

Sustainability Commission Meeting July 2, 2018

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm by Vice Chairperson Julie Morris.

Roll Call: Julie Morris, Andrew Scholl, Judy Nelson, and Miriam Jackson

ABSENT: Nadine Gomez

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

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

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of June 11, 2018:

Revisions were made to pages 3 & 4. Mrs. Nelson made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from June. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and was approved with a 3-0-1 vote. Ms. Jackson abstained.

Public Comment

Mark Miller & Ann Marie Noble, The Haven of Portage County, Ravenna, OH- Mr. Miller presented on their mission and reasons for forming an organization. Mr. Miller described how they try to serve at risk populations and address vulnerabilities to housing. Currently the organization is focusing on fundraising. A goal of the Haven of Portage County is to merge services to help multiple populations and issues such as trafficked women, drug use, homelessness, veterans at risk, etc. Mr. Miller described their property needs and their desire to accommodate different types of housing, identified as the 'graduated housing options' model. Mr. Miller articulated statistics for Portage County and stated there were 138 homeless individuals in Portage County and that 16% of Portage County residents are below the poverty level. Mr. Miller confirmed a lack of sustainable living options contributes to homelessness, drug use, and human trafficking. Mrs. Noble identified individual success stories to describe who the Haven could help in the future. Mr. Miller explained that ultimately their goal is to create a rescue facility that addresses all stages of homelessness. Mr. Miller described their current facility, still in development, to be a 10,000 square foot warehouse that will be converted to men and women dorms, including human trafficking recovery and drug rehab and recovery. Partners on the project include Coleman Professional Services, Portage County Habitat for Humanity, and others. Mr. Miller commented that operations and administration would cost \$255,000/annually and shelter remodeling and renovations would cost \$550,000. Mr. Miller confirmed no federal funds are planned to be used due to restrictions that come with funding.

Gwen Rosenberg, 526 Rockwell Street, Kent, OH- Mrs. Rosenberg is an at-large councilmember and resident of Kent. She spoke in support of chickens on residential properties in Kent. Mrs. Rosenberg commented she grew up in Cleveland with neighbors that had chickens. Urban chickens are sustainable and provide for sustainable concepts including

waste reduction and composting. She commented urban chickens are desired by younger populations and young families. She pointed out urban chickens are successful in other cities with necessary restrictions to satisfy both types of residents that would be for or against chickens. Potential restrictions could include a limitation on the number of hens allowed, fenced enclosures, no chickens off property, and animal welfare guidelines. Mrs. Rosenberg commented that a few residents in Kent have chickens in violation to the current ordinance and so it should be addressed, otherwise residents will continue to work around the current restriction.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Morris made a motion to move the Haven of Portage County discussion item, followed by the chickens on residential lots item, to the beginning of old business to accommodate guest speakers. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Mrs. Nelson and Dr. Scholl described the group's progress and next steps in preparation of the upcoming meeting on Thursday, July 5th. A work plan is being finalized to establish a timeline to complete the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory. Mrs. Nelson commented the ad-hoc committee has agreed to meet twice a month and has selected the GPC protocol as the guiding document for the inventory. The period of time the committee will be focusing on is 2010-2016 and they will only focus on activities inside the City of Kent boundaries. Dr. Scholl was curious to know if Kent State University (KSU) had previously completed a GHG inventory, and decided to reach out to Melanie Knowles at the KSU Office of Sustainability to learn more. Mrs. Nelson thought not since Mrs. Knowles hasn't mentioned anything about it. Dr. Scholl commented the KSU Stark campus completed a GHG inventory so it could be beneficial to reach out to a representative at the Stark campus to learn more.

Farmers' Market Update- Mrs. Morris asked to postpone the discussion about programming at the market. Mrs. Morris commented the commission could possibly focus on plastic straws for upcoming events and add other programming in the future. Mrs. Nelson agreed and added that the commission could share information with residents on the harmful impacts of plastic straws. Mrs. Nelson commented the inclusion of other local environmental groups would be beneficial and the commission could ask for their involvement. Mr. Wicks put forward the idea of a poster board to have community members write their views on plastic straws. There was a consensus that the commission could wait until August to attend the market.

