

Sustainability Commission Meeting, May 6th, 2024

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Mary Starbuck, Julie Grant

Excused: Maryjayne Stone, Judy Nelson, Andy Scholl

There was no quorum to hold a vote, but members present agreed to excuse the absences.

Others in Attendance: Julie Morris, Bill Wilen

Mary Starbuck called the meeting to order at 5:35pm and roll was taken.

Mary opened the Good of the Order/Open Comments section of the meeting.

No comments were made and Julie G. began to discuss her New Business item related to proposing resolutions for Council. Julie G. advised she had two issues she thought Council should be aware of. Julie G. advised that in her job as a reporter, writing about environmental issues, she has become aware of a new technology for industrial carbon capture. Julie G. advised the process she heard about involves using a pipeline to capture the facility CO2 and transfer it to carbon storage wells, like fracking processes that pose hazards to the environment and people. She believes it to be somewhat supported by IRA funds and new start-up companies to help mitigate industrial scale emissions. Julie G. isn't sure how much of this process is established, being used, or whether it is more in the development stage. She isn't sure whether it is being considered a real possibility in industry circles, but she felt Council should be aware of this since our area has many injection wells and she could see this becoming an issue.

On a similar topic, Julie G. felt it would be important for Council to be aware of the dangers of waste water injection wells (associated with hydraulic fracturing/fracking processes) and suggested that Council consider a statement or policy about what the City wants to do to protect against same. Julie M. mentioned that she didn't know the origins of the practice, but she remembered Harrison Wicks (previous City staff liaison to the commission) providing injection well maps for our county so that the commission could monitor for any changes to same (new wells being drilled, existing operating wells, and any that were no longer used). Julie M. remembered this being a recurring agenda item from her previous time as a Sustainability Commission member. Julie M. advised she would reach out to Bridget and do some research to find out more about whether there were any other Commission responsibilities related to this and whether Council already had resolutions, decisions, or anything else related to this issue.

Julie G. reiterated she felt that given the waste product from both processes can migrate into gas production wells and leak out into the environment, Council should be ahead of any issues these processes could pose to the City. She felt it important to find out whether the City wants to have a policy (any zoning restrictions on wells in the City etc.), or at least a statement (if the City can't act due to these things being governed by State laws etc.) about it to help discern action should any oil and gas representatives try to propose any related projects within the City. She is also concerned about the possible impact to the City's water supply with any of these potential projects being sited nearby and is concerned that landowners would welcome them to make money.

Julie M. advised the issue will be moved to Old Business with the discussion continuing at next month's meeting. She advised that a quorum would be needed to hold a vote on whether the group wanted to pursue bringing these issues to council, and that if they did, they would need to decide what format they wanted to

suggest to council (statement/letter of concern, resolution, ordinance) and then that would all have to be drafted and reviewed with Staff before being given to Council.

Bill Wilen asked for clarification about what resolutions were going to be presented to Council given the meeting agenda item title. Julie M. provided an explanation that there aren't any current resolutions going before Council but that the discussion we had around Julie G.'s issues of concern was that same agenda item. Julie M. reiterated that Julie G. had concerns about these issues and feels Council should be made aware and act, but it is up to the Commission to decide whether or how to move this forward, and Julie M. reiterated the process for that.

Mary requested more information about the carbon storage wells and other processes be provided ahead of next meeting so that members can have time to think about it before further discussion. Julie G. advised she will work with Julie M. to get additional information and Julie M. would help disseminate that out to the group.

Members present agreed there were no more items to discuss as part of the commission meeting and ended same. Julie M. began the working session at 5:55pm. Mary asked whether anyone had questions regarding the Staff Work Updates that were previously sent out.

Bill Wilen had a question about the World Kinect update. He wanted to clarify the grants being worked on with World Kinect and asked which of the two City buildings were selected for the onsite solar assessment. Julie M. explained the services World Kinect are offering are in-kind services, not part of a grant. Julie M. explained that Council must make the decision as to which two buildings/facilities they'd like to see onsite solar developed for, and we are pending more information from World Kinect in their reports to be able to give those details to Council for a decision. Julie M. reiterated that the reports World Kinect will provide both for the City's carbon audit and for the onsite solar assessments will be accompanied by funding source suggestions and will help give us needed information to apply for grants that will be paired to our needs.

Julie G. asked whether the City's building solar assessments were just for onsite solar or being considered for community solar projects. Julie M. advised that in a way, they eventually could be considered for both. Julie M. explained that the assessment from World Kinect would be focused on installing solar onsite at two City facilities as a stand alone project for the City. Julie M. advised she would like to explore in the future how, if there was to be a large array built at one of the City's facilities that same large array could eventually be folded into a larger and separate community solar project, but this is just an idea and would have to be vetted later as even possible. Julie M. explained some of the differences between the two types of solar projects and more about what community solar is.

