

Sustainability Commission Meeting July 10, 2017

Meeting called to order at 5:40 pm by Chairperson Nadine Gomez

Roll Call: Rick Hawksley, Nadine Gomez, Judy Nelson, Julie Morris, and Ann Gilmore

ABSENT: None

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager
Suzanne Stemnock, Human Resources Manager
Bridget Susel, Community Development Director

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of June 5, 2017:

Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the summary reports from June with a name correction. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and was approved with a 3-0-2 vote with Mr. Hawksley and Mrs. Gilmore abstaining.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

Commission approved 5-0 to move the recycling update to the beginning of the Old Business discussion to accommodate the guest speaker Mr. Bill Wilk.

Recycling update - Mrs. Nelson commented that she saw coupled trash and recycling cans while traveling in Columbus and thought it was effective to keep both cans together to encourage people to recycle. Ms. Susel brought up the issue of contamination when trash and recycle bins are coupled together. Overall, there was a consensus that recycle bins need to be used downtown as well as for special events downtown. Mrs. Gilmore asked if the City could make recycling at city sanctioned special events mandatory? Mr. Wicks said he can review past minutes to see if there has been previous progress on this issue. Mrs. Gilmore also asked if recycling collection could be added to the trash collection completed by the current contracting service. Ms. Susel commented that the adding of services would increase costs in the Service Department budget. Ms. Susel confirmed she would ask Mrs. Baker for a cost estimate of adding recycling collection to current services. Mrs. Gilmore asked if the City could make it a requirement for fold out recycle boxes to be used at downtown special events in lieu of permanent cans? Ms. Susel confirmed she would ask Lori for the fold out recycling box cost.

Recycling Update Guest Speaker:

Mr. Bill Wilk from the organization Simple Recycling (hereafter 'SR') presented on his organization and how it could benefit the residents of Kent. SR is based in Solon, OH. Mr. Wilk presented the data point that the United States generates 25 billion pounds of clothing waste per year. Of that, 15% goes to second hand stores, charitable organizations, etc. This leaves 85% of

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all other clothing waste items to be sent to the landfill which averages out to 70 pounds of waste per person in the United States. SR is a curbside program in which cities can sign an agreement to have trucks pick up bags of clothing at the curb. The dates of these pickups coincide with the same day trash is picked up. SR has agreements with over 30 cities including Akron, OH and Cincinnati, OH. The City of Kent would be the first city in Portage County. A common question Mr. Wilk addresses is how much does it cost? Mr. Wilk confirmed it is a free service. Mr. Hawksley asked what was the impact on the secondhand stores/charities/etc? Mr. Wilk confirmed it is very little since 85% of clothing waste is going into the landfill. SR is only trying to acquire the clothing waste that would otherwise go into the landfill. Ms. Gomez had a question regarding SR's brochure that is sent to residents at the beginning of the program's implementation. Mr. Wilk commented that generally in the beginning of the program, the Mayor or other official would send out a letter of support to the public making them aware of the new program. Also orange bags will help residents differentiate between trash and clothing waste and are very easy for drivers to spot. Mrs. Morris asked is there is any capacity for SR to give clothing to social agencies and/or charitable organizations such as shelters? Mr. Wilk confirmed there is a history of sharing clothing (Ex. sharing with Value World in Cleveland). SR's main business model is that clothes are shipped overseas or sent to domestic companies such as car manufacturers that turn clothing waste into rags. Mr. Hawksley asked if the mailings that are sent to residents can be specific to the City? Mr. Wilk confirmed that mailings can be made custom to the City and can emphasize other clothing donation options. Mr. Wilk confirmed that mailings can be proofed by the City and will show local alternatives. SR offers a rebate for clothing waste collected at \$20/ton or \$0.01/pound to be given to the City. Mrs. Gilmore asked what happens to the plastic bags after use? Mr. Wilk confirmed he did not know but can look into it. Mr. Wilk confirmed bags are manufactured by a company called Waste Zero. Mr. Wilk commented that SR also takes household items such as pots and pans, small furniture, etc. Small furniture must be in reusable shape. Mr. Wilk also commented that all bags regardless of what is inside will be picked up by drivers even if the material is not acceptable. Mrs. Gilmore asked if SR does anything with universities? Mr. Wilk confirmed that SR has a program with Case Western and could envision something similar at Kent State University (KSU). Universities receive a larger rebate of \$0.07 or \$0.08/pound. Mrs. Stemnock mentioned that SR could work with KSU for a big event such as Earth Day or a cleanup. Mr. Wilk also commented that other one-time events are successful such as Richmond Heights' 'junk in the trunk' event. Mrs. Nelson asked how does SR work with apartments? Mr. Wilk confirmed that SR provides service to any place that also receives service from solid waste providers. The bags however must be able to be picked up by the curb. Mrs. Nelson asked if there were any problems with bed bugs? Mr. Wilk confirmed as of now there have been no cases. Items that are unacceptable are thrown away. Mr. Wilk commented that once an agreement is signed with a City it takes about 7 weeks to begin because of finishing mailing materials and disbursing bags. There are two main mailings. The first is a postcard alerting residents to the service and the second mailing includes the bags.

Mr. Hawksley made a motion to recommend SR to council for consideration, Mrs. Morris seconded; motion passed 5-0.

