

Sustainability Commission Meeting June 11, 2018

Meeting called to order at 5:37 pm by Chairperson Nadine Gomez.

Roll Call: Nadine Gomez, Julie Morris, Andrew Scholl, and Judy Nelson

ABSENT: Miriam Jackson

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

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of May 7, 2018:

Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the summary reports from May. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and was approved with a 3-0-1 vote. Mr. Scholl abstained.

Public Comment

Laurel Hurst, 702 Mae Street, Kent, OH- Mrs. Hurst spoke on the CLUCKent initiative from 2010. The main reason for the CLUCKent initiative stemmed from community interest in having chickens on residential properties in an effort to implement sustainable practices and alternative living. Mrs. Hurst described the limitations for chickens in Kent, then as it is now, and detailed the proposed ordinance that CLUCKent supported that would have allowed for responsible ownership of up to 6 hens on residential properties smaller than 2 acres. Details of the proposed ordinance included guidelines such as predator proof barriers and specifications for chicken coops. Mrs. Hurst commented that in 2010 many college towns and nearby urban centers in the Midwest allowed for urban hens. In addition, she commented that Franklin Township allows hens. Common criticisms of the initiative at the time included a belief that chickens would attract predators such as foxes and coyotes, that roosters would be allowed as well, and that the smell would be a burden to neighbors. Mrs. Hurst challenged the validity of these criticisms by commenting that chicken coops would protect hens from the elements and potential predators, that hens only, not roosters, would be permitted on residential lots, and that 6 hens would be the maximum allowed under the new ordinance and as such would not be enough to generate a foul smell. Other considerations included adding a litter collection site at the yard waste transfer site at Plum Creek Park for proper disposal of waste. The issue of end of life disposal was a concern. Disposing of chickens in the trash was not ideal. A potential solution was disposal at a livestock auction yard. Additionally, there was discussion of adding a health inspector to the Kent Health Department but these considerations were not implemented. Ultimately the proposed revisions failed and Mrs. Hurst recalls a major concern for City Council was the fear that young people would acquire chickens and either not take care of them or leave Kent and abandon them. Mrs. Hurst challenged this assumption by stating the coop building specifications and other requirements for housing chickens safely would have been too rigorous for any cavalier owner to implement successfully. In general, owning chickens would be a significant investment and would only be feasible for Kent residents that would put forward the effort.

Mr. Rick Hawksley advocated for a sunset clause or trial run of the proposed ordinance in Kent but ultimately it was not accepted. Mrs. Hurst believed this initiative should not have a time limit.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Gomez made a motion to move the chickens on residential lots item to the beginning of old business. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Chickens on Residential Lot Update- Ms. Gomez asked about the effect of winter conditions on chickens. Mrs. Hurst commented certain types of chickens fare better in the cold. In general, chicken coops are adequate to keep chickens warm. The combination of body heat and a small space keeps the hens warm. Mrs. Nelson asked if Mrs. Hurst had any interaction with the Farmers' Market during the CLUCKent initiative? Mrs. Hurst confirmed they discussed the proposal with market vendors at the time. Mrs. Nelson commented that educational opportunities at the market for residents interested in having hens could be beneficial and serve as an educational requirement. Mrs. Morris asked if there were any examples that council members, or opposed members of the community, highlighted when siting concerns of hens on residential lots? Mrs. Hurst did not readily recall specific examples. Mrs. Morris supported the idea of hens as it relates to sustainable practices. Mrs. Morris commented that establishing a relationship between chickens and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) that is currently being developed could be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson identified the current restrictions for chickens and livestock as laid out in the Kent Codified Ordinances 505.19 & 505.20. Mrs. Nelson asked if a more simplified ordinance could be well received this time. Mrs. Hurst commented that the way the ordinance is written is good but she would be open to a simplified ordinance. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she will invite council member Gwen Rosenberg to speak at the July meeting.

Ad Hoc Committee Update- Dr. Scholl introduced himself as the newest member to the commission and described his previous experience conducting a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory at Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH. The commission welcomed Dr. Scholl and invited him to join the ad-hoc committee to assist in the GHG inventory given his previous experience. Dr. Scholl agreed to join the ad-hoc committee. Mrs. Morris agreed to step off the ad-hoc committee so Dr. Scholl can attend. Mrs. Morris provided an update on the last ad-hoc committee meeting as well as described the GHG Inventory cohort training administered by ICLEI. Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Morris spoke about the ICLEI community platform and described templates that will be used to acquire data from utilities and other stakeholders. Mrs. Morris described the work plan for the GHG inventory that was created by Mr. Boateng and will be used to guide the ad-hoc committee. Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Morris commented that the inventory should include leeway to include items not necessarily required by the work plan or ClearPath software. Dr. Scholl agreed and commented that an inventory can be broad enough to include other items of consideration. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can forward periodic communications of the ad-hoc committee to Ms. Gomez and Mrs. Jackson if they desire to

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watch the live session recordings of the GHG inventory training.

