

APPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

Mayor Rowan called the special meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Sue Unterberger, Brenda Carlson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin, Marc Wirz

Others present: Jesper from Nature Energy

Purpose of the meeting was for a presentation by Nature Energy on its biogas plant.

Nature Energy is looking to expand in Meeker County. Jesper from Nature Energy noted that biogas, also known as Green Gas or Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) has the same characteristics as fossil natural gas. Organic waste from animal manure, food waste and other organics are collected and transported. The waste is reduced to biomass in a grinder. The biogas plant converts the carbons from waste to methane and CO<sub>2</sub>. The gas is transported to the nearest natural gas pipeline. The residual product is used as more efficient fertilizer in the fields with less smell. They have 14 plants in Denmark and France. They have an office building in St. Paul.

Nature Energy will start construction of a plant in Benson MN in 2023. They are looking to expand into Meeker County. They need 25 acres (minimum) to 40 acres. They would need power and water. Annual water usage for employee use would be about 132,000 gallons. This usage would go through the sewer system. They need another 9 million gallons annually for processing. This usage would go back to fields, not down the sewer. The water for processing doesn't need to be fresh or chemically treated. They could use treated wastewater for processing.

Nature Energy would sell the gas to a natural gas provider, i.e., CenterPoint Energy and pipe it to an existing pipeline. The gas can be used for anything that uses gas. Benson plans to use it mainly to feed their city.

Nature Energy would need the land and also some investment from farmers.

There would be no noise other than the trucks transporting material. There are no chemicals involved, only manure. The plant would operate Monday – Friday and 1/2 day on Saturdays. They don't operate on Sundays.

Council felt a public informational presentation would be a good idea to get the community's feedback on the plant.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer, Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan, Mayor