

Sustainability Commission Meeting, February 5th, 2024

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Judy Nelson, Mary Starbuck, Maryjayne Stone, Andy Scholl, Julie Grant

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.

The Commission welcomed its newest member, Julie Grant, and Judy requested everyone provide introductions of themselves. Each member and persons present gave a brief background of their personal and professional experience, and work associated with the commission.

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

Judy advised she had been invited by Melanie Knowles at Kent State to serve on Kent State's Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee as a representative of the City's Sustainability Commission. Discussion was had and Judy advised she thought it would be good, since this committee work could continue for a long time, that, in addition to agreeing to her serving as same given she is Chair, the Commission add another person from the Commission to serve as an alternate and establish the participation. **Judy made a motion to have the Chair of the Sustainability Commission represent the Commission at Kent State's Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee meetings and that one other member of the commission be appointed to serve along with and/or as an alternate at those meetings. Andy seconded the motion. Discussion was had and it was also decided that Andy would serve as the alternate. It was asked whether there were any other items for discussion around this motion. Hearing none, the vote was called and passed with unanimous approval of those present (Mary Starbuck arrived later in the meeting after the call of this vote, but quorum was still achieved to hold the vote).**

Judy opened the New Business section of the meeting.

Julie Morris provided a brief summary of the grant Dr. Amy Ward from KSU is working on to address vulnerable road users in Kent, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, also in relation to the E. Main Street renovation project. Dr. Ward is looking to present to the Sustainability Commission information about the grant and to get feedback from members as part of her work to collaborate with the community around the grant. Members discussed the request. **Maryjayne motioned to have Dr. Ward attend the March meeting and present to the Commission information about the vulnerable road users grant she is working on. Judy seconded the motion. It was asked whether there were any other items to discuss around the motion. Hearing none, the vote was called and passed with unanimous approval of those present (Mary Starbuck arrived later in the meeting after the call of this vote, but quorum was still achieved to hold the vote).**

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. Andy seconded, and discussion was offered. Hearing none, and with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 5:56pm.

Julie Morris began the working session with updates.

It was requested that Julie M. provide commission members (and Bill) with a color printed hard copy of the CAP for each one of them to have since many of the members do not have a copy and it would help for ease of reference. Julie M. advised she will do so and bring them to the next meeting.

Julie M. addressed the issue Maryjayne had brought up at January's meeting regarding Maryjayne's experience interviewing with Council for her reappointment to the Sustainability Commission. Julie M. advised she had reviewed the video recording of Maryjayne's interview with Council and identified the questions that were asked by council members Heidi Shaffer-Bish and Robin Turner. Julie M. had transcribed and read the council members' questions to the commission members so all could hear exactly what was asked. Discussion around same was had. It was agreed that the nature of the questions indicated more clarity for Council around the role of the Commission and CAP policy suggestions brought to Council by the Commission is needed, as is more communication about progress around CAP work.

Julie M. and Judy explained that in the past, Sustainability Commission members had worked to advocate for policy, and gave an example about when the Commission had worked to help bring a Resolution In Support of the Paris Climate Agreement before Council in 2017. Andy clarified however that even though the Commission presented to Council to advocate for that, and worked to help draft the resolution, Bridget and City Staff were still involved and got it to Council. Judy also mentioned her and the Commission's work around the 2018 Ordinance Council ultimately passed related to keeping backyard chickens in Kent as another example. Once again, it was noted that City Staff still had to be involved in getting the Ordinance finalized and to Council.

Judy also mentioned there had been times in the past as well where Council had a question or sustainability-related issue they wanted more information about that was referred to the Commission to gather more information and report back. It was discussed that there may be confusion between the Commission helping, advising, suggesting etc. with policy ideas versus them having any legislative authority to bring or provide policy to Council. Julie M. explained that the Sustainability Commission is an advisory committee that provides valuable feedback and input on the City's Sustainability work and sustainability issues that affect the community, but reiterated it has no legislative authority.

