

Sustainability Commission Meeting, February 3rd, 2025

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Judy Nelson, Julie Grant, Maryjayne Stone, Tracy Wallach, Justine Gallo

Others in Attendance: Bill Wilen, Julie Morris

Judy Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:35pm and roll was taken.

Judy opened the Good of the Order/Open Comments section of the meeting. A welcome to new members Tracy and Justine was given. Members introduced themselves, providing information on their personal and professional backgrounds.

Tracy advised she had served on the City of Kent's Council for 16 years. She is currently the Vice Chair of the Portage County Solid Waste Management District Policy Committee. She was a former board member of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. She was the first Recycling Coordinator for the City of Kent. She noted she drives an all-electric car. She was a former math teacher at Kent State University and is currently retired.

Justine advised she moved from New Jersey to attend Kent State University for fashion design. She stayed in Kent after graduating and opened a boutique downtown in Acorn Alley, called Sun In Leo, which is a circular brand. She advised she learned a lot about the fashion industry's negative impacts on the planet and noted big brands are greenwashing instead of doing something about it. She decided to open her own business to help make a positive impact on these issues. She noted being a small business owner isn't easy, but she hopes to integrate what she knows and collaborate with the town of Kent as she has grown to love the City. Additionally, she hopes her work can help educate another generation about how easy it can be to care about the planet. She noted she lives in downtown Kent and walks to work at her store.

Judy advised she's the current Chair of the City's Sustainability Commission. She noted she has been either on the Commission and/or a part of the Ad Hoc group that helped to create the City's Climate Action Plan since 2016. She noted she's been a resident of Kent since 2005, and she lived in California for 12 and ½ years. She advised that a lot of her sustainability beliefs and environmental concerns stem from her time in California. She advised she grew up on a farm which also taught her sustainable practices. She noted she currently serves on the Portage County Solid Waste Management District Policy Committee. She lived in Stow for nine years and advised she did various environmental things with the City of Stow and through the schools while living there. She advised recycling is her passion, but all aspects of sustainability are important to her.

Mary Jayne noted she's been concerned about the environment since she was a child, and issues related to same have been a great source of anxiety for her since the 1960's. She referenced commercials at the time that featured a Native American man crying about litter, Smokey the Bear and information about forest fires, and other items about the environment being shown on television. She advised she used to organize the neighborhood kids to pick up trash with her, tried to get their band class to pick up garbage instead of selling candy bars, and find other ways to help clean up the environment when she was younger. She noted she was in Girl Scouts as a kid, and she loved to go camping as well as did a lot of gardening through the program. She advised she grew up gardening at home as well, noted her mom canned a lot of food, and she felt they lived sustainably or as much as they could in those days. Mary Jayne noted she has lived in and out of Kent since she was about two years old and has lived all around Ohio and in other places as well. She advised in the late 90's or early 2000's she participated in the City of Kent's visioning exercise (Tracy noted it may have been the Blue Ribbon Panel), where she was able to attend many of the community meetings and share her thoughts about what she liked about the City in addition to environmental concerns, which she is still very passionate about. She has worked at Kent Natural Foods for over 20 years and while she felt she lives as sustainably as she can, she felt she wasn't doing enough. She found out about the Sustainability Commission through the quarterly Tree City Bulletin newsletter, applied and was appointed. She has been on the Commission for 5 years now, with this being her second term. She advised serving on the Commission helped her learn about City processes that help take something from idea to action. She noted it is

very exciting to finally have a Climate Action Plan in place, and she feels like the City is heading in the right direction.

Julie G. advised she moved to Kent in 1999 to work at the public radio station, WKSU and she has been here mostly since then. She left a few years ago but came back and still works as a journalist but covers Pittsburgh and the Ohio Valley. She doesn't cover Kent as part of her work, but she wanted to sit on the Commission and use some of what she's learned along the way to advocate for or at least share the environmental information she has. She noted everyone on the Commission brings so much to the table that she doesn't know. She wanted to see what she could do locally to help, since where she lives and where she works are different. She advised she's been on the Commission for about a year now and noted it has been an interesting experience for her. She noted she was glad Tracy and Justine are on the Commission to have new perspectives brought to the group.

Bill advised he is a retired professor from Kent State University where he taught in the field of teacher education for 34 years. He noted he developed a strong interest in renewable energy, especially after the United States became involved in initially signing the Paris Climate Agreement to reduce its greenhouse gases. To help with this, Bill joined the Sustainability Commission's Ad Hoc Committee in 2017. Bill noted that while he has thought about joining the Commission, he feels he has a very narrow interest-area focus on solar energy, and he recognizes that the Commission, while dealing with the same, also works on other issues of Sustainability. As such, he likes to continue to attend the meetings as a guest. He noted that he was involved in the solarization of Hobbs Hall at the Unitarian Church and has advocated for his Condo Association to solarize.

Judy noted that Bill is a member of Kent Environmental Council and provided context for his work on the Sustainability Commission's Ad Hoc Committee. Judy explained that the Ad Hoc committee was a subcommittee of the Commission involving other community members and stakeholders that helped with the City's greenhouse gas inventory efforts and eventual Climate Action Plan development. Judy advised that Lorraine McCarty, who periodically attends the Sustainability Commission's meeting as a guest, is also a member of Kent Environmental Council who had served on the Ad Hoc Committee as well. Judy noted that both Bill and Lorraine played an important role in the process.

Julie M. advised she graduated in 2016 from Chatham University in Pittsburgh with her Master's degree in Sustainability. She advised it was a relatively new program at the time, with hers being the 3rd cohort to go through the program. She described the history of the university's Eden Hall Campus and the variety of innovative sustainability initiatives and technology that was being developed there. Julie noted that upon graduation, she wanted to learn more about sustainability efforts going on in Kent and use her experience to help where she could. She served on the City's Sustainability Commission from 2016 to 2019, also serving on the Ad Hoc Committee for a time until she needed to step back in 2020 related to health and a variety of other reasons. Julie M. noted she worked with Kent Cooperative Housing, in addition to other work, until the Sustainability Coordinator position became available, which she was hired for in March of 2023. She noted it began as a shared position between the City and Kent State University to help both entities implement their respective Climate Action and Sustainability Plans. Due to budget reasons, the shared position ended, and she transitioned to the City as their full-time Sustainability Coordinator in July of 2024.

Julie M. added she had grown up in northern California with her family raising sheep, chickens, and doing a lot of gardening. She noted trees are a personal interest of hers given her childhood experiences. She noted that while her family had long since moved, that childhood property burnt down in the 2017 Tubbs fire, and she noted the devastation these climate change fueled fires have on communities. Julie M. noted that she has great care and concern for helping mitigate the worst effects of climate change and wants to help support resiliency in the Kent community in the face of same.

Julie M. noted the Commission's bylaws update work being done to align the Commission's purpose with current practices is important for thinking through how this group can continue to support the City in its CAP and resiliency efforts. She noted institutional change can be slow and frustrating, but when collaboration happens such that thoughtful programs can be developed, approved, and implemented at a city scale, there is potential for larger impacts and benefits to reach more folks. Julie M. noted there are many ways and places to do climate action work and advised all are important. She noted doing same at a city is a very particular way to do the work that comes

with a lot of restraints and legal considerations. It also requires a lot of different perspectives be included throughout not just development, but implementation of initiatives as well, which she feels is a good thing and is necessary to create solid programs. Julie M. hoped the Commission could consider these things as they think about the role and purpose of the group.

Judy explained the process of creating the Climate Action Plan, and the City's support for same evolved from when it first started. Judy advised the process began with volunteers on the Ad Hoc committee who had different areas of expertise but who had not done a greenhouse gas inventory before, which had its struggles. It was recognized more experience was needed to continue the process of developing a climate action plan and Judy noted the City hired a professional consultant, Keramida, to help. Judy noted the volunteers and Commission's presence helped shift Council and City Staff support over time, resulting in the City making a commitment to support the climate action work, and hiring the professionals needed to complete the planning process and the plan itself. Judy noted Tracy, during Tracy's time on Council, had always had a commitment to and advocated for the work.

Judy noted the City continues to demonstrate its commitment to the work by having created a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position to help implement the plan, which is still in progress. Judy noted without this kind of commitment, and without implementation, the plan just sits on a shelf which wasn't what City staff or anyone else wanted. Judy noted that the final Climate Action Plan did not look like what she had anticipated, but she wants to do what can be done with it and implement the items that are in it. Judy advised this information was intended as context for new members to help understand what the Commission has been working on, and what has been happening since the passage of the Climate Action Plan by Council.

Judy noted she had some additional items for the Good of the Order. Judy advised she liked the January edition of the Sustainable Kent News e-newsletter. She thought the article on the Energy Star Portfolio Manager project was good and liked how a connection to the City's mission, vision, and strategic values was made in same. She really enjoyed the article from PARTA about their water program for washing the buses, and thanked Bill for his article on the solar array at downtown's Standing Rock Gallery.

Judy noted that members come to these meetings for an hour and a half once a month. and noted she tries to make a point to go through and read everything that Julie M. has sent out in preparation for coming to the meeting. She considers this work outside of the meetings themselves to be part of her job on the Commission. She noted the information can be unfamiliar when starting on the Commission, likening same to a foreign language, but advised the more members review everything, the more it will become known to them and will become easier.

Judy reported back on the status of the Community Solar bill that was proposed in last year's Ohio legislature session. Judy noted it did not pass, and Julie G. advised it never made it out of committee. Julie G. advised she thought it was going to be reintroduced in this year's session. Members discussed this bill, advising it had been originally introduced in 2023 and has gone through several iterations to try to address concerns from Republicans and utilities. Members noted this was only intended to be a pilot program.

Members briefly discussed possible impacts to rebate and tax credit programs that were developed under the Inflation Reduction Act for clean energy projects and upgrades that were also available to consumers by the current federal government's freezing of funding and programs. Julie M. noted as far as she understood, existing funds that had been allocated as part of grants are supposed to be available, but any future funding that hasn't yet been distributed is in question. Julie M. noted this could have big implications for developing and completing projects related to climate action, but it will have to be seen how things play out through the courts. Julie M. advised she will continue to search out available funding mechanisms, including those that don't require State or Federal funding, track these larger funding impacts, and she advised it is important for members to stay informed and communicate their thoughts and concerns to their elected representatives.

Judy agreed on the importance of local actions and noted Tracy's efforts on recycling were the first for Kent. Tracy provided a brief history of the recycling infrastructure advising that back in the 1960's glass had to be broken and separated into like-colors. Tracy advised in the 1970's a recycling center was built off of Marvin Street in Kent, which then evolved into a county program (as part of the Portage County Solid Waste Management District) and we

now have the Portage County Recycling Center as part of same. Judy advised this is an example of a local program that grew to have big impact and gives hope.

Justine discussed the importance of physically talking with people in community as it builds relationships. She noted as a small business owner, she is able to explain her positions on the importance of addressing issues of climate change. She likened being able to have these conversations to politicians going door to door to explain their positions to garner votes. Justine noted there is a lot of propaganda online and in the media about climate change. She felt being able to talk in person with those who hold differing views can help those people feel more comfortable understanding the issues and feel safe to change their minds as they are all in the same community together. Justine felt it would be good to host community events that normalize sustainability and, as far as recycling, help educate the community on how to do it. Justine noted the importance of finding common ground with people, giving examples of enjoying animals, the importance of agriculture, and experiencing nature outdoors. Justine feels helping folks understand the connected nature of these issues and helping them understand the impacts of consuming plastics and caring more about video games than these issues is important.

Tracy advised it was sad to hear this perspective on younger generations as she noted they were raised being educated about recycling and it seems like they have turned their backs on these efforts. Julie G. felt there was a lot of cynicism around recycling as what has been communicated is that items aren't being recycled despite going to recycling bins or facilities. Julie G. noted that when Tracy's generation was developing recycling programs in the beginning, there were markets for the materials. Judy noted that this change in recycling markets happened within the last 10 years and has to do with China not purchasing the recyclables and related tariffs. Members discussed the issues around recycling plastic and glass, and the lack of markets.

Justine asked