

Sustainability Commission Meeting November 13, 2018

Meeting called to order at 5:36pm 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. Morris and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of October 2, 2018:

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes from October. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Mrs. Morris attended the meeting on October 29, 2018 in place of Mrs. Nelson. Mrs. Morris confirmed that work groups were continuing to collect data and were waiting on responses from other organizations and agencies. Mrs. Morris commented on the spreadsheet provided by NOPEC on users in Kent and that it could be a beneficial dataset. Mr. Boateng commented that it is important to understand data will come back different from what is desired and will need to be revised to fit the ICLEI ClearPath software. Mr. Wicks confirmed the next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2018.

Farmers' Market Update- Ms. Gomez confirmed she spoke to Market Manager Andrew Rome about tabling at the markets and commented the weekend after Thanksgiving would be available. Mrs. Morris mentioned potential programming for the market could be sharing information on a Haven of Portage County initiative to make mats out of plastic bags, known as *Plarn*, for homeless individuals in need. Ms. Gomez mentioned that last year in November and December, the commission did not table during the market. Instead, the commission tabled at the market in January. Ms. Gomez commented the commission can brainstorm ideas for tabling in the early months of 2019. Mrs. Nelson commented on the spring environmental film series and scheduling screenings? There was a consensus that the film series would be beneficial to continue and it could promote recently released documentaries on climate change. The film series can begin in February 2019 and be promoted at the farmers' market.

Chickens on Residential Lots Update- Mrs. Nelson confirmed the ordinance was approved during the October 17, 2018 council meeting. Ms. Gomez asked if the ordinance language was revised in any way from the first draft? Mrs. Nelson confirmed it did not, with 30 feet set back

**Sustainability Commission Meeting Summary
November 13, 2018**

requirements from the back property line and 10 feet set back requirements from the side property lines. Other considerations were protection from predators and regulations on coop size. Health Commissioner Jeff Neistadt spoke on potential health hazards of backyard chickens during the meeting. Ordinance enforcement will be complaint-driven. Also, chicken feces can be buried and used in compost. Mrs. Nelson commented the setback requirements may limit certain properties owners in Kent from having backyard chickens.

Single Use Plastic Straws- Ms. Gomez created a draft of a script for commission members to use to talk to downtown businesses as a part of the public awareness campaign on single use plastic straws. Ms. Gomez commented on including other business and restaurant items such as styrofoam cups and containers, plastic utensils, etc. to address as well. Another topic to discuss with downtown owners is their business goals and obstacles to adopting sustainable practices. One consideration was whether the work for the Climate Action Plan could tie into the public awareness campaign and the consensus was it could. Mrs. Nelson commented that commission members can be ambassadors for the Sustainability Commission and the larger community. Also as a customer, they can go downtown and request restaurants consider doing away with single use plastic straws and other items. Mrs. Nelson commented that a main goal of speaking with the owners is to make them aware of the public awareness campaign, the Sustainability Commission, and what they can change to protect the environment. Mrs. Morris asked if there were ways to encourage businesses to change? Ms. Gomez asked if reaching out to Main Street Kent could be beneficial? Mrs. Morris commented there is value in speaking with business owners and managers as a customer, for instance not requesting a straw or saying no to a straw being offered. Mr. Wicks commented about meeting with property owners to speak with them separately? Mrs. Nelson commented these meetings could be used to educate them about who the Sustainability Commission is and its mission, vision, and values. There was a consensus that it would be important to provide context to business owners that this conversation is happening all over the US and that many businesses have committed to making changes to help the environment. Next step includes speaking with businesses and restaurants as customers and commission members as available. Meetings with individual business owners will not be scheduled at this time.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- No update. Mrs. Morris attended the KEC permaculture presentation led by Renee Ruchotzke and found it very interesting.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Mrs. Morris commented the KSU Office of Sustainability did decide on a film screening event and the movie will be *Plastic Paradise: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch*. The KSU Office of Sustainability confirmed the commission is welcome to table during this event in the KSU KIVA on Thursday, Nov 15, 2018 from 4:30-7:30pm. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson confirmed they would be available to attend. Programs to promote could be the single use plastic straw public awareness campaign. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she will contact KSU student Mary O'Leary to see if she would be available to attend.

**Sustainability Commission Meeting Summary
November 13, 2018**

- c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris confirmed the haven is not able to open as a warming center for the 2018-19 winter season. The Center of Hope in Ravenna will be hosting a warming center this year. Mrs. Morris confirmed that the rummage sale was a success, with a total of 1,482 pounds that were donated to the County Clothing Center. Mrs. Morris commented that the 'Plarn' plastic bag mats could be created for homeless people in Portage County. These plastic bag mats could be used as part of Reach Team efforts to reach, contact, and give items to homeless people in need. For instance, Hilltop Christian Church in Mantua makes these Plarn mats all year round. Mrs. Morris commented support for this effort would be beneficial. Mrs. Morris commented this activity could be promoted at the farmers' market through a workshop. Mrs. Morris also promoted a paper bank box for donations to Haven and they can be handed out as needed. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she would take one home.
- d. Family & Community Services- No update. Mrs. Morris confirmed she is waiting to hear back from Sandy Halem for ways the commission can partner with residents at the 55 or Better Kentway Apartments. Also, Mrs. Morris confirmed fundraising at Kent Social Services for Thanksgiving and Christmas is underway and they would be happy to take turkeys, grocery gift cards, cash donations, etc.

Tree City Bulletin- There was a consensus to brainstorm ideas for the Spring 2019 Tree City Bulletin. One idea was to showcase businesses and restaurants in Kent that have done away with single use materials or have adopted more sustainable practices. Commission members agreed to bring ideas to the December 2018 commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Informational solar energy meeting- Mrs. Morris commented she spoke to a representative about an upcoming meeting called the Portage County Solar Initiative set for Saturday, December 1, 2018. Event organizer and Director of Corporate Foundations at Oberlin College, Mary Lang asked Mrs. Morris if the commission would be interested in participating? Mrs. Morris confirmed commission members can attend to listen and learn. Mrs. Morris commented that she received a flyer of the meeting with City of Kent sponsorship logos on it. Mr. Wicks confirmed he contacted another event organizer Gwen Fischer to remove the City of Kent logo since approval was not officially obtained. Mrs. Morris confirmed after this initial meeting, there will be more, larger community meetings for Kent residents to attend. Mrs. Nelson mentioned the Stark County solar co-op as an example. Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Morris confirmed they plan to attend the initial meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Gomez to support the solar energy meeting on December 1, 2018 and seconded by Mrs. Nelson. Motion passed 4-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to remove an item from old business chickens on residential lots within city limits. Motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Ms. Gomez made a motion to move an item from new business to old business on informational solar energy meeting. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Mrs. Morris wanted to recognize the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released since the last commission meeting. Mrs. Morris also recommended the commission members read the book *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*. The book was originally recommended to Mrs. Morris by Renee Ruchotzke during her recent presentation on permaculture. Mrs. Morris commented some of the solutions can be implemented at the individual and local levels.

NEXT MEETING

December 4, 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 7:29pm.