Julie M. advised it may be a good idea to revisit the Commission's description and duties across all City channels (the website, the commission's application etc.) so that they are clear and reflective of the Commission's responsibilities, especially given they have changed in some ways since the adoption of the CAP. Members looked at the Sustainability Commission's webpage and agreed that this may be work we will want to devote time to during our working sessions later this year, and in light of the fact that the City will be getting a new website in May.

Julie M. also advised she felt that council member Heidi Shaffer-Bish does understand that the Commission doesn't create and bring policy to Council, but it is indicative, along with council member Robin Turner's question regarding when the Commission will be holding CAP education and outreach events and/or other informational efforts, that Council is curious and needs more regular information about what work the Commission and the City are doing around the CAP.

Julie M. advised she hopes the upcoming CAP Open House and creation of the City's Sustainability Newsletter will help with this. She advised that the Year In Review presentation she was scheduled to give Council in February has been pushed back to April. Their agendas are packed with other business for the next couple of months.

Julie M. provided an update regarding the NOPEC/World Kinect press release. Julie M. noted the draft has been completed and sent to representatives at NOPEC and World Kinect who have indicated they liked same and are sending it through their various channels for approval. Brief review of the NOPEC services letter that was given to Council in November of 2023 was had to provide Julie G. with background around the press release. It was also suggested that a copy of the NOPEC services letter be made available at the materials table we will have at the Open House.

Julie M. moved the working session to discussion of the Open House Event. Andy asked whether it was ok, given Sunshine Laws, for all members of the Commission to be present at the same time at the Open House. Julie M. advised it should be fine and suggested perhaps they do not all sit right next to each other. The issue is whether 3 or more of them talking Commission business together could constitute a meeting that was not publicly advertised. Julie M. advised as long as they are not congregating together, it should be ok and she will double check with Bridget.

Members reviewed the CAP Open House flyer and discussed where to distribute them and how the members would divide up distribution. Julie M. provided each member with 5 hard copies of the flyer to post and she advised she will send each of them an electronic copy to distribute as needed as well.

Julie M. reviewed Bridget Susel's responses to questions members had posed last meeting regarding the CAP Open House. Bridget had advised that only City staff have badges and those wouldn't be able to be created for commission members. Bridget did say it was fine to have the "Hello, My Name Is" sticker name-tags and members could identify themselves as commission members on same.

Bridget had advised that State Law prohibits public monies be spent on refreshments, so in-kind making/donating of same by the commission members is fine if personal time/money is used. Bridget also advised that the Library will charge if the kitchen is utilized (i.e. to make coffee etc.) so refreshments need to be items that can be brought in and set out on the food counter area of the conference room. In Bridget's estimation, if each member brings roughly 1 dozen cookies, there should be plenty. Bridget will bring small water bottled packs (and we will have a prominent recycle bin), some kind of wrapped sweet treats, and napkins. Discussion was had around bringing plastic water bottles, but it was explained that bringing pitchers of water and glass or other reusable cups wasn't going to be feasible given the event venue and capacity.

Julie M. advised the Library only posts Library sponsored events on their event calendar, so the CAP Open House event won't show up there, but they will post a physical flyer for us on their community board. All of the other event invitations and blurbs are being sent out now – Dave forwarded our invitation to Council, invitation went out to City staff, personalized emails are being sent to CAP contributors, Patti will be posting on the City's website and downtown sign, Dominique will be sending out via the City's social media channels, the generic public invitation is being sent out via the Community List Serv and via KSU Office of Sustainability Channels as well, and we will be sending a notice to the Portager with a request to publish same with their event notices. Bill and Mary suggested we send the invitation for KEC to Renee Ruchotzke and Lorraine McCarty. Members suggested an invite be sent to Andrew at the Haymaker Farmer's market along with a request to post the flyer for us at the market – Julie M. advised she will do. It

Members asked whether the City tracks any of their social media outreach data – i.e. how many times posts have been viewed or shared etc.. Julie M. advised she didn't know but will ask about it.

