

Sustainability Commission Meeting, July 3, 2023

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Judy Nelson, Mary Starbuck, Andrew (Andy) Scholl, Rick Hawksley, MaryJayne Stone

Others in Attendance: Julie Morris, City of Kent; William (Bill) Wilen, Ad Hoc Committee member

Judy Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:33pm and roll was taken.

Judy opened the Good of the Order/Open Comment section of the meeting and asked whether anyone had any items to discuss. Hearing none, Judy advised they were ready to adjourn. Rick motioned to move adjournment to go into working session. Mary Jayne seconded, and discussion was offered. Hearing none, and with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned.

Julie provided materials for review to start the working session that included an outline to help guide the group through work needing to be tended to during the session and to help with facilitation of same. She advised she would provide them for future sessions, to be used or not as needed.

Julie provided a summary of work underway and updates to other items that had been under discussion from previous commission meetings and associated work sessions:

- Julie advised that she asked about the outdoor water use/swimming pool rebate program and was told Rhonda Hall and Brian Huff from the City were the folks who had more data on the program usage and Julie is working to schedule a meeting with them for same. Julie demonstrated where to find the existing pool rebate program form on the City's website and read through the form contents that members can direct the public to in the meantime. Members had some questions about what happens around pool drainage and where the water/chemicals go, as well as power washing. Julie will also bring those questions to the meeting with Rhonda and Brian.
- Julie advised she submitted the NOPEC Foundation grant on June 30th. She provided a summary of what the grant will cover: a survey of Kent residents regarding various aspects of energy audits to generate data that will provide the foundation for development of the larger CAP suggested subsidized energy audit program and provide baseline energy retrofit data for our housing stock. She advised awards will be announced in the Fall.
- Julie shared Jim Bowling's announcement that the city was awarded \$5.25 million for the E. Main Street renovation project via the federal RAISE grant he had submitted which will include the installation of 34 dual plug EV charging stations in public parking lots along the south side of E Main St on Kent State's campus. Discussion was had about the charging level rates and station placements in relation to public access if located on KSU campus. Julie advised she would need to get more information from Jim about same, in addition to more information about how he would like to see outreach and communication about the project be supported by the Commission given the direct alignment of the project with the CAP.
- Julie advised Judy had caught an error in the CAP tri-fold brochure – the initiative blurb reading "Creation of a feasibility study for EV infrastructure..." is currently placed above the section header for Transportation and needs to be moved beneath same. Mary also pointed out there is an extra line after the Stationary Energy section header colon that needs to be removed. Julie advised we won't waste the remaining brochures, but she will make those corrections before printing any more.

The working session then moved into CAP prioritization discussions.

Members had reviewed the CAP to identify their main areas of interest within same. Rick provided a hand-out he created to help facilitate discussion around who could be the champions of work around each of the 15 initiatives (corresponding to their numbered listing on the “short CAP initiative summary document” Julie had distributed in prior meeting sessions; Rick suggested adding Recycling as part of item 11) and who other stakeholders and partners might be related to same. Rick clarified that the champions were intended to be Commission members (and Bill) who could help facilitate work in those CAP areas as needed.

Julie briefly reviewed the Initial CAP initiative prioritization by year document that she had created as an initial timeline for how the initiatives could be ordered and worked on.

Commission members and Bill took turns sharing which areas of the CAP they were most interested in, discussing the items in more detail while sharing, and breaking down as follows:

- Mary: Food Waste (item 10) and the Urban Tree Credit program (item 12)
- Judy: Energy Audits (item 3), Food Waste (item 10), Expanding Solar (item 6) and the Climate Business Alliance (item 15)
- Rick: MEMP (item 2), Energy Codes (item 5), Expanding Solar (item 6), Bike & Walk Infrastructure (item 9)
 - Rick provided some information about the current state of Ohio’s energy code that governs much of what is possible
 - Rick provided some context about biking safety and education in relation to biking infrastructure vs. riding on the street
 - Rick advised there isn’t much regarding transit in the CAP and he would like to see more education campaigning about getting folks out of their cars and onto bikes, scooters, buses etc.; members discussed inefficiencies in the current transit system available in Kent
 - Judy added that PARTA has a ZERO Emission Fleet Plan (that utilized our GHG Inventory) and members discussed different aspects of the process of creating that plan – Julie advised she has a copy of the plan that Claudia Amrhein (Director of PARTA) had provided her and when we begin implementation work around this section of the CAP, we can reach out to Claudia as well to learn more about the current status
- Bill: Expanding Solar (item 6), EV Infrastructure (item 8), working with Kent City Schools and KSU (items 13 & 14)
 - Bill and members shared how he had done some work with the K-12 district during the ad-hoc committee work on the GHG Inventory and CAP development, as well as work he had done with League of Women Voters around same
 - Members briefly discussed the League of Women Voters (LWV) in Hudson and their public survey materials Judy had shared (provided to members in their working session information packets) from when Judy and Julie presented at their Climate Roundtable event back in April
 - Members agreed with Bill’s suggestion (it was noted he is on the board of LWV) that having the LWV position at the state-level regarding energy would be more helpful than individual townships or cities, and that LWV would be an important stakeholder
- Andy: All initiatives under Transportation (items 8 & 9), Urban Tree Credit program (item 12), Food Waste and Recycling (items 10 & 11)
- Mary Jayne: all Education & Outreach areas (items 13 & 15), items within the MEMP that address light pollution (item 2), Food Waste, compost, and recycling (items 10 & 11)

