

Sustainability Commission Meeting August 12, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm by Chairperson Nadine Gomez.

Roll Call: Renee Ruchotzke, Nadine Gomez, Andrew Scholl, and Miriam Jackson

ABSENT: Judy Nelson

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Ms. Gomez made a motion to excuse Mrs. Nelson. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Ruchotzke and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of July 1, 2019:

Ms. Gomez made a motion to approve the minutes from July. The motion was seconded by Dr. Scholl and approved with a 3-0-1 vote. Mrs. Ruchotzke abstained.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Mr. Wicks and Ms. Susel are continuing to meet with Mr. Boateng to discuss the ICLEI Clearpath software. They are meeting on a bi-weekly basis. Mr. Wicks explained that ICLEI software recently updated the software. There was discussion that in future rounds of data gathering, having the business community on board would result to higher levels of participation. Ms. Gomez commented on the participation of the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce or Main Street Kent to establish buy-in and help organizations participate. Mrs. Ruchotzke asked if a report will be available from ICLEI? Mr. Wicks confirmed a report will be generated on a specific calendar year. Mr. Wicks agreed to look into methods of reaching out to the business community including a specific time of year to increase response and an online fillable form.

Farmers' Market Update- Ms. Gomez confirmed that Saturday, September 14th will be the next time to attend the farmers' market. Mrs. Ruchotzke presented her sustainable doll house to the commission. The doll house could be used to visually explain sustainable items and practices that residents could do such as acquire a rain barrel, install xeriscape, install solar panels, plant a fruit forest, etc. There was a consensus to create an activity where individuals can identify and write down the sustainable practices they see to try and guess them all. Other programming that will be shared at the table will be material related to the Green Energy Ohio (GEO) Tour scheduled for Saturday, September 28th. Ms. Gomez confirmed she is available to attend the market from 9-11am. Ms. Jackson confirmed she can attend from 11-1pm. Dr. Scholl was unsure on time and Mrs. Ruchotzke will be out of town. Mr. Wicks can follow up with Mrs. Nelson to check her availability.

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Informational Solar Energy Meeting- No update.

Single Use Plastic Public Awareness Campaign- Ms. Gomez reached out to Mrs. Malarcik with Main Street Kent to see about working on sustainable practices with downtown businesses and is waiting to hear back. Mrs. Ruchotzke spoke to Lynn Vogel with the Portage County Soil and Water Conservation District. Ms. Vogel confirmed she is hiring a new intern and that position will plan to connect with businesses in Portage County to teach sustainable practices. Ms. Gomez commented she has noticed more paper straws at local establishments. There was a consensus to think about ways to recognize local businesses for adopting sustainable practices. One idea was a Main Street Kent 'I am a Sustainable Champion' sticker.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- Mrs. Ruchotzke commented she is a member of the KEC and regularly attends the Friday morning breakfasts. With her new role as commission member and involvement with the KEC, Mrs. Ruchotzke requested to be made a representative liaison to the KEC on behalf of the Sustainability Commission. Ms. Gomez made a motion to make Mrs. Ruchotzke a representative liaison to the KEC on behalf of the Sustainability Commission. The motion was seconded by Dr. Scholl and was approved with a 3-0-1 vote. Mrs. Ruchotzke abstained.
Mrs. Ruchotzke confirmed KEC President Lis Regula has resigned and is moving to the Columbus area. The new KEC President is Bob Heath. As for upcoming programs, there will be more information on the Fall Forum during the next meeting.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Mrs. Ruchotzke provided an update on the GEO Tour event. Tour stops that have been identified include Iris Metzler's home, the KSU Fieldhouse, the Kent Police Station, etc. For the cruise-in, there will be an electric race car from the University of Akron. Mrs. Ruchotzke confirmed the next GEO Tour planning meeting is Tuesday, August 13th at 2pm.
- c. Haven of Portage County- No update.
- d. Family & Community Services (F&CS)- No update. Mrs. Ruchotzke is open to volunteering with F&CS and will speak with Mrs. Morris about future meeting times.

Tree City Bulletin- Discussion of ideas was held on the next article for the Winter 2019 Tree City Bulletin. Mr. Wicks commented on a previous idea from Ms. Jackson to highlight a list of inexpensive sustainable practices for Kent residents. Another idea was to highlight water quality preservation and the need to safeguard water sources used by Kent residents. The City of Kent Water Treatment Plant accesses well water from wells in Franklin Township. A complementary idea to focus on agricultural practices and the impact of chemical runoff from

pesticides and insecticides was discussed. Additionally, there was discussion of an article focusing on methods for homeowners to winterize their home during the colder months. There was a consensus to continue researching ideas and discuss at the September meeting.

2020 Environmental Film Series- Mrs. Ruchotzke presented on a format for the film series to include short films followed up by discussion. This format would require attendees to break into groups of 3-4, discuss the film, and then reconvene with the entire group and discuss their reflections and insights. Mrs. Ruchotzke also commented on a 'community conversation' series to encourage more discussion. A title of the series could be 'Coco and Conversations' with an organization donating food and beverages. Discussion will be continued.

NEW BUSINESS

Waste Stream Reform- Ms. Jackson discussed the current state of recycling and that it constitutes a regression in the industry. Ms. Jackson commented on the possibility to have a guest speaker from the Portage County Solid Waste Management District (PCSWMD) attend the next meeting to present on the current state of recycling in Portage County. Ms. Jackson also presented and shared two articles regarding the use of plastic and the need for reduction of plastic products nationwide and around the world. Dr. Scholl commented Kent State University is also dealing with changes to the recycling stream with fewer items being accepted by the university waste hauler, precipitating the need to re-label recycling bins. Ms. Jackson commented on her previous experiences working at a Native American reservation in New Mexico and lamented their use of Styrofoam products because it was less expensive than washing reusable dishware. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can contact PCSWMD to see if a representative would be available to attend the September meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Ruchotzke described and shared an article on sustainable messaging and the power of word selection in framing the impact of Climate Change.

Mr. Wicks presented on the Bicycle Friendly Community designation administered by the League of American Bicyclists. There is an initiative that has gained priority in light of the recent tragic death of Theodore Roosevelt High School teacher Dr. Mitch Lambert while riding his bike in nearby Rootstown. The Bicycle Friendly Community designation is something the City of Kent could apply for and comes with metrics and goals that need to be accomplished before receiving the lowest level 'bronze' designation. Ms. Gomez made a motion to add "Bicycle Friendly Community" to new business. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ruchotzke and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

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NEXT MEETING

September 9, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Ruchotzke made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and was approved with a 4-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.