Julie M. briefly discussed the order for the evening. It is planned to open with the Keramida video and then have Julie M. give the informational overview presentation. Julie M. showed the members the power point slides she had generated but advised she will be reorganizing them a bit now that the Year In Review presentation for Council has been pushed back – it was originally designed to be the same presentation for both events. After the presentation, it will be opened up for the community sharing about what having the CAP means personally and/or for their organization. It was discussed that Judy might share about her experience having installed solar on her house and/or her work with the CAP. Other members are free to share as well.

Members suggested we have some questions generated to ask the audience, and that they could be based off of similar questions that were asked as part of a survey for the audience at the Hudson Climate Roundtable

that Julie M. and Judy presented at last year. Julie M. will review those survey questions and select a few that can be used if needed to engage the audience during this open sharing time. This time will also be for Q&A. Bill asked whether Council will speak at the Open House. Julie M. advised that while they are welcome to share during the open sharing session, they are not formally being asked to present or speak.

Members suggested providing a few hard copies of the CAP that can be taken. Julie M. advised she will do so and she will make the CAP Trifold Brochures and QR Code flyers used for tabling available on the materials table for that evening. Members also suggested embedding a QR code for the CAP into the presentation or on a slide. Mary suggested having a rotating slide show added to the presentation or somewhere for folks to watch as they arrive. Julie M. advised she'll consider how/where to add same. Members also suggested the sustainability "doll house" be brought to the Open House and set up in case any children attend. Julie M. advised she'd bring same.

Julie M. briefly ran through some of the remaining updates and other items that she had planned for the working session.

Julie M. advised the GHG Inventory Update is complete. She is getting some clarifying information from Keramida regarding same but should be able to have the information to share at the Open House, get uploaded to the Sustainability Overview website, and discuss at the next commission meeting as well.

Given time constraints, Julie M. suggested the work planned for the evening around the newsletter be postponed to next meeting. Julie M. gave a quick background about the newsletter for Julie G. and Maryjayne explained her efforts to create a catch-phrase for the CAP and explained her KCAP idea. Members reviewed the newsletter template that had been created and Julie M. advised we'll need a new lead story since the Open House event will have passed by the time the newsletter is ready. Julie M. suggested members continue to brainstorm a title for the newsletter and Julie G. advised she would write up a piece about the IRA tax rebates for review at the next meeting. Julie G. also suggested looking into the newly created federal Climate Conservation Corps as she believes there may be funding opportunities available through same.

Julie M. mentioned that KSU will be hosting their annual E-Waste recycling event that is also open to Kent residents as part of their Campus Race to Zero Waste efforts. She provided the dates and list of items that can be recycled, advising Patti will also help promote the event by putting information about same on the downtown sign and get it published in the Spring Tree City Bulletin. Julie M. advised she had written a brief year-in-review style article about the CAP work that will also be included in the Tree City Bulletin. Members suggested adding a flyer about the E-Waste event to the CAP Open House materials table.

Julie M. mentioned that KSU is planning for various Earth Month activities in April and members mentioned the Who's Your Mama festival. There are various tabling and/or event opportunities coming up in March through May that could involve the Sustainability Commission. Members decided to add this topic to New Business at the March meeting so that discussion and votes could be had around same if needed.

Julie M. mentioned that KSU is working to convene their Sustainability Plan Committee to review, prioritize and potentially form working groups around tasks and initiatives out of same. Julie M. mentioned she is hopeful given same that there will be more movement around the shared initiative with the City of creating a sustainability internship/project structure that could help get us some marketing ideas and materials for the CAP work the City is doing among other possibilities.

Members ended the working session at 7:35pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, March 4th, 2024, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Overholt building.