- Members had further discussion around the MEMP – Rick has contacts who work on large scale energy savings contracts, and he explained his ideas for how different stakeholders could be involved in MEMP development; members noted this could be an area of importance to get started on soon
- Mary Jayne mentioned, and members discussed the Free Cycle website and related concepts, and/or little free library boxes concepts but for household goods or any other items as well as the free-items table within the Habitat for Humanity store as compliments to recycling efforts

Members discussed the distinction between elements of the CAP that will have to be done internally by staff and with experts/consultants versus work done by the Commission members. It was noted that much of the work the Commission can focus on is education and outreach around specific components of the CAP initiatives as we move through implementation, and that those specific components may be where ad hoc committees form, or outside stakeholders can be brought in for further input. It was noted that despite City staff and consultants doing the main development of initiative programs, the very important compliment to that work is educating the community on what work is happening, as well as providing opportunities to engage and connect around that work, which is a primary component of work the Commission members can and will need to do.

Members agreed priority should be low-hanging fruit items that will impact the most emission reduction – how and the timeframe for what that looks like should be left to staff purview. It was noted that members CAP interest areas were spread out across the initiatives, with some of the items where most members held interest involve partnership with KSU to develop (namely food waste – item10). Discussion was had about the possible broad impacts of Ohio Senate Bill 83 may have on sustainability initiatives at the university, but it was reiterated the items in the CAP that call for KSU partnership can still be worked on, it may just need to be thought about differently on the university side.

Julie reviewed the Initial CAP prioritization by year document in more detail which fostered discussion around the need to develop stakeholder relationships and engage with them around alignment of their interest and areas of sustainability work they are already doing with areas of the CAP. Julie advised this work falls within the CAP directed development of the City-Business (& organization/non-profits etc.) Climate Alliance. Julie noted having a broad understanding of stakeholder interest and having the business/org community aware of what the CAP is and what initiatives may align with their work will create the synergy necessary to help involve them in specific program development as CAP implementation is worked through. Julie noted this foundational relationship work should be prioritized ahead of reaching out to stakeholders yet about any specific items in the CAP. The “how” of that relationship development as part of the City-Business Climate Alliance is in itself the work that now needs to be done and members discussed some initial ideas for what that might look like using some KEC community meetings and other options as examples.

Members moved into discussion around listing initial stakeholders, or sectors that could be included in the City-Business Climate Alliance: Health systems, Habitat/Restore, Arts community & Kent Stage, Lion’s Club, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Food Not Lawns, different KSU groups (student clubs/fraternities/sororities etc.) Kiwanis, the Faith community including the group FACT. Members reviewed and discussed the list of Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Portage County Visitors Bureau and Main Street Kent events Julie put together as another source of stakeholders and possible events were Climate Alliance work and outreach could be done.

Discussion of tabling materials was had – posters about the CAP, give-away items (buttons, other swag, flyers etc.) official nametags for Commission members so they can be identified when tabling/providing outreach at different places, and other items need to be developed to enhance tabling activities. Members recapped their

experience tabling at the Heritage Festival and agreed that most people were unaware that the CAP has been passed, and that having a focus to let the community know its official would help. Discussion around news media outreach was had as well – articles in local news outlets and in school newsletters both at K-12 schools and KSU etc.

Members continued discussing what different types of outreach could look like and Julie requested that members each put together their own vision of what community and Climate Alliance outreach looks like to them so it could be the focus of their next meeting's working session.

Members briefly discussed their upcoming tabling at the Farmer's Market on July 22nd. Julie will email members later in the week with the times they signed up for siting the table, the status of tabling materials, as well as organize the transfer of tabling to members ahead of and after the event.

Members ended the working session a little before 7:20pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, August 7th, 2023, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Overholt building.