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Bag Share Project Update - Mrs. Gilmore dropped off fabric to the company Custom T-shirts, located on West Main Street in Kent, to make mock ups of tags that would be put on the bags in the bag share program. Mrs. Gilmore said she hasn't heard from them in a few months and thinks it is time to pick up the fabric to take to another store. Mrs. Gilmore confirmed the quote for the tags was over \$100, however the commission does not have a budget. Mrs. Gilmore commented that the commission needs tags to go with the bags so they are identifiable in the bag share program. Mr. Wicks confirmed he will look into previous minutes for what was said regarding the bag share program cost. Mrs. Gilmore will call Custom T-shirts to see about picking up the fabric. Mrs. Gilmore confirmed she has over 50 handmade/donated bags. Three organizations in Kent have verbally confirmed participating in the bag share program (One Love Yoga, Kent Natural Foods co-op, and Haymakers Farmers' Market). Signs could be placed at these locations asking people to donate bags as well. Mrs. Gilmore was curious about how to acquire the funding necessary to sustain the program. Mrs. Morris said there is a way to collaborate with other organizations and that could be an option. Mrs. Nelson commented that if people are taking bags then when will they be returning them? Mrs. Gilmore commented that over time more bags would be added into the system. Mrs. Morris agreed that it's important to have a fund structure in place to continue the program and sustain it over time. Mrs. Gilmore pointed out that a good example to emulate was the North Hampton Bag Share Project.

Rain Barrel Workshop Update - The date for the workshop has been confirmed as August 26th. Mrs. Morris mentioned the need to find other ways to promote the event since the Sustainability Commission will not be able to attend the Farmers' Market again until September 2017. The Kent Environmental Council (KEC) is one organization that could help promote. Also, the City of Kent social media pages (Twitter and Facebook) can inform residents. The price for residents to attend would be 20-25 dollars. Mr. Wicks commented he will confirm the price with Sheri Chestnutwood. Other methods of promoting the event include the 25th Anniversary Haymaker Farmers' Market Block Party on August 18th and creating an electronic sign for downtown. Reservations will be taken by the City Manager's Office. A driver's license or utility bill can be used to confirm those registered are residents. There was a consensus that for the day of the event it may be best to have two group sessions of 10 people each with the first session at 10am and second session at 11:30am. Mrs. Gilmore confirmed that at least 2 hours would be good. Mrs. Gilmore agreed to make a flyer and send to Mr. Wicks before the end of July. Ms. Gomez agreed to print and give copies to Andrew Rome at the Farmers Market and Mrs. Morris confirmed she could give the information to the KEC.

Farmers Market Attendance - The next available times for the Haymaker Farmers' Market are September 9th, 16th or 23rd. The commission agreed to attend on September 16th and will request to be under the bridge again. Mrs. Morris commented that if the city could buy a tent it would be great for the Farmers' Market but also other events. Mr. Wicks confirmed that he would talk to Sheri Chestnutwood about acquiring a tent.

Community Information Update - Mrs. Morris confirmed that Leah with KSU Sustainability was going to reach out to the geo-tour group and Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson are waiting on a

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response. So far seven places have been identified to be on the geo-tour. Mrs. Morris also pointed out that 'KSU Sustainability Month' is October 2017. The commission chose Sunday, October 1st as a date to do activities for sustainability month and the geo-tour from 1-4 pm. Mrs. Nelson put forward the idea of a zero emission car 'Cruise In' at the KSU field house which would be another draw for people to attend the event. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson are set to meet again with the KSU sustainability team on August 1st and will include an update at the next commission meeting on August 7th. Mrs. Morris confirmed there are no updates yet on the film festival. Mrs. Stemnock said we could also reach out to the Don Joseph Toyota dealership to bring an eco-car to the field house for the 'Cruise In' Mrs. Nelson proposed. Mrs. Morris confirmed there is still a problem using the data on the KEC website. Mrs. Nelson recommended reaching out to Chris O'Daniel at Kent State to help address data issues. Also Mrs. Morris confirmed she will reach out to the Kent State Environmental Society student organization for information.

Review and Discuss the Current Fracking Permits - No discussion as no new items have been addressed.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution of Support for the Paris Climate Agreement - Mrs. Morris wanted to clarify the process of approval for the resolution. Ms. Susel confirmed that the commission would review the wording for the resolution and make a motion to approve the resolution. Once approved the resolution would then be presented to council for consideration and approval. Previous resolution examples from Akron, OH and Yellow Springs, OH were presented for review. A draft resolution was also presented to the commission that City staff created. Mrs. Morris agreed the draft resolution has almost everything we need. Mrs. Gilmore advocated for a name change in the resolution text from global warming to climate change. Mrs. Morris commented that the commission will need more time to review the language of the resolution. Ms. Susel recommended convening a special meeting in two weeks to finalize the wording of the resolution. There was a consensus that meeting in two weeks would be preferred.

Mrs. Morris made a motion to convene a special meeting of the Sustainability Commission on Monday, July 24th at 5:30 pm in the Community Development Conference Room at the Service Administration Complex (SAC) located at 930 Overholt Road for the purpose of finalizing and approving the draft resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement, Mrs. Nelson seconded; motion passed 4-0.

In addition to the resolution, there was a consensus that an ad hoc committee be created with members from the commission and outside organizations, specifically the Kent Environmental Council, to develop climate action goals. The ad hoc committee would meet for a 6-9 month period.

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NEXT MEETINGS

July 24, 2017 (Special Meeting)
August 7, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Gomez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved by a 4-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.