Chickens on Residential Lots Update (*Moved to second item of Old Business*)-

Mrs. Rosenberg commented that personal responsibility is important to handling and keeping chickens. There was a concern in previous discussions on urban chickens that they would be abandoned and create a nuisance. Dr. Scholl commented that the concern of abandonment could be applied to other pets and animals such as cats, dogs, snakes, etc. Ms. Susel confirmed that even with the current restriction, the City of Kent has encountered abandoned

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roosters and hens. Mrs. Nelson commented that the farmers market could be a useful resource for education on urban chickens and that potential chicken owners could attend workshops at the market to learn about proper handling and care. Mrs. Rosenberg agreed an educational component would be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson commented that a community group of urban chicken proponents could exist to help and guide new chickens owners in Kent. Mrs. Nelson was curious to know if chickens are classified as pets, livestock, or other? Does the Center for Disease Control (CDC) have a classification for chickens due to potential health concerns? Mrs. Morris commented that health concerns were a key issue during the previous urban chicken campaign. Ms. Susel commented that chickens are currently defined as livestock in the Kent codified ordinances. Also, it was confirmed that if urban chickens became legal, homeowners' associations (HOAs) would still have the ability to prohibit them in their neighborhood. Ms. Susel commented that a registration or permit process for urban chickens would most likely not be the City of Kent's recommendation, however City Council will have the ability to provide guidance on this issue.

Mrs. Nelson made a motion in support of adopting an urban chicken ordinance in Kent. The motion was seconded by Dr. Scholl and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Single Use Plastic Straws- There was a consensus that a partnership between the commission, the Kent Environmental Council (KEC), and the KSU Office of Sustainability would be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson commented the commission and other local organizations could reach out to businesses and other groups to gather support. Mrs. Nelson identified Mr. Carmen at Theodore Roosevelt High School (TRHS) as a good resource to connect with. Mrs. Morris commented the database of sustainability affiliated organizations on the KEC website could be a good resource to use to identify support for a plastic straw awareness campaign.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council- Mrs. McCarty was curious to know about the possibility of a rain barrel workshop in Kent for 2018. Mr. Wicks confirmed the previous vendor the City used to acquire the barrels is no longer available and we are currently trying to locate a vendor.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Morris are set to meet with Mrs. Knowles on Friday, July 6th to talk about the upcoming Green Energy Ohio Geo Tour to be held on Saturday, September 29th. A potential location for another electric car cruise-in could be the parking lot behind the Kent Health Department offices at 414 E. Main Street, adjacent to Willow Street and KSU esplanade.
- c. Haven of Portage County (*Moved to beginning of Old Business*)- Following the public comment portion, Mrs. Nelson asked what church the Haven was affiliated with. Mr. Miller commented the Haven was affiliated with the Portage Community Chapel, a non-denominational church. Mrs. Morris commented that issues of poverty and homelessness tie into sustainability and so establishing a

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connection is important. Mrs. Morris confirmed a collaboration between the Haven and the commission could be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson commented that convenience creates trash and advocated for the promotion of reduction and reusability concepts in Haven's plans moving forward. There was a consensus that sharing the Haven of Portage County postcards during tabling events would be acceptable.

- d. Family & Community Services- Mrs. Morris confirmed that Mrs. Halem wanted to discuss a potential collaboration with the commission at the farmers' market, however the idea is still in development. Also there is another idea to collaborate at the newly acquired Kentway building on Summit Street. Potential ideas include a community garden, compost bins, and other outdoor activities. Mrs. Morris confirmed she can provide more information during the August meeting.

Tree City Bulletin- Mrs. Nelson described the draft article and the research she found on plastic straw awareness campaigns and resources. Mrs. Nelson described what other communities and organizations have done in the past. She commented that asking people to share their views on the subject is important and Mrs. Morris agreed. Ms. Susel put forward the idea that including an email in the article and asking residents to respond with ideas could be a way to receive comments. Staff could collect responses. Ms. Susel also pointed out the article seems to be two different articles put together. What about the possibility of dividing the draft into two articles? There was a consensus that dividing the draft into two articles would be the best idea. Mr. Wicks confirmed the two articles could fit in the same Fall 2018 Tree City Bulletin. There was a consensus to add a few revisions and sentence structure simplification in select portions of the draft. Overall the information and message of the two articles will not change.

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to approve the article draft, and once revised, submit to Mr. Wicks. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to add an item to new business on the 100% renewable project from the Sierra Club, presented by Heidi Shaffer. Motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and approved with a 4-0 vote.

NEXT MEETING

August 6, 2018

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ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Morris 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 8:02pm.