

Sustainability Commission Meeting, August 7, 2023

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Judy Nelson, Mary Starbuck, MaryJayne Stone

Excused: Andrew (Andy) Scholl, Rick Hawksley

Others in Attendance: Julie Morris, City of Kent

Judy Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:36pm and roll was taken.

Julie Morris noted that there were several technical difficulties affecting the meeting this evening - the computer recording system was down and there a problem with one of the building fire alarms that was continually sounding in error, but there was a possibility there could be another problem. Bridget Susel stopped by to suggest the meeting end early or be rescheduled due to same.

Judy opened the Good of the Order/Open Comment section of the meeting and asked whether anyone had any items to discuss. Judy had an item regarding recycling that she wanted to address. She recapped the recent switch of recycling services from Portage County Recycling to Republic Services as per the recent contract bid results. She noted she had received a mailer from Republic Services advising about items that can be recycled and she noticed a discrepancy on same – the mailer featured “sour cream” type plastic tubs and foil pie tins that in her understanding aren’t able to be recycled. She advised she had called Brent Bowker, the General Manager for Central Ohio at Republic Services, to discuss this issue and he confirmed that those items can’t be recycled. He advised they can still be placed in the recycling bin, but they will be sorted out at their facility and sent to the landfill. It was noted that mostly plastic items with a “neck” (plastic items designated #1 and #2) are recyclable at this time.

Judy also discussed with Brent the possibility of setting up a tour in the future for the Commission at Republic’s regional MERF facility which is where they separate/sort the items for recycling and for the landfill. Members present expressed interest in doing same.

Judy requested Julie find out from the City’s Service Department what City-sanctioned materials the Commission can share about Republic’s recycling services and what can be included in our tabling sessions as needed. Judy also requested Julie find out from the City’s Service Department how to request Republic clarify the detailed plastic numbers (and other specific items) that can actually be recycled and change their outreach materials to Kent residents to reflect same.

Mary noted she had heard of a resident who was being charged by Republic for the cost of their recycling bin. Julie and Judy advised that this should not be the case as the bins were to be provided free of charge to Kent residents as part of the new service contract. Julie recommended the individual call the City’s Service Department to discuss their circumstances.

Mary Jayne noted an individual had approached her regarding presenting to the Commission about solar initiatives. Discussion was had about public meetings and it was noted the individual could come to any meeting and provide their statements during the Open Comment section of the meeting. If they wanted to provide a full presentation, Julie suggested having the individual get in contact with her to be able to discuss and plan for same. Julie provided her business card to Mary Jayne to give to the individual if needed.

During the discussion about public meetings, Mary Starbuck noted she did not feel it was appropriate to lock the doors at the Overholt building. It was clarified that the doors are left open and unlocked until the meeting is called to order (which usually starts past the scheduled starting time to allow for late-comers) and are then

sometimes locked due to the multi-use nature of the Overholt building for safety and security. It was noted that today was also an exception due to the fire alarm and system problems occurring in the building. Mary felt strongly that the doors should never be locked during a public meeting and it was noted. Brief discussion about moving the Commission meeting to the new City Hall once complete was had. Members felt it is more centrally located and could accommodate the public in a more accessible way.

Judy asked whether there were any further items to discuss. Hearing none, Judy advised they were ready to adjourn. Judy 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 at 5:50pm.

Julie provided materials for review to start the working session and help facilitate same. Included were frameworks she created to help guide the CAP Education and Outreach and City Climate Business/Org Alliance work.

Julie provided a partial update of her work on CAP related items due to Bridget's request of ending the meeting early, and in response to Mary Starbuck advising she wanted to skip to the portion of the working session involving updates on the City's work. Mary advised we have a quorum to decide on any issues despite Rick and Andy's absence. Julie advised a goal of this evening's working session is for each member to share their visions of what Education and Outreach around the CAP looks like to them, and there weren't any issues that needed a vote this evening. Julie advised if any were to arise, Judy would call the formal meeting back into session to hold a vote.

Julie provided a brief summary of her meeting with Rhonda Hall, Brian Huff and Tracy Huffman from the City regarding the pool rebate program that members had requested information about. Julie provided basic cost information for the rebates, explained the differences between the Pool Rebate program and the Sprinkler Meter program, along with its associated costs. Julie advised that per the City, the space on the water bills are reserved and utilized by the Service Department (and others as needed) to communicate necessary information and it wouldn't be a space used to advertise rebate programs. Rebate programs are available as a public good and should be utilized, and it was noted rebates do take away from the City's overall budget to provide other needed and necessary services. The City advised that generally, greater savings for people regarding water usage can be had by ensuring they do not have any leaking toilets, pipes or other issues that cause water bills to become excessively high. It was noted that sharing about the Pool rebate program would be best served as part of a themed tabling or other information session where maintenance and fixing of household leaks was also discussed as part of water conservation and/or other sustainable water initiatives.

Julie noted the GHG Inventory update is getting underway with the help of KERAMIDA.

The working session then moved into CAP Education and Outreach discussions.

