



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC WORKS

SHAWYN PATTERSON-HOWARD
Mayor

City Hall
One Roosevelt Square – Room 108
Mount Vernon, NY, 10550
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DAMANI L. BUSH
Commissioner
ROBERT L. HACKETT
Deputy Commissioner

September 23, 2024

Honorable City Council Members
Of the City of Mount Vernon
City Hall, Mount Vernon, New York
(Through the Office of the Mayor)

Re: Request Permission to Accept an Invitation from the Consulate General of Denmark to be a part of their District Energy Delegation and Travel to Copenhagen, Denmark.

Dear Honorable City Council Members:

I am writing to formally request your approval to accept an invitation extended by The Consulate General of Denmark to participate in their District Energy Delegation. This delegation will be traveling to Copenhagen, Denmark, from **October 26, 2024, to November 1, 2024**. I am honored to be invited to join this group and am pleased to inform you that the entire trip, including travel, lodging, and associated expenses, will be fully funded by The Consulate General of Denmark. **There will be no cost to the City of Mount Vernon.**

As the Director of Sustainability, I currently serve as the municipal lead on a UTEN (Utility Thermal Energy Network) project in partnership with Con Edison. This initiative is focused on reducing our city's carbon footprint by exploring energy-efficient solutions like thermal energy networks. The project aligns with the City's broader sustainability goals, particularly in relation to environmental justice and equitable access to green infrastructure.

Denmark is globally recognized as a pioneer in the development and deployment of district heating and thermal energy networks. Their systems are considered the most advanced, energy-efficient, and environmentally sustainable in the world. By traveling to Copenhagen and learning directly from their experts, I will gain first-hand knowledge of best practices and cutting-edge innovations that can be adapted and applied here in Mount Vernon.

Key Benefits of This Trip to the City of Mount Vernon:

- **Advancing the UTEN Project:** The UTEN project is in a critical phase, and understanding Denmark's thermal energy systems will provide actionable insights to ensure our own system's success. This experience will also enable me to bring back innovative solutions to accelerate the adoption of this technology, positioning Mount Vernon as a leader in sustainable energy.
- **Policy Development and Long-term Sustainability:** As part of my role, I am developing green policies to support new initiatives and create lasting benefits for our community. Denmark's progressive energy policies can serve as a model, allowing me to introduce policies that are both forward-thinking and sensitive to the needs of our disadvantaged communities.



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- **Equity and Environmental Justice:** Mount Vernon, as a historically disadvantaged community, faces significant challenges regarding equitable access to clean energy solutions. Denmark’s holistic approach to district energy, which emphasizes community involvement and equitable distribution of benefits, is directly applicable to our ongoing efforts to ensure that our sustainability initiatives reach and serve our most vulnerable populations.
- **Strengthening Partnerships and Securing Funding:** This delegation will also provide the opportunity to strengthen partnerships with international leaders in sustainability. The knowledge gained will not only enhance our current collaborations, such as with Con Edison and the Pace Energy and Climate Center, but also help attract additional funding and resources for Mount Vernon’s environmental health and energy efficiency projects.

In conclusion, this is a unique and invaluable opportunity for both myself as Director of Sustainability and for the City of Mount Vernon to gain global insights that can directly benefit our sustainability efforts. The fully funded nature of the trip makes it a cost-free investment in the future of our city’s environmental health and energy infrastructure.

I respectfully request the City Council's approval to accept this invitation from The Consulate General of Denmark. Your support will enable me to bring back vital knowledge and strategies that will further our efforts to make Mount Vernon a model for sustainability, equity, and environmental justice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shayne Brooks
Director of Sustainability
City of Mount Vernon, NY

Damani Bush
Commissioner of Public Works
City of Mount Vernon, NY

Cc: Mayor’s Office
Comptroller’s Office
Clerk’s Office