

Sustainability Commission Meeting August 6, 2018

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm by Chairperson Nadine Gomez.

Roll Call: Julie Morris, Nadine Gomez, Judy Nelson, and Miriam Jackson

ABSENT: Andrew Scholl

Ms. Gomez made a motion to excuse Dr. Scholl. 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 July 2, 2018:

Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from July as amended. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0-1 vote. Ms. Gomez abstained.

Public Comment

None

Mrs. Morris made a motion to move the '100% Renewable Project by Sierra Club' discussion item to the beginning to accommodate guest speaker Heidi Shaffer. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and approved with a 4-0 vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Mrs. Nelson confirmed ad-hoc committee members divided into sectors and are beginning to request data. The ICLEI training course has finished and ICLEI staff are able to provide one-on-one guidance as needed. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she selected the Transportation sector and Mr. Wicks confirmed he selected the Built Environment (electricity & natural gas) sector, among others.

Farmers' Market Update- The topic to focus on during the August 25th tabling event at the market will be the Single Use Plastic Straw Awareness campaign. There was agreement to invite Kent State student Mary Claire O'Leary to attend as well. Ms. Gomez confirmed she can prepare materials for the event. Mrs. Morris and Ms. Gomez confirmed they could attend the morning session and Ms. Jackson and Mrs. Nelson confirmed they could attend the afternoon session. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can email Andrew Rome at the Haymaker Farmers' Market to reserve attendance on August 25th and September 15th.

Chickens on Residential Lots Update- Mrs. Nelson confirmed an extended discussion took place during the previous City Council meeting on August 1st. She confirmed City administration wanted to clarify with City Council how much interest there was in chickens before moving forward. City Council voted to approve further discussion and to collect more

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research on legal chickens on residential properties smaller than 2 acres. Ms. Susel recommended that the City does not establish a permitting process, however a select number of council members advocated for permits. Mrs. Nelson commented that the addition of an education requirement for new chicken owners could be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson commented permits could come with inspections and cost money. Mrs. Morris agreed with Ms. Susel that permits should not be instituted as it could be administratively impractical. Mrs. Nelson confirmed Ms. Susel addressed limitations to legal chickens. They will not be allowed in multifamily or rental units. Only owner-occupied residential houses would be eligible.

Single Use Plastic Straws- Ms. Gomez commented that educating businesses is an important part of single use plastic straw awareness. Mrs. Nelson commented on the possibility of creating a pledge for residents to sign to say 'No Thanks' to plastic straws? Ms. Gomez agreed it was a good idea and that she could prepare a pledge sheet to present during the farmers' market on August 25th. Ms. Gomez commented that to pass an ordinance restricting the use of plastic straws would be difficult. Ms. Jackson asked if restricting the use of Styrofoam could be considered as well? Mrs. Nelson commented that yes if the campaign on plastic straws was successful, then maybe the commission could focus on Styrofoam next. Mrs. Nelson commented the Kent City School District could be a prime location to eliminate plastic straws. Mrs. Morris confirmed she can ask her daughter what she has observed in school and the prevalence of plastic straws.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council- No update
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Mrs. Knowles and Mrs. Graham have been meeting regularly with the commission to plan the 2018 Kent Green Energy Ohio Tour on Saturday, September 29th. Mrs. Graham reached out to Mrs. Gloria Tilenni at the Kent State University College of the Arts, and organizer for the Kent Creativity Fest, to confirm if they can use the parking lot behind the Kent Health Department (414 E. Main Street) for the clean transportation cruise in. Current Kent Green Energy Ohio Tour participants include Standing Rock Cultural Arts, Kent State Architect Michael Bruder's residence, and other locations around Kent. Mrs. Morris commented a solar cooperative was reached out but more information is needed. There was a consensus to include the new Kent Police Station as a potential tour site but approval must first be given by the Kent Police Chief. Mrs. Nelson commented the location for the cruise in will be confirmed tomorrow after the meeting with Mrs. Knowles and Mrs. Graham. Mr. Wicks confirmed he will ask Clerk of Council Tara Grimm about the possibility of a new 2018 proclamation for October as 'Sustainability Month.'
- c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris confirmed the organization recently had an auction. There will be a fundraising gala in November 2018. There was a consensus to continue to share postcards at tabling events.