Bill Wilen mentioned the Unitarian Universalist Church in Kent installed a solar array on the roof of their Hobbs Hall building and are experiencing very low-priced energy bills for same. Bill also mentioned Ohio Solar United Neighbors (OH SUN), a little bit about their work around community solar, and his communication with Tristan Radar who works with OH SUN. Bill advised Kent Environmental Council (KEC) is considering having Tristan come to provide an informational presentation around community solar or other solar projects for area decision makers.

Julie G. asked questions regarding OH SUN's work and Julie M. directed Julie G. to OH SUN's website, advising they are a non-profit organization that has lots of educational information about various kinds of solar projects and options, including community solar, and educational information about transmission of energy produced and how it gets connected to the grid etc..

Julie M. asked if there were any other questions about the staff work updates. Julie G. asked if there was anything the members could be working on before the next meeting. Julie M. advised having ideas for the Newsletter would be helpful since the next issue is meant to be sent out in July. Bill suggested there be a paragraph in same about the school visit Julie M. had with Mrs. McComb's 2nd grade class at Longcoy Elementary to answer questions about climate change and the City's CAP that the students had generated. Julie M. briefly summarized how the school visit came about and what was talked about during same. City tree policies were discussed during the school visit in response to student questions and this led to a brief discussion among commission members about the loss of flowering cherry and/or crab-apple tree in or near Hometown Bank Plaza (Heritage Park) downtown that Julie G.'s family members had really enjoyed.

Members didn't have any further questions regarding the staff work updates. Julie M. provided information about Judy Nelson's and Maryjayne Stone's tabling materials and event ideas that they had shared with Julie M. since the last meeting.

Judy had let Julie M. know that she had purchased a toy truck that has recycling and trash bins attached (to mimic a hauler truck) and that contains cards with images of common household items can be sorted into the recycling or trash bins on the truck. Judy sorted the cards to be relevant to our area and thought this could be an addition to our tabling activities. Julie M. advised she had spoken with Bridget Susel to ensure this could be utilized given the City's contract with Republic Services and Bridget advised that it could, as long as we have a sheet or other materials from Republic Services listing or showing what can actually be recycled with them here in Kent.

Maryjayne had suggested to Julie M. that the Commission consider tabling at Art In The Park and use a silk screener to print slogans, images or other items related to the CAP (like Maryjayne's K-CAP idea – Julie M. showed the design to members present) on tee shirts as an event at same. Maryjayne had said she might know some folks who are silk screeners who might be willing to donate time, equipment, and materials for this. Julie M. had advised she had to discuss the idea with Bridget Susel, which she did and Bridget advised this would not be possible. Bridget advised that any services provided by an entity printing slogans or images about City items could present a legal problem of not having provided a publicly-bid service or be construed as advocating for a sole vendor. Bridget advised the City would not be able to sponsor or be associated with it.

Mary Starbuck asked about the status of the Sustainability Doll House. Julie M. advised currently, we are sharing use of same with KEC and have a check-out system designed to keep track of it. Julie M. advised we will be using it at our next tabling event, Leadership Portage County's Family Fun Day scheduled for Sunday, May 19th from 1-4pm at Trail Lake Park. Julie M. advised we would use the doll house and potentially the toy truck for child-friendly activities at that event. Mary advised perhaps coloring could be added to the family tabling events as an additional activity if needed. Julie M. advised we'll also be sharing our CAP information and hand-outs for the adults and trying to get folks to sign-up for the listserv. Julie M. advised she will send out an email to the commission to sort out shift logistics for tabling at this event. Mary advised she will be out of town for that event.

Mary Starbuck asked how the previous tabling events (Who's Your Mama Festival and KSU's Earth Fest) in April went. Julie M. provided stats for how many tabling materials were handed out at each event, how many community suggestions had been provided and how many folks had signed up to be added to our community list-serv. Mary raised concerns about handing out the Earth seed paper shapes since they don't have any logo or other information on them to connect them to the City's CAP, and she advised sourcing them from a company in Colorado wasn't very sustainable. Julie M. advised from a budget perspective, these were a good option (300 shapes for \$21), and she provided the history of why she had to get them in the first place (tabling

events at KSU traditionally need giveaways). Julie M. also advised that people receiving the seed paper shape had to have stopped and talked with someone at our table to learn more about the CAP, so there are some connections people could make between receiving the shape and where it came from. Julie M. advised in the future it would be great to have a shape with CAP information and that was made locally, but this is what is available for now. Julie M. noted that a total of 47 people had signed up for the list-serv across both events, almost doubling the amount of folks on same.

Julie M. advised she had talked with Bridget regarding the Commission possibly tabling at the Heritage Festival on Saturday, July 6th as Julie M. wasn't sure who organized that event. Julie M. advised no one had reached out to ask the Commission to table there, but she was inquiring with Bridget as that would be the next big event coming up and wasn't sure if the Commission would have any interest in tabling at same.

