

Special Sustainability Commission Meeting July 24, 2017

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

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

ABSENT: Rick Hawksley

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to excuse Mr. Hawksley. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

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

Public Comment

Bill Wilen, 867 Stonewater Drive, Kent, OH - Spoke in support of the resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement and was in favor of adding more specific items to the resolution of support that could be accomplished such as energy efficient lighting, solar, and a commitment to using renewable resources at City buildings.

Lis Regula, 1433 Cedar, Kent, OH - Spoke in support of the resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement. Affirmed the resolution will provide the City of Kent a moral authority that will influence how we see ourselves as a City. Commented on a need for a statement in the resolution that the planet is of the utmost importance. Finally the resolution should explain why the City is setting these goals.

Lorraine McCarty, 210 Orchard Street, Kent, OH - Spoke in support of the resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement. Advocated for the use of portions of the City of Akron's resolution. Commented that it would be good to enumerate the accomplishments of the City of Kent related to sustainability. Finally the term social equity should be included in the resolution.

Andrews Boateng, Stow, OH - Spoke in support of the resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement. Commented on the draft resolution language and Mrs. McCarty's statement that past accomplishments of the City of Kent could be difficult to verify. For instance, the City of Kent signed on to the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement in 2007 and one way to know if the City accomplished its commitment would be if it conducted a greenhouse gas inventory after 2007. If the City did not accomplish the goals of the agreement then it should not be included in the resolution of support.

BUSINESS

Resolution of Support for the Paris Climate Agreement -

Chairperson Gomez moved to waive Roberts Rules of Order guidelines and include public dialogue during the discussion of the draft resolution of support.

Mrs. Nelson commented that she wants to make sure the resolution is easy to understand and says what the commission wants it to say. Affirmed that if the commission doesn't understand the language then the public won't understand it either.

Mrs. Morris agreed with public comments that if the City is not able to verify previous accomplishments as completed then they should not be included in the resolution of support.

Ms. Susel confirmed that tonight the resolution will be finalized by the commission and sent to council for approval. If approved, an ad hoc committee will be created with members from KEC and a maximum of two members from the Sustainability Commission to meet as often as necessary.

Below are the finalized items of the draft resolution and discussion:

WHEREAS, consensus exists among the world's leading climate scientists that global warming caused by emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities, which has led to climate change, is among the most significant problems facing the world today; and

Discussing item #1: Mrs. Gilmore commented that the term climate change should be used instead of global warming. Mrs. Nelson mentioned she did not think global warming should be taken out because it is still a good term. Mr. Boateng confirmed that global warming is used as a term for the cause of climate change and could be used. There was a consensus that the term global warming be used to describe the buildup of greenhouse gases which then causes climate change.

WHEREAS, global climate change has led to increased occurrences of extreme weather events and to adverse impacts on ecosystems, demographic patterns and socio-economic activities; and

Discussing item #2: Mrs. Gilmore wanted to clarify use of the term 'demographic patterns.' Mr. Regula supported use of the term. Mr. Boateng commented that ecosystems could include major concepts of demographic patterns. Mrs. Morris agreed that we need to be accurate in defining the term, but we also need to keep it simplified. Mrs. Morris pointed out that by leaving the statement generic, the Commission is giving the City an opportunity to not adhere to the agreement in the future by claiming the wording is too vague. Mrs. Gilmore agreed we need to make a simple general statement and not lose focus. Mrs. Nelson confirmed that the ad-hoc committee will be able to review the language more closely.

Pg. 3
Special Sustainability Commission Meeting Summary
July 24, 2017

***WHEREAS**, responding to climate change provides communities an opportunity to be a leader in a green economy; developing products, services and knowledge that are required when transitioning to a climate-resilient future; and*

Discussing item #3: Mr. Boateng commented that mitigation is important for cities and should be reflected in the statement. Technical language such as ‘first mover advantage’ was removed and replaced with ‘leader.’ There was also a consensus that the term climate-resilient be used in lieu of climate-compatible.

***WHEREAS**, the City of Kent desires to protect and enhance the quality of life for all those who live, work, learn and play in our community, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; and*

Discussing item #4: There was a consensus that the phrase ‘without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ be added to the end of this item.

***WHEREAS**, actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions also have the potential to improve air and water quality, public health, energy security, social equity, our local economy and natural environment, and the quality of life in Kent; and*

Discussing item #5: There was a consensus that the term ‘greenhouse gas emissions’ replace ‘climate pollution.’ The concern was that climate pollution was too vague a term. Mrs. Morris also supports the use of the term social equity in the resolution and thinks it should be defined in detail later during ad-hoc committee meetings.

***WHEREAS**, the City of Kent has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability through a series of initiatives, including signing on to the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement in 2007, the creation of a Sustainability Commission, energy efficiency improvements to existing city buildings, and a commitment to LEED certifications for new construction; and*

Discussing item #6: There was a consensus that sustainable accomplishments should be listed to highlight past efforts by the City of Kent.

***WHEREAS**, the City of Kent recognizes the important role that local communities will play in taking immediate action to significantly curb greenhouse gas emissions; and*

Discussing item #7: Originally used in the City of Akron’s executive order for the Paris Climate Agreement, there was a consensus that this item be used for the Kent draft resolution.

***WHEREAS**, protecting our planet is of the utmost importance and requires a comprehensive effort at all levels-including government policies, industry standards, and household practices.*

Discussing item #8: Originally used in the City of Akron’s executive order for the Paris

Pg. 4
Special Sustainability Commission Meeting Summary
July 24, 2017

Climate Agreement, there was a consensus that this item be used for the Kent draft resolution. Mr. Regula advocated for the statement as necessary to generate the proper moral authority. Finally, there was a consensus that the phrase 'comprehensive effort' should replace 'coordinated and consistent action.'

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Kent, Portage County, Ohio, at least three-fourths (3/4) of all members elected thereto concurring:

SECTION 1. *The City of Kent commits to consider for adoption the climate action plan developed by the Sustainability Commission in response to the City's support of the Paris Climate Agreement and in accordance with this resolution.*

Discussing item #9: There was a consensus that the Sustainability Commission develop a climate action plan for council consideration that will encompass goals and objectives to fulfill the City's support and commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement.

SECTION 2. *The City of Kent agrees to join the Compact of Mayors, and thereby stands in solidarity with communities across the nation and the world in support of the Paris Climate Agreement.*

Discussing item #10: There was a consensus that the City of Kent join the Compact of Mayors to solidify support for the Paris Climate Agreement. Mrs. Nelson confirmed that the Compact of Mayors has better resources and is more firmly established than other climate networks.

Once discussion ended:

Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement as substantially submitted by the Sustainability Commission. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved by a 4-0 vote.

NEXT MEETING

August 7, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Gilmore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and was approved by a 4-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.