- d. Family & Community Services- Mrs. Morris confirmed she emailed Mrs. Sandy Halem about potential partnerships and is waiting to hear back. Ms. Gomez asked what is the building on Gougler called AxessPointe? Mrs. Morris explained it is an organization that works with F&CS to provide healthcare services to qualified individuals.

Tree City Bulletin- There was a consensus to begin talking about article ideas for the winter edition during the meeting in September. Mrs. Morris put forward the idea of Ms. Jackson's sustainable living methods and resources in Kent. It could be a list of resources and available services that Kent residents could utilize. Mrs. Morris confirmed this list could be a start to do something to address climate change. Another idea of bringing your own take away container to restaurants was presented. Mrs. Nelson confirmed that as long as restaurant employees do not handle the container, it could be feasible. The discussions will continue at the next meeting in September.

NEW BUSINESS

100% Renewable Project by Sierra Club (*Moved to beginning*)- Ms. Shaffer attended the Sierra Club training and provided a summary of the presentation and materials. Ms. Shaffer identified local speakers in the training such as Mr. Mike Foley, director of the department of sustainability at Cuyahoga County and Bryan Burgess, Oberlin City Council member. In addition, Ms. Shaffer spoke about a great resource she received from the training, a 2017 case study report of communities in the United States that have moved towards 100% clean energy. The report shares case studies from 50 communities and many initiatives that could apply directly to Kent. One example included Boulder, CO with a voter approved tax plan for sustainable initiatives. Another was Madison, WI with the MadiSUN program that designated a solar community. Ms. Gomez asked if some of the case studies address municipal buildings and Ms. Shaffer confirmed that yes they do. Ms. Shaffer commented that the 100% Clean Energy for All, or the Ready for 100, trainings hosted by Sierra Club provide tools for those that need to build a foundation for sustainability in the community.

Ms. Shaffer commented that a goal of the Sustainability Commission is to turn sustainable ideas into policy. Ms. Shaffer commented that the City of Kent used to have a Sustainability Director, however the position no longer exists. Mrs. Morris commented that the Climate Action Plan Ad-hoc Committee is working on a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory to gauge where the City is on emissions to better guide policies in the future. Ms. Shaffer commented that the Climate Action Plan should provide options for council to choose and implement.

Mrs. Morris provided the example of a sustainable cooperative to encourage lower energy rates. Mrs. Nelson confirmed a similar group exists in Stark County and can be used as an example. Mrs. Morris advocated for a long term vision of localizing the grid while also partnering with other communities. Mrs. Morris asked if the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) allowed for localized power generation and if so, they could be a key entity

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to partner with for smaller energy generation. Mrs. Morris confirmed that early buy-in from the utility company would be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson described a previous presentation she heard on the Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council (SOPEC) and that their contracts are with renewable energy sources. NOPEC selects providers who are the cheapest, and so a shift to renewables can be advocated for. Mr. Charles Ramer from NOPEC could be a potential advocate to support renewable energy. Mrs. Nelson commented that in light of the fact October 2018 will be Sustainability Month in Kent, would it be a good time to invite Mr. Ramer to speak at a meeting?

The main question remains if residents are offered more expensive renewable solutions, will they accept it? Mrs. Morris asked if residents could encourage the local government to choose renewable energy from NOPEC for City buildings? Ms. Shaffer commented that Service Director Melanie Baker may know more. Ms. Shaffer commented that the City may be able to advocate for sustainable options or to conduct energy audits to spread awareness. More research is needed.

During the discussion, Ms. Shaffer commented on her previous experiences in college and her passion for sustainable issues. She described the previous and current state of sustainability in the United States and confirmed that more needs to be done to encourage sustainable solutions and that the local level is an important area to advocate for sustainability. She commented on the concern that Kent City Council needs to be convinced of the merits of sustainability. Current cost limitations have created concerns about building sustainably and the new police station is an example of LEED certified sustainable design that is good for the community. Ms. Shaffer commented that a new City Hall could be an example of sustainable design as well. Ms. Shaffer expressed concern that there needs to be more input from the Kent environmental community on the new City Hall. She commented that the architect hired to research the City Hall building could benefit from more resident input. Ms. Shaffer commented on the possibility of the Sustainability Commission inviting the architect to attend a commission meeting and speak on the City Hall planning process.

OTHER BUSINESS

No changes

NEXT MEETING

September 10, 2018

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Gomez 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 7:58pm.