

Sustainability Commission Meeting, March 4th, 2024

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Judy Nelson, Mary Starbuck, Maryjayne Stone, Andy Scholl, Julie Grant (arrived after roll was taken)

Others in Attendance: Julie Morris, William (Bill) Wilen, Chad Nelson, Dr. Aimee Ward, Harley Hill

Judy Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:40pm and roll was taken.

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

Judy explained her knee injury, which was why she couldn't attend the CAP Open House and why she was attending this evening's meeting in a wheelchair. Judy advised her husband, Chad Nelson, was able to attend the CAP Open House and use Facetime to stream the meeting for her at home so she was able to view the meeting. She noted she enjoyed hearing the updates that Claudia Amrhein, General manager/CEO of PARTA provided at the CAP Open House regarding PARTA's removal of the last diesel bus in their fleet, replacing it with a new CNG (compressed natural gas) fuel burning bus.

Members discussed what CNG was and how it was considered cleaner burning fuel than diesel, creating less vehicle emitted GHGs and particulate matter, and accounting for carbon credit capture during its processing. It was also mentioned that the term "clean burning diesel" when referencing CNG is misleading, as it still emits GHGs especially during the processing and distribution of CNG. Concerns about the term being a form of greenwashing were expressed.

Mary Starbuck asked about a couple of NOPEC grants the City received that had been written about in a recent Portager article and what their relationship to the Commission or the City's CAP work would be. Julie Morris explained one of those grants is being run through the City's Service Department, and is part of a succession of grants from NOPEC run previously through the Service Department for energy efficiency items, the lighting study mentioned in the article, and things like fixing parts at the water reclamation facilities etc. Julie advised that while this is not within the purview of the Community Development department's work on the CAP, it is still related to the CAP, but the Commission wouldn't have any direct tie to the Service Department work. Mary expressed concern that there would be duplicated work and funding efforts around energy efficiency. Julie advised we are aware of that Service Department work, and that particular NOPEC grant, and the work we are doing with NOPEC/World Kinect around the City building energy audit will account for same, as it is meant to compliment work that has already been done and that is in process. Julie advised the other grant mentioned in that article had to do with the Eclipse and had nothing to do with our CAP work.

Judy turned the meeting over to Dr. Aimee Ward for her presentation on the grant work she is doing related to her East Main Street Vulnerable Road User Project. Dr. Ward's presentation slides have been attached to these minutes. Members also asked questions during the presentation, as well as held some discussion after the presentation. Dr. Ward will send out some follow-up information and Julie Morris will distribute same to the members. Dr. Ward and her assistant, Harley Hill, left the meeting at 6:45pm.

Julie Grant advised she had an idea for a resolution proposal for council as a matter of new business. The content of this resolution was not detailed and Julie Morris advised she will add it to next month's meeting agenda under New Business for discussion.

Discussion turned to the tabling opportunities available for the Commission to participate in. Julie Morris briefly reviewed the three possible events: the Who's Your Mama festival scheduled for Saturday, April 20th

from Noon to 4pm at the Hometown Plaza; the Kent State Earth Fest event scheduled for Monday, April 22nd from 11am – 2pm on the Student Center Plaza if good weather, inside the student center on the 2nd floor if bad weather; and the Leadership Portage County Family Fun Day scheduled for Sunday, May 19th from 1-4pm at Trail Lake Park.

MaryJayne advised she had explored a United Nations educational program related to Climate Action Heroes as part of her work at the library and suggested we consider some kind of activity around this for the Family Fun Day tabling event. Julie Morris advised there will be time to discuss the content of our tabling activities at our April and May meetings as part of our upcoming CAP working sessions. Julie advised that for tonight, a decision was needed around whether the Commission would attend and table at these events.

Mary motioned to have the Commission table at all three events discussed this evening (Who's Your Mama festival, KSU Earth Fest, and LPC Family Fun Day) and Julie Grant seconded.

Judy asked whether there was any discussion around the motion. It was asked whether there was enough capacity among the members to attend the tabling given folks work and life schedules. It was asked how many the minimum was to table. Julie Morris advised there could be at minimum one member, but also advised she could always be there to represent the City and the Commission in the event no Commission members are able to attend a particular event.

Judy asked whether there was any further discussion needed. Bill Wilen advised he was talking with Council Member Heidi Shaffer-Bish after the Open House event about developing the property off Mogadore Road for solar. Julie Morris advised that land is privately owned and not an option at this time. Julie Morris explained the work the City is doing to expand its solar work as related to the IRA Solar For All funding competition and the work with World Kinect and NOPEC. It was asked whether the City would be talking to Solar United Neighbors (OH SUN) regarding the City's solar work. Julie Morris advised OH SUN is an expert in solar development and would be considered an important stakeholder for same. She advised that if the City reaches a point in the development of its solar programs to have a specific need to talk with OH SUN, the City will reach out to them.

Judy asked whether there were any further items to discuss. Hearing none, Judy called the vote on the motion to have the Commission table at all three events discussed this evening. It passed unanimously.

Judy advised they were ready to adjourn. Judy motioned to move adjournment to go into working session. Mary seconded, and discussion was offered. Hearing none, and with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm.

Julie Morris advised that in the interest of time, the items set for the working session would be tabled until next meeting.

Judy mentioned that as Chair, she wanted to reiterate the importance of allowing all members a chance to speak and ask questions, and to be mindful of how their participation allows for this. Mary mentioned she felt the speaker's presentation took too long and wasn't happy that it interfered with the Commission's ability to do work as part of the working session. Mary suggested that future speakers be given a time frame and be held to the end of the meeting.

Mary advised that the last several commission meetings have run longer than the stated ending time of 7pm, which goes beyond the time commitment for meetings she understood to be for same. Judy mentioned that part of what extended the speaker's time was Mary asking a lot of questions during the presentation and it is difficult to reconcile unhappiness with the meetings taking longer when it is member questions that cause the

extension of time. Judy noted that she personally feels like ending at 7pm is not enough time to get work done and she would like to see more meetings scheduled.

Julie Morris advised that the Commission rarely has speakers and tonight was more of an exception. Julie Morris advised Dr. Ward had asked for a time frame and Dr. Ward said she needed around 20 minutes for same along with time for the discussion. Julie Morris acknowledged that the previous Commission meeting working sessions had been ending generally closer to 7:30pm, but that members seemed engaged in the work that was being done that took them to into that later time frame.

Julie Morris reiterated the working sessions are designed to be flexible to accommodate work that needs to get done. She advised that it sounded like a discussion was needed around meeting length and structure, and she would add it to next month's agenda as a new business item. Both Mary and Judy advised they would welcome that discussion.

Members ended the working session at 7:20pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, April 1st, 2024, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Overholt building.