

Sustainability Commission Meeting December 4, 2018

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

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

ABSENT: Miriam Jackson

Ms. Gomez made a motion to excuse Ms. Jackson. 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 November 13, 2018:

Ms. Gomez made a motion to approve the minutes from November with select revisions. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0-1 vote. Dr. Scholl abstained.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Dr. Scholl commented that there was not much new to report. Working groups are still gathering data. Mrs. Nelson and Mr. Wicks commented on a potential workshop led by ICLEI on a SolSmart designation available to communities. Mrs. Nelson confirmed the next ad-hoc committee meeting is scheduled for December 17th. Mrs. Nelson commented that committee member Andrews Boateng participated in a panel discussion at Kent State University (KSU) titled 'Countdown to Climate Catastrophe' on November 29th and that the event was well attended.

Farmers' Market Update- Ms. Gomez commented she can speak to Market Manager Andrew Rome to reserve a time in January and/or February 2019. There was a consensus to reserve January 19th if possible.

Informational Solar Energy Meeting- Mrs. Morris commented the meeting on December 1st at the Kent Free Library was well attended with a large cross section of residents and public officials from across Portage County (including one City Council member from Tallmadge). Mrs. Morris commented a statewide solar congress is coming up on Saturday, March 9th in Athens, OH at Ohio University. Mrs. Nelson commented she attended the solar congress last year in Wilmot, OH and that there were informative sessions on solar policy. A Portage County Co-op is being organized by the organization Ohio Solar United Neighbors (OH SUN) and a website is being developed with the eventual URL <solarunitedneighbors.org/portage>. Participating entities can be businesses, residents, companies, and government agencies. Mrs. Nelson confirmed this was an initial meeting and the entire community will be invited to attend

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the next meeting. Mrs. Nelson confirmed entities in Summit County could still be included in the Co-op if the installer agrees to it. Mrs. Nelson explained the RFP process and how it is administered by OH SUN. Mrs. Nelson also explained eco-link credits and other federal tax credits available to solar buyers. Mrs. Morris commented federal tax credits are beginning to be phased out in 2019. Next step is to expect a notice on another public meeting in the beginning of 2019.

Single Use Plastic Straws- Ms. Gomez commented they were going to continue discussing the campaign with the community whenever possible. Mrs. Morris confirmed she presented the single use plastic straw campaign to individuals at a KSU film screening event and received many signatures of support on a refuse the straw commitment petition. Ms. Gomez commented on expanding the campaign to include a Styrofoam ban and encourage downtown businesses to use paper products. There was a consensus to continue the conversation.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- No update.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson attended a KSU film screening and listened to a presentation by a panel of speakers. The discussion included a focus on the current issues related to recycling and that some items are not economically viable any longer and as such are taken to the landfill. Dr. Scholl commented that in some cases it is cheaper to dump these items in the landfill. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson commented on the past return value of cans and glass in California. Dr. Scholl confirmed changes in policy abroad, most especially in China, is responsible for the shift in commodity value. Dr. Scholl added companies are revenue driven and so they will make decisions based on profitability. Mrs. Morris commented on a desire to connect with more groups and identify solutions to allow residents to live more sustainably. There was a consensus to find the names of the speakers on the panel. Mr. Wicks confirmed he will research the event details to find out.
- c. Haven of Portage County- No update. Mrs. Morris confirmed the Haven cancelled their November meeting and December meeting was not yet scheduled.
- d. Family & Community Services- No update. Donations are being accepted for the holidays. Ms. Gomez commented on a can-struction event during the farmers market in order to encourage donations of canned food items.

Tree City Bulletin- Mrs. Morris provided a list of article ideas. Mrs. Morris commented she is interested in highlighting advances by some local businesses to reduce single use plastic consumption. Another article idea is to highlight the actions of the Climate Action Plan. Mrs. Nelson asked if an article could include concise summary updates on 2-3 topics? Ms. Gomez agreed and added an idea to create a small dialog box in the article to provide a

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concise explanation of a topic. Ms. Gomez also presented the idea of zero waste methods or an article on Ohio SUN's efforts forming a Co-op. Mrs. Morris agreed with the idea of summarizing 3-4 topics in concise updates. The topics can include: 2019 film series, Climate Action Plan progress, Ohio SUN solar co-op, and/or can-struction challenge (structures made out of canned food items) at the Haymaker Farmers Market. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can provide tentative dates for the film series at the January 2019 meeting. All members are encouraged to review documentary ideas for the film series and provide titles to Mr. Wicks.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to add an item to new business on environmental film series for 2019. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Ms. Gomez made a motion to add an item to new business on phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Mr. Wicks explained the Xtinguish Torch Fest event and upcoming planning meetings.

NEXT MEETING

January 7, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Gomez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Scholl and was approved with a 4-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26pm.