

Sustainability Commission Meeting July 1, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:39pm by Chairperson Nadine Gomez.

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

ABSENT: None

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of June 3, 2019:

Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from June with select revisions. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0-2 vote. Dr. Scholl and Ms. Gomez abstained.

Public Comment

Renee Ruchotzke, 237 Highland Avenue, Kent, OH- Mrs. Ruchotzke presented a book 'What we think about when we try not to think about global warming' by Per Espen Stoknes. Mrs. Ruchotzke described the book and its message of encouraging social psychology practices to create change and re-establishing a connection to the environment. Mrs. Ruchotzke also commented on a social movement to talk about difficult subjects, such as death, and could potentially be used to talk about climate change.

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Mr. Wicks and Ms. Susel met with Mr. Boateng to discuss the ICLEI Clearpath software. They will begin bi-weekly meetings for July and August. There was a consensus with commission members that the Climate Action Plan should be a document to be integrated into City functions and also as a way to address what residents value most.

Farmers' Market Update- Mrs. Morris provided an update on the tabling event during the Kent Torch Fest on June 20th. Commission members passed out flyers and showcased a poster of the Cuyahoga River Watershed. Mrs. Morris received inquiries on volunteer opportunities with the commission. There was a consensus to have a volunteer sign-up sheet at future events that could be used to contact interested community members in volunteer opportunities. Mrs. Ruchotzke commented that volunteers could potentially attend the farmers' market booth on behalf of the commission and engage with community members. Saturday, September 14th was selected as a possible time for the next market appearance. Ms. Gomez commented she can speak with Andrew Rome to confirm. Mrs. Morris highlighted the database of environmental organizations on the KEC website as a location to find volunteer opportunities. Programs to advertise for the next farmers' market tabling event includes the Green Energy Ohio (GEO) Tour, as well as a volunteer sign-up sheet for community members.

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Informational Solar Energy Meeting- Mrs. Nelson commented she attended a meeting at Mary Lang's house and confirmed the new Ohio Solar United Neighbors (Ohio SUN) representative is Matt Bearzotti. Mrs. Nelson confirmed Councilmember Shaffer did not attend the meeting. Mrs. Nelson commented 40 people in Portage County have signed up or expressed interest and Ohio SUN has went ahead and called for bids to pick an installer. Three bids were received and one was selected. The installer will be notified and will begin to contact the individuals that signed up to do a site visit and provide a quote. Mrs. Nelson confirmed the price quote per person is based on individual circumstances and will cost differently. Mrs. Morris asked if the government co-op could include a solar array on City property for local residents to use? Mr. Wicks confirmed he can contact Mr. Bearzotti and work towards a solar co-op meeting at the governmental level.

Single Use Plastic Straws- Mr. Wicks commented on recent news of Cuyahoga County's plastic bag ban and the work at the state level to preempt it. There was a consensus the current circumstances are not favorable for local bag bans due to the state level resistance. Ms. Gomez commented the lack of plastic alternatives makes it hard not to buy plastic items. Mrs. Nelson commented businesses should be responsible to close the loop of the production cycle and establish a take back program for products at their end of life. Ms. Gomez commented Styrofoam packing is another bad example of single use without a closed loop. Mr. Wicks agreed to rename this agenda item to "Single Use Plastic Public Awareness Campaign."

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- Mrs. Morris commented the 2019 Legacy for the Environment Grants issued by KEC were awarded to the following: the KSU Child Development Center, the Portage County Soil & Water Conservation District, Kent Crowd Hydrology, Kent Parks & Recreation, and others. Mrs. Ruchotzke confirmed she is willing and able to be the liaison between KEC and the Sustainability Commission when she begins her term as a commission member. Approval will be decided at the next meeting in August 2019.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- The GEO Tour planning committee met today, July 1st. More information will be provided on event activities and plans at a future date. The tour will coincide with the Kent Creativity Festival on Saturday, September 28th.
- c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris provided an update on volunteer opportunities with the Haven. More information will be provided on the Community Resource Connect event set for Thursday, Sept 12th as a potential volunteer opportunity.
- d. Family & Community Services (F&CS)- Kent Social Services (KSS) confirmed they will have a booth at the Heritage Festival set for July 6th. Mrs. Morris provided figures for May 2019: 338 households were fed and 1,608 hot meals served from

KSS. Mrs. Morris confirmed the Miller Community House is at full capacity. Also, the Safer Futures Domestic Violence shelter is at full capacity. There was a consensus to be a drop off site for materials such as food, clothing, and school supplies during tabling events.

Tree City Bulletin- Mrs. Nelson made a motion to approve the topics of the Sustainability Commission's article for the Fall 2019 Tree City Bulletin. They include information on the GEO Tour and Portage County Solar Co-op. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 5-0 vote.

2020 Environmental Film Series- Mrs. Morris provided a movie idea for the 2020 film series. The documentary is titled 'Joanna Macy and the Great Turning' and is 26 mins in length. The Kent Free Library (KFL) could possibly purchase it and sponsor the movie. Mr. Wicks can reach out to the KFL later in 2019.

Phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River- Mr. Wicks sent the NEFCO report to Councilmember Rosenberg for review. Mr. Wicks provided information to the commission on the State of Ohio Nutrient Mass Balance Study from April 2018. A potential future speaker to attend the meeting and speak on phosphorus is retired KSU professor and Kent Environmental Council member Bob Heath. A date has not been identified.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Jackson spoke on the state of recycling and a recycling grant received by Portage County Recycling that was highlighted in the Record Courier. Mr. Wicks confirmed billing for recycling services is now administered by the Portage County Solid Waste Management District. Mrs. Ruchotzke commented education on what can be recycled is important. There was a consensus to hold a workshop on recycling and potentially have Mr. Bill Steiner attend a future meeting to discuss the district's efforts to educate the community on recyclable items. A date has not been identified.

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to add "Waste Stream Reform" to new business. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and was approved with a 4-0 vote. Dr. Scholl left the meeting early.

Ms. Gomez made a motion to remove "Phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River" from old business. Motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and approved with a 4-0 vote.

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Mr. Wicks explained the need to find a new vendor to supply food grade 50 gallon barrels for another rain barrel workshop.

Mrs. Ruchotzke commented on a doll house diorama idea to visually represent items that can be sustainable in the household. This could be used at tabling events.

Kent Torch Fest- Mrs. Nelson presented the poster board presentation used at the Kent Torch Fest event highlighting facts about the Cuyahoga River Watershed.

NEXT MEETING

August 5, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Morris made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and was approved with a 4-0 vote. Dr. Scholl left the meeting early. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.