Sustainability Commission Meeting
May 6, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:45pm by Chairperson Nadine Gomez.

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

ABSENT: None

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of March 4, 2019:
Ms. Gomez made a motion to approve the minutes from March. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and was approved with a 3-0 vote. Dr. Scholl and Mrs. Nelson abstained.

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of April 1, 2019:
Mrs. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from April. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0 vote. Dr. Scholl and Ms. Gomez abstained.

Public Comment

Renee Ruchotzke, 237 Highland Avenue, Kent, OH- Mrs. Ruchotzke introduced herself and explained her experience on sustainable issues. Mrs. Ruchotzke agreed it was important to connect with community groups and work to create a brand the Commission can use in the future. Mrs. Ruchotzke will be provided a packet of information and training on Open Meeting requirements once she begins her term on the Sustainability Commission later in the summer.

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- No update. Mr. Wicks will send an email to the Ad-hoc Committee to follow up on the progress of the project. Mr. Wicks has met with Community Development Director Bridget Susel to discuss data input into the ICLEI Clear Path software. There was a consensus to plan for the next meeting in June 2019. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson have previously attended the meeting and will continue as available. Alternates will be established if needed. The last meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee was on February 1, 2019.

Farmers' Market Update- Mrs. Morris described the results of the food drive on April 20th. There was a consensus to attend the farmers' market on June 15th. Events and programs to promote will include The Perils of Plastic Pollution hosted by the Portage County Soil & Water Conservation District on June 19th, the Kent Torch Fest on June 20th, and the August 2019 Cuyahoga River clean up. There was a consensus to wait until the next meeting on June 3rd to decide who will attend the market. Ms. Gomez commented on the creation of bat houses along the Cuyahoga River to encourage population growth and to provide a natural predator of mosquitoes. Ms. Gomez commented that a 'make it and take it' bat house workshop at the market could be an interesting program. Ms. Gomez asked if the Portage Park District has information on bats? If so, the Commission could share it on the table at the

market. Mr. Wicks commented he can research local resources for bats and possibly identify a guest speaker to attend a future meeting. As for other programming ideas to share at the market, Mrs. Nelson commented on the possibility of providing more information on the Portage County solar co-op. It could be beneficial to have co-op flyers to share.

Informational Solar Energy Meeting- No update. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she can follow up with Mary Lang and/or Heidi Shaffer to see if progress has been made of the project since the last meeting in March 2019. Mr. Wicks will also continue to organize a governmental co-op meeting for later in the summer.

Single Use Plastic Straws- Ms. Gomez commented that it may be time to expand the scope of the single use plastic straw campaign to include other single use plastic items. Ms. Gomez commented she can update the poster board used at the farmers' market to include information on other items. Mrs. Morris commented community members like to sign the pledge so continuing that aspect of the campaign and including additional single use plastic items would be beneficial. Mrs. Nelson also commented she can add examples of using reusable products, such as patrons bringing their own to-go containers to the restaurant. Mrs. Nelson asked what the health regulations were for bringing carry out containers to restaurants? For instance, Grazers restaurant would like to utilize reusable containers, however they are unable to do so due to health code limitations. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can ask the Kent City Health Department to provide regulations on carry out containers. Dr. Scholl commented food preparation procedures may account for some of these rules. Mrs. Ruchotzke commented on her experience with patrons bringing their own mugs to coffee shops and the mug can't go behind the counter, or employees cannot pull off the top mouthpiece per health code. There was a consensus to learn the restrictions so that recommendations from the Climate Action Plan can be made to provide alternatives within the limits of the law. Mrs. Ruchotzke commented on an experience while traveling in Ithaca, NY- she saw a dish renting service, known as the Dish Truck. The Dish Truck would drop off reusable items for restaurants to use and once used the Dish Truck would pick up the items to be cleaned and replace the inventory with a clean inventory. Businesses in downtown Kent that may benefit from a service like this include Erie Street Kitchen and Grazers, that do not have a sanitizing station and so cannot clean dishes to be reused. Finally, Mr. Rick Hawksley sent Mrs. Morris and City staff information on an international climate program. Informational item only.

