

Sustainability Commission Meeting June 3, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:45pm by Vice-Chairperson Julie Morris.

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

ABSENT: Andrew Scholl and Nadine Gomez

Mrs. Morris made a motion to excuse Dr. Scholl. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Mrs. Morris made a motion to excuse Ms. Gomez. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of May 6, 2019:

Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from May. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Public Comment

Renee Ruchotzke, 237 Highland Avenue, Kent, OH- Mrs. Ruchotzke expressed her happiness to attend meetings and is excited to begin her tenure as a commission member at the end of July 2019.

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- No update. Mr. Wicks confirmed he will set up the next meeting at a future date. Mr. Wicks is continuing to work with Community Development Director Bridget Susel on data input into the ICLEI Clearpath platform. Mrs. Morris confirmed resident Ann Ward has been sharing articles on Climate Change that are helpful. One article was on the local Green New Deal plan presented by Mayor Myrick of Ithaca, NY. Information included the City of Ithaca's support for a national Green New Deal and green building policies.

Farmers' Market Update- Ms. Gomez previously confirmed attendance during the June 15th Haymaker farmers market. There was a consensus to promote upcoming events such as the Perils of Plastic Pollution presentation on June 19th at the Kent Free Library and the Kent Torch Fest on June 20th. For scheduling, Mrs. Nelson is available during the morning session (9-11am) and Mrs. Morris and Ms. Jackson are available during the afternoon session (11-1pm).

Informational Solar Energy Meeting- Mrs. Nelson confirmed Luke Sulfridge recently resigned from his position at Solar United Neighbors (SUN) to become the new Executive Director of the Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council (SOPEC). Luke and SUN helped deploy 1.5

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Megawatts of solar in Ohio. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she received an email from the Ohio SUN team and they would like to hold a selection committee meeting to review contractor bids for solar installation in Portage County. Mrs. Nelson confirmed that Mary Lang is still working with Ohio SUN but is not sure how involved she is. Ohio SUN will notify interested residents once there is more information. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she will follow up with the Ohio SUN team to get a better sense of their plans and timeline.

Single Use Plastic Straws- Mrs. Morris confirmed the County Council in Cuyahoga County approved a ban on single use plastic bags to go into effect January 1, 2020. Bags must be made of at least 40% recycled material. Cuyahoga County is the first county in Ohio to pass such a plastic bag ban. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can try to find out regulations on carry out containers in Kent by the Kent Health Department. There was a consensus to follow up with Ms. Gomez to see if she spoke with Heather Malarcik at Main Street Kent on interest of downtown businesses to no longer use single use plastics.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- Mrs. Morris commented the KEC weekly breakfast at Little City Grill on June 7th will feature a speaker on wetlands. Also, the Edith Chase Symposium will occur in the afternoon of June 7th at the College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED). There was a consensus to contact KEC members to see if there is an opportunity to work together on reducing single use plastics in Kent.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Mrs. Morris commented she is working on the Green Energy Ohio (GEO) Tour planned for the last weekend in September 2019. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson are planning to meet with Mrs. Knowles on Monday June 10th at 2pm. Mrs. Ruchotzke confirmed she could attend as well.
- c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris provided an update. Upcoming volunteer opportunities include work days Tues/Thurs 8-4pm. The United Way day of caring event is planned for June 21st and work will be completed at the Haven. In addition, September 12th will be the Community Resource Connect event at the Haven and their fundraising Gala event is planned for November 2nd.
- d. Family & Community Services (F&CS)- Mrs. Morris provided results of the April food challenge. In total, there were 7,145 food items collected in April by Kent Social Services (KSS) in Kent. More than 3,000 items came during the one day Mayor's Challenge event hosted by Mayor Jerry Fiala. In total, \$17,000+ in monetary donations were collected for KSS. The Center of Hope in Ravenna received 8,550 food items by comparison. Also, the new Meijer store in Stow will donate expired food items to KSS. Mrs. Morris commented the Miller Community House is hiring and looking for student interns. There is a need for volunteers and capable employees. Also, the KSS capital campaign is set to begin.

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Tree City Bulletin- Mrs. Ruchotzke commented on having an article identifying items that can be recycled by residents. Mrs. Ruchotzke commented on a potential interview with Bill Steiner with the Portage County Solid Waste District to understand what items are accepted in the recycling container. In addition, there was a consensus to include info on the GEO Tour on September 28th.

2020 Environmental Film Series- Mrs. Ruchotzke commented on the idea of making the film series more interactive with discussion prompts after screenings. In addition, discussions can be in small breakout groups and then after a period of time the groups can come back together to present takeaways from the film.

Phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River- Mrs. Morris commented that residents Ann Ward and Rick Hawksley sent her information on a dog waste compost program in Louisville, CO as well as other topics related to City zoning practices. There was a consensus a dog waste compost program such as this could be an action item from the Climate Action Plan. Finally, Mr. Wicks sent the NEFCO report to Councilmember Gwen Rosenberg for review. There was a consensus to learn more about the water treatment process and what happens to solid waste in the water reclamation facility. More information can be provided later.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion for community gardens- Mrs. Morris commented gardens are unifiers and bring people together. There is a joy and sense of well-being in gardening. One example that may be replicated in Kent is the community garden in Stow administered by the City.

Kent Torch Fest- There was a consensus the Sustainability Commission will attend the Kent Torch Fest event on June 20th. Tentatively, programing includes making t-shirt totes and asking quiz questions about the river. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson confirmed they can attend between 4-7pm.

NEXT MEETING

July 1, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and was approved with a 3-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51pm.