Mary Starbuck provided her feedback about the July Farmer's market tabling. Mary liked having the community suggestion box and asked Julie to confirm how many suggestions had been placed in same. Julie advised she couldn't remember off the top of her head as she was still working to get suggestion items added to the CAP database, but she thought it was around 2. Mary felt certain there were more as she had personally added several suggestions to the box in addition to the amount she remembered people providing. Julie noted she would double check. Mary was glad to have folks sign up for the email list-serv and felt it could be a competition between Commission members for how many people they could get to sign-up for same during their tabling shift. Mary asked whether any outreach was being done to the people who signed up.

Julie advised she personally emailed (via the list-serv) a thank you note to everyone for signing up and to advise we would use the list serv to provide information and updates about the CAP, any associated events, as well as to alert them to as possible volunteer opportunities as they arise in the future.

Julie advised she is tracking CAP outreach data and provided same from her work updates, noting that a little over 200 people so far had been reached via their outreach efforts:

- 79 folks were in attendance for the Hudson Climate Roundtable (plus potentially more with the live broadcast and YouTube viewing after) in April
- 50 folks took either a trifold or CAP QR code card at the Heritage fest, with 12 folks signing up for the listserv at same
- 41 folks took either a trifold or CAP QR code card at the July farmer's market tabling, with 19 folks signing up for the listserv at same

Mary advised there should be a separate table and smaller chairs for children to access and play with the Sustainability House. Mary Jayne expressed concerns about possible damage to the house and to consider same when thinking about how and where to place it.

Mary advised there should be a Sustainability Commission meeting notice that displays our meeting times and location as part of our tabling materials. Julie advised of the other ways the meeting is advertised publicly. Mary suggested the existing meeting notices aren't accessible enough and felt displaying notice of the meetings at tabling sessions would help. Julie advised there is no problem with doing same and it could be considered as part of the members discussions around what tabling materials to include when doing outreach.

Mary Jayne advised her experience tabling at the July market was good and she noted that there were many folks from out of town (Hudson and Brimfield in particular) who were interested in what Kent was doing regarding their climate action plan.

Mary Jayne shared the CAP slogan and icon design she drew and created. It states: "K-CAP, Kent cares about people, Kent cares about planet, Kent Climate Action Plan" and features a blue and green globe. She suggested we could add our webpage to it and possibly put it on buttons or other swag items to be handed out while tabling, at events, or at other outreach opportunities. She advised it would be good to have something catchy to say and help people remember/think about the CAP. Mary Jayne gave the drawing to Julie who will get it distributed to members for further consideration.

Mary Starbuck asked about the Flashes 1st Thursday event Julie had noted under her work updates on the working session outline. Julie explained the event is normally held on the KSU campus to welcome students but this year, it will be held downtown. Melanie Knowles had invited the City and Commission to share the KSU Office of Sustainability table at same and share about the CAP. It will be held Thursday, August 24th from 5-8pm. Julie will be there to set up and sit the City's portion of the table, but any commission members are welcome to join. Mary advised she would be interested in tabling at that event. Julie will send out more information to members as she gets it and will coordinate participation in tabling.

Mary Starbuck asked whether we were going to table again at the Farmer's Market. Julie advised we would want to include Rick and Andy in that discussion as we would need their help to staff same. Mary advised we have a quorum and wouldn't need their input to decide, and suggested we only attend for a couple of hours and not the whole market time if staffing it was an issue. Julie advised she could reach out to Andrew Rome to find out whether there was a good time in later September for the Commission to be there, and she would have to double check whether he would want the commission to leave early, as generally, market vendors and participants stay for the whole time (9am-1pm). Julie also noted they would be tabling with the same

materials for a September market, unless the CAP website gets up and running and the GHG Inventory is finished by the end of September. Mary asked whether members present could agree to table in September.

Judy noted that tabling at the Farmer's market isn't part of her Education and Outreach vision and she's not sure she wants to table at another one. She provided some history of her having tabled at the Farmer's Markets for many years in her past work during her previous appointment to the Commission and she doesn't feel it is the most effective form of outreach for her. Additionally, she felt it wouldn't be effective to table again at the market with nothing new to share yet about the CAP. Part of her vision, which she noted she hadn't been able to share tonight, includes reaching out and going to other organizations and businesses to speak about the CAP.

Julie noted she was hearing each member had different aspects of Education and Outreach that were most important to them, which is the purpose of sharing each member's vision to identify and incorporate those ideas as applicable when developing the Education and Outreach components of the CAP. Julie also noted that Bill Wilen had provided an email in his absence sharing part of his work and vision, which was included in the working session packet but would not have time to be reviewed tonight.

Julie advised there would not be time to look through the frameworks for the Education and Outreach work that she had provided as part of the working session materials, and given the differences expressed this evening, we would revisit sharing each member's full vision for the Education and Outreach work at our next meeting. Julie advised revisiting this work at the next meeting will also allow for Rick and Andy's ideas to be shared.

Given the differences between members regarding attending another Farmer's Market, the issue will be tabled until the September meeting's working session.

Members ended the working session at 6:38pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, September 11th, 2023, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Overholt building.