Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He provided a SWLRT update.

1. **Community solar gardens**

Gary Swanson, Energy Management Solutions, gave the presentation.

Wagner asked what would happen if a site was chosen and the area around it developed degrading the production of the cells. Would the city’s rebate amount decrease? Swanson indicated it would. Provisions could be included in the agreements the developers have with the landowners to prohibit too much intrusion on to the property. He noted the contracts are for 25 years and over time the solar system would degrade. The recommendation was to work with the developer and even the land site to provide for annual inspections.

Wiersum asked what megawatt size made it sufficiently attractive for the bigger developers to participate. Swanson said from the information he had it seemed five megawatts was the low end of the scale. Wiersum asked how much risk there was if Xcel was able to delay the process enough so the tax credit expired. Swanson said if the city signed a contract in the near future the only risk would be the gardens not being built so no credit would be available. There would be no financial risk.

Allendorf said one risk that was previously mentioned was the city signing a contract with a vendor who does not perform as expected and then being locked out from signing with another vendor. Swanson said it would be important to include out provisions in the contract if the vendor was not performing. Another strategy for risk mitigation would be to sign contracts with multiple vendors.

Wagner noted that although there were not a lot of government entities signed up at this point there was a lot of corporate demand for the same spaces. Since there was not a lot of downside, he questioned why demand would not pick up quicker and quicker. Swanson agreed and said if the city waited too long it would never get to the 120 percent goal.
Barone indicated if the council would like to move forward the next step to begin negotiations with the three vendors.

Wiersum said this clearly was a situation where the early bird gets the worm. There was a risk of the savings not ever happening but there was no downside in pursuing the program.

Schneider asked what happened at the end of the 25 years. Swanson said the contract would end, and by that time there likely would be a newer technology available.

Bergstedt said the information presented was helpful. At the last meeting he felt pressured and a little unprepared. The information clarified the program for him.

2. Strategic profile progress report

Barone introduced the report.

Vetter provided an overview of the process for the profile.

King, Wagstrom, Gustafson, Wischnack, Sebenaler, and O'Dea reported on individual sections of the profile.

Wagner said that over the past four to five months he has had a number of people reach out to him about the number of garbage trucks that go through their neighborhoods. He brought up the topic because Hennepin County recently released its waste/recycling study. The study indicated that the county was going to provide incentives through grants to encourage more organics recycling. The city has a voluntary program but there were only two haulers doing organic recycling. He questioned what more the city could do to promote organic recycling. He said he spoke with County Commissioner Jan Callison who indicated that grants would be available based on the year the city began its program. The higher the participation rate, the more grant money would be available from the county.

Wagstrom said staff had discussed including a question in the community survey about hauling. The council could face a lot of concern from residents if the decision were to be made to go with one hauler in the city. Going with one hauler would be the best way for the city to get a handle on organic recycling.

Wagner said he thought there were other things that could be done. He said there were areas of the city that were particularly green oriented and thought a
lot about the natural environment. The city could focus the education efforts with the neighborhood associations in these areas. He said a little visibility could have an impact if it meant better rebates in the future.

Wiersum said the city should study the experiences of other cities that have gone to one hauler. He liked the idea of working with the neighborhood associations. The idea of voluntary participation versus big government appealed to him but at the same time reducing the number of trucks would protect the infrastructure.

Acomb said the idea of highlighting or targeting specific neighborhoods appealed to her. She suggested highlighting what some neighborhoods are doing in the Minnetonka Memo.

Bergstedt said long serving council members still have scars from years back when the idea was discussed. He said the council learned that residents value their haulers almost as much as they value their own kids. He said it would likely be more fruitful for the city to start with the neighborhood associations rather than trying to do it citywide.

Schneider said he struggled some with the whole concept of organic recycling. He has a number of friends who are avid organic recyclers. These people compost and use the fertilizer in their yards. He said he doubts that his household generates more than a grocery bag a month of organic material. The average resident was likely in a similar situation. Wagner said he would estimate two thirds of his household's garbage was organic. Wiersum said he has tried organic recycling but it really requires a big lifestyle change.

Heine provided information about a Supreme Court decision related to sign neutrality.

Barone presented the results from the community survey.

3. Adjournment

The study session adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Maeda
City Clerk