Farmers' Market Update- Mrs. Morris confirmed during the last tabling event at the market 115 pounds of items were collected and donated to the County Clothing Center (CCC). As for scheduling a new date to table at the market, Ms. Gomez confirmed she will be out of town for the rest of the month of June. Mrs. Morris described different programming ideas promoted in the past such as partnering with CCC, creating seed bombs, and converting t-shirts into bags. There was a consensus that the commission should try to have a table at the market at least once a month. All members agreed to brainstorm programming ideas and bring them to the next meeting in July. Once a program is set, the commission will work to set a date to table in July.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)- Mr. Wicks provided an update on the June 6th City Council meeting and Service Director Baker's oral presentation on HHW services in Portage County. The presentation detailed services provided by the Portage County Recycling center and information on their <http://portagerecycles.com/> website. It was evident from the presentation that Portage County Recycling would not be able to implement a HHW program due to financial limitations. Ms. Gomez advocated for a HHW program that would last one day as it would be much cheaper. Mrs. Nelson agreed that a one day HHW program would be cheaper than the spring cleanup. Ms. Gomez also put forward the idea of have a spring cleanup event and HHW event occur in odd/even years. The commission agreed to discuss this item further once the ad-hoc committee and the CAP address it.

NEW BUSINESS

Single Use Plastic Straws- Ms. Gomez discussed research she found online and supports a public awareness campaign to encourage residents and businesses to minimize or stop using one-time disposable plastic straws. Mrs. Nelson commented this item could be a farmer's market programming idea. Ms. Gomez commented a public awareness campaign could be a beneficial Tree City Bulletin article. Ms. Gomez and Mrs. Nelson broadened the discussion to include the use of general plastics in the world today. Ms. Gomez confirmed she will gather more information on single use plastic straws for a potential program at the farmers' market.

Community Outreach Update- Mrs. Morris will confirm if Sandy Halem from Family & Community Services (F&CS) is available to speak at the July meeting.

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- In the past, Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson attended the KEC breakfasts on Friday mornings to keep KEC members up to date on Sustainability Commission projects. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson were not able to attend in the past 9 months, and given open meeting requirements, the commission agreed to discontinue sending members to speak. Three KEC members are on the ad-hoc committee to complete the CAP and can provide updates to

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KEC membership. Mrs. Morris commented a communique or memo could be given out to keep the community updated. Mr. Wicks commented that in addition KEC members are welcome to attend meetings and read minutes provided on the City of Kent website.

- b. Kent State University (KSU) Office of Sustainability- There was a consensus to work with the KSU Office of Sustainability on future projects between the university and the City. Mrs. Morris described past joint projects such as the Green Energy Ohio Geo Tour to Dr. Scholl. Mrs. Nelson explained the Clean Transportation Cruise In that occurred in the fall 2017. Ms. Gomez made a motion for the commission to communicate with the KSU Office of Sustainability on the upcoming Geo Tour. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.
- c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris described the organization and their goal of raising funds for a new facility to assist at risk populations in Portage County. Mrs. Morris commented the organization is committed to sustainable principles and would welcome a collaboration with the Sustainability Commission. One concern in sharing Haven's information at tabling events is its open affiliation as a Christian organization. Haven is involved with secular organizations including Coleman Professional Services and Portage DD and so Mrs. Morris would like to invite guest speakers to attend the July meeting and present on the organization's mission and goals. Mr. Wicks confirmed he will consult City staff to see if there is any concern about sharing Haven's information at tabling events.

Tree City Bulletin- Mrs. Nelson commented that an article on single use plastic straws could be a good topic. There was consensus that an article on a single use plastic straw public awareness campaign in Kent could be beneficial. Examples of past single use plastic straw campaigns include 'Refuse the Straw', 'The Last Straw', 'Straw Wars', etc. Mrs. Nelson will provide a draft to the commission for review and approval during the July meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Gomez made a motion to remove the Household Hazardous Waste item from old business. Motion was seconded by Dr. Scholl and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Ms. Gomez made a motion to add Community Outreach item to old business. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Ms. Gomez made a motion to add Single Use Straw item to old business. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Ms. Gomez made a motion to add Tree City Bulletin article item to old business. Motion was

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seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Mrs. Morris made a motion to add F&CS item to community outreach in old business. Motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and approved with a 4-0 vote.

NEXT MEETING

July 2, 2018

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 7:57pm.