Community Outreach Update-

a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- Mrs. Morris described the upcoming River Day event on May 18th hosted by KEC and Kent Parks & Rec Department. Also the Edith Chase Symposium will be held on June 7th for anyone interested in attending. Other upcoming events include The Perils of Plastic Pollution on June 19th and the Kent Torch Fest on June 20th. The Cuyahoga River clean up is tentatively set for August 17th. Finally, the Friday morning breakfast event on May 17th will feature KSU Professor Joseph Ortiz to speak on Lake Erie algae blooms.

b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Tabling at the KSU Earth Fest was a success. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson described the Green Energy Ohio (GEO) Tour annual awards ceremony held at Kent State in the architecture building. University Architect Michael Bruder received an award on behalf of the University. Mrs. Ruchotzke commented the building information and presentation on the architecture building is worth sharing with the community. Mrs. Morris also highlighted the work of the Ohio Hospital Association and their progress to make hospitals achieve energy efficient ratings. Also the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections have a program on providing inmates training and resources to achieve a solar technician certificate so as to have an employable skill once released from incarceration. Mrs. Morris confirmed that a GEO tour planning meeting has been scheduled with Melanie Knowles and Leah Graham for June 10th. The GEO Tour is planned to be the last weekend in September 2019.

   Mrs. Nelson made motion to support the GEO Tour event and to attend planning meetings. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and approved with 5-0 vote.

c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris provided an update. She confirmed construction work has continued on the property. Mrs. Nelson asked if they have a website. Mrs. Morris confirmed yes they have a website and Facebook page. Mrs. Morris confirmed they have a spring fundraiser event at a restaurant in Ravenna. Mrs. Morris commented since she originally began to attend Haven meetings, once her term is completed would anyone else on the Commission like to take her place? Do we still want to continue sending representation from the Commission? More consideration is needed.

d. Family & Community Services (F&CS)- Mrs. Morris commented the food drive on April 20th was a success. The Commission and F&CS collected 3 garbage bags of clothes to be sent to the County Clothing Center. The F&CS hunger challenge and mayor challenge competition was completed in the month of April. Mrs. Morris presented on Kent Social Services' design concept for the facility renovation. The planned renovation is planning to be showcased in the next edition of the Around Kent magazine. Previous showcases of F&CS programs in Around Kent include a feature article on the Miller Community House.

Tree City Bulletin- As for future article ideas, Ms. Gomez is working with Heather Malarcik with Main Street Kent to speak to downtown businesses on their activities to reduce single use plastic items and what obstacles are standing in their way. More information will come later. Ms. Jackson's previous list of services that residents on a budget have access to come be another idea. Mrs. Morris agreed this is a good idea as lower income residents need affordable alternatives to become more sustainable. Ms. Jackson commented Walmart recently began selling reel mowers that do not require gas or put off emissions. Ms. Gomez asked if there is a significant difference between Walmart and regional food stores? Should we recommend

buying local to keep resources in the City? More information is needed on pricing. Ideas will continue to be discussed during the June meeting.

2019 Environmental Film Series- Mr. Wicks provided a final update. Overall, the 2019 series was a success. There was a consensus to begin planning the 2020 film series in October 2019.

Phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River- No update. Mr. Wicks agreed to find contact information for the authors of a Clean Water Plan report completed in 2011 by NEFCO. There was a consensus to send Councilwoman Rosenberg the report and see if it satisfies what she was looking for.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Wicks presented a resolution draft of the Green New Deal to the Commission. This was requested by Ms. Jackson during the April 2019 meeting. Commission members are free to read the resolution.

Mr. Wicks presented on a 'Rummage Rampage' program from the University of Iowa and City of Ames, IA. If there is interest in a similar program in Kent, Commission members are free to research and investigate interest. Dr. Scholl commented that unlimited trash disposal offered to renters, many of them students, creates an environment that makes it easier to throw large items, such as furniture, away. Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Morris confirmed they can ask the KSU Office of Sustainability regarding University efforts to deter waste on campus during student move out at the end of the academic year.

Kent Torch Fest- Mrs. Nelson presented on the Kent Torch Fest and asked if the Commission would like to have a booth. There was a consensus to have table at the event and an activity will be decided during the upcoming June meeting.

NEXT MEETING

June 3, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Gomez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and was approved with a 4-0 vote (Dr. Scholl left the meeting early). The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.