

Sustainability Commission Meeting January 7, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:40pm by Vice-chairperson Julie Morris.

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

ABSENT: Nadine Gomez

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to excuse Ms. Gomez. Motion was seconded by Dr. Scholl and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of December 4, 2018:

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes from December with select revisions. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

Ad-hoc Committee Update- Dr. Scholl confirmed the ad-hoc committee was continuing to collect data. Mrs. Nelson added that Mr. Boateng presented on a new tool provided by Davey Tree called TreeKeeper that could be used to track data points in Kent. Mr. Wicks confirmed that 6 responses were received out of 350 letters sent out to select Kent businesses. Dr. Scholl commented that adding language in a future letter letting businesses know this is an ongoing collection effort could help encourage them to participate. If a future letter is sent out, it should include this language. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she spoke to Kent State University (KSU) representatives Heather White and Scott Schelat with facilities about lawn care equipment and fuel usage on the KSU campus. Mrs. Nelson commented she will send Mr. Schelat a formal request on equipment and fuel usage. Mr. Wicks commented he can check the ICLEI ClearPath wording on engine/fuel types. Mrs. Nelson confirmed solid waste companies licensed to operate in Kent were mailed a letter before the holidays. Mr. Wicks confirmed he has received no responses yet.

Farmers' Market Update- Ms. Gomez confirmed with market manager Andrew Rome that January 19th is available for tabling. The winter market hours are 10am-1pm. Mrs. Nelson and Ms. Gomez confirmed they can be available in the morning 10-11:30am and Mrs. Morris and Ms. Jackson confirmed they are available 11:30-1pm. Ms. Gomez confirmed she can pick up the materials at the Service Admin Complex prior to the market. Items to promote include the 2019 Environmental Film Series and Portage County Ohio Solar United Neighbors (OH SUN) Co-op.

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Informational Solar Energy Meeting- Mr. Wicks confirmed the OH SUN website has created a Portage County Co-op webpage, however, no information session has been scheduled. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she can reach out to co-op organizers Mary Lang and Gwen Fisher. Once the information session is scheduled, the commission can promote it.

Single Use Plastic Straws- There was a consensus that the public awareness campaign be continued at the Haymaker Farmers Market. Mrs. Nelson commented that while eating at Wild Goats the waitress confirmed the owner was aware of the campaign and would like more information. Mrs. Nelson confirmed she will try to give campaign information to the Wild Goats owner. Mrs. Nelson commented she can stop by downtown restaurant Grazers to talk about sustainable business activities they are doing and how it can be expanded. Dr. Scholl commented students at KSU reuse to-go containers, which is a good model. Mrs. Nelson commented that the National Skip the Straw Day event on February 22nd could be a good time to promote the campaign. Mr. Wicks confirmed he can promote the National Skip the Straw Day on the community sign if needed.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- Mrs. Morris confirmed the KEC sent out emails to members raising awareness for new recycling restrictions by the Portage County Solid Waste District.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability- Leah Graham notified the commission of an upcoming Ohio EPA Sustainability Conference in Columbus on April 17th. All commission members are encouraged to attend. Topics include building sustainable solutions, sustainable community partnerships, sustainable food management, etc. In addition, Mrs. Graham confirmed the 2019 annual meeting of the Green Energy Ohio organization will be hosted at KSU on April 25th.
- c. Haven of Portage County- Mrs. Morris confirmed there was no update. Their next meeting will be on the last Tuesday in January. Mrs. Morris confirmed they are not opening as a warming center, but instead working with F&CS and the Center of Hope in Ravenna.
- d. Family & Community Services- Mrs. Morris confirmed there is no update. Holiday food drives have ended and participation was good. Mrs. Morris confirmed that F&CS is planning renovations to Kent Social Services as a capital project in 2019. Mrs. Morris was curious if SNAP payments will be distributed late if shutdown continues. A food drive may be beneficial to help in the event of the shutdown continuing. A potential food drive in February at the farmers market could be beneficial. Mrs. Morris confirmed she can ask Christie Anderson at F&CS about availability in February. Mrs. Nelson also mentioned that Mike Lewis with the Kent Police Department could encourage Citizen Police Academy ambassadors and graduates to participate in a food drive as well.

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Tree City Bulletin- There was a consensus to have 4 topics to combine into one article. They are the 2019 Environmental Film Series, progress on the Climate Action Plan, OH SUN Portage County Co-op, and highlighting sustainable practices of businesses downtown. Mrs. Morris confirmed she can write a summary on the film series and/or solar co-op. Mrs. Nelson and Ms. Gomez can write on the downtown businesses. Mr. Wicks and Dr. Scholl can write on the progress of the Climate Action Plan. Mrs. Nelson commented she will be absent for the next commission meeting on February 4th.

NEW BUSINESS

2019 Environmental Film Series- Mr. Wicks provided prospective dates for the film series and a list of documentaries available to show. Of the documentaries listed, Mrs. Nelson recommended 'Bringing it home', a movie on industrial hemp. Mrs. Nelson commented if the movie was chosen, a guest speaker from Kent Natural Foods Co-op could attend to speak. Tentatively, dates for the film series will be Feb 19th, March 19th, and April 16th. Selected documentaries will be finalized via email. A short list of potential movie ideas include: 'Bringing it home', 'Tomorrow', and 'Before the Flood'. There was a consensus to review the list of movies and provide recommendations. Recommendations should be sent to Mr. Wicks by Friday, January 11th with a final selection by January 15th. A flyer will be created for the Haymaker Farmers' Market on January 19th.

Phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River- Mr. Wicks commented the reason to study phosphorus in the Cuyahoga River is to better understand Kent's contribution to Lake Erie algae blooms. Mr. Wicks confirmed the data presented by the Water Reclamation Plant and the levels of phosphorus upstream and downstream of the facility show a negligible impact. Mr. Wicks confirmed that we will still need to investigate phosphorus causes and mitigation efforts should the levels rise. Mr. Wicks confirmed water quality monitoring stations are currently on the Cuyahoga River to monitor phosphorus, and other chemical levels. They provide monthly readings, but Mr. Wicks confirmed he can check to see if the stations monitor weekly or daily levels as well. Dr. Scholl commented rain events can cause high levels of phosphorus. One potential solution to rising phosphorus levels is permaculture concepts of sustainable living.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Nelson made a motion to add an item from new business to old business on the 2019 Environmental Film Series. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and approved with a 4-0 vote.

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

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NEXT MEETING

February 4, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

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