaw County.