Bridget had advised the Heritage Festival is organized by the Chamber of Commerce. Bridget advised that usually, the City has one big table that different departments can table at, but there would not be an option for the Commission to have its normal full table by itself. Bridget advised we could ask for a single chair and possibly put out some CAP brochures, but it wouldn't be a regular tabling event. Julie M. advised she will be on vacation that week and won't be able to help sit the table if that was something members wanted to do. Members present felt that it wasn't a good venue to try to do partial tabling at. Julie M. advised that Staff is working to hold the next Open House near the Heritage Festival date, so there will be occasion for a larger event in July the Commission can help with.

Mary asked whether the Commission would be tabling at the Farmer's Market again. Julie advised the group would need to discuss whether to do same again. Mary asked whether we'd need a motion to table at Heritage Fest or any other upcoming events. Julie M. advised no, that no one had invited us to the Heritage Fest (we had invitations to all of the previous tabling events that we did hold motions for), she had just inquired about it in case it was of interest as she didn't know who organized the event. This was for information only at this point.

Members discussed possibly holding raffles at future events to help draw more people to our tables. Julie M. advised it could be explored but that would have to be discussed with Bridget Susel and potentially a legal team as there most likely would be problems with promoting vendors or products etc.

Julie G. brought up the Assisted Living Center project proposed for a location on Water St. that is being heard by the City's Planning Commission. She advised a Kent resident had approached her requesting the Sustainability Commission's input and more information, and that she had sent an email to both Bridget and Julie M. regarding same, and that Bridget had responded. Julie G. explained more about that situation as she understood it for the other members who were not familiar with the issue. Julie M. advised that as individuals, any members were welcome to voice their opinions on the issue, but they cannot say they are representing the City or the Commission in those opinions. Julie M. advised that should any members be approached or asked about the issue wanting a City response that members direct them to Bridget Susel. Julie G. wanted to clarify if how she handled the original resident request was correct and whether she needed to copy Julie M. on that kind of correspondence in the future. Julie M. advised members are always welcome to do either – email Bridget alone, or copy Julie M., and Julie M. advised copying her could help assist in the communication.

Bill Wilen asked Julie M. about whether she is applying for grants. Julie M. explained the need to be further along in program development, obtaining needed reports and other information to make our projects "shovel ready" so that we can pair the appropriate funding to our needs. Julie M. advised the report that World Kinect will be providing the City will help us to have data we need in order to seek funding for energy efficiency and solar projects.

Julie G. reviewed a copy of the updated GHG Inventory (using 2022 data) summary results and asked why the Transportation sector had such a large increase from the original GHG Inventory (using 2016 data). Julie M. advised that to start, those inventories were done using different methods/tools and had different data gathering capacities, so it is kind of like comparing apples and oranges. The updated inventory reflects some additional data that was able to be received from AMATS and ODOT than what was collected in the original inventory. Julie G. asked whether there would be additional GHG Inventories done and Julie M. advised yes, possibly in 2026, and advised that future inventories will hopefully start to be reflective of reductions through our mitigation efforts as we move through implementation of the CAP. Julie M. advised Transportation is a sector we are focusing on through exploring the EV Infrastructure and Bike and Walk infrastructure sections of the CAP, which have been prioritized for 2024 and into 2025, in addition to our MEMP and solar work to address our Stationary Energy sector emissions. Julie M. referred to the CAP Overview presentation she had given that outlined these different strategy priorities.

Mary asked what the procedure is for cancelling Sustainability Commission meetings if we don't have quorum, using the Shade Tree Commission's actions around similar situations as an example. Julie M. advised she would double check with Bridget, but her understanding is at least 24 hours' notice must be given prior to cancellation of a public meeting, and in this case, the notice of absences would have been too soon to meet that requirement.

Mary acknowledged that last minute plans and illness happen and can't be planned for, but she wanted to have some notice sent out to the group if there wasn't going to be a quorum so remaining members could decide whether they wanted to attend. Mary felt it wasn't helpful to hold the meeting if business couldn't be conducted due to lack of quorum. Julie G. advised it was still helpful for her to come to the meeting and have discussions around the various topics, even if decisions couldn't be made. Julie M. advised that not every discussion or item on the meeting agenda requires action or a vote, and the items can just continue as a discussion into the next meeting if there isn't a quorum.

Julie M. advised that meetings can be rescheduled and/or cancelled from the standing meeting day and time to another if known and decided on in advance. Julie M. advised we will have to reschedule the July Commission meeting as an example since Julie M. will be off the first week in July when the first Monday of the month falls. Mary asked whether that meant there would be no meeting in July. Julie M. advised the members can discuss at the June meeting whether they would like to cancel the July meeting or reschedule it to the following Monday, July 8th, instead. Julie M. as Staff will add the discussion of whether to cancel or reschedule the July meeting to June's agenda as a new business item.

Members ended the working session at 7:10pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, June 3rd , 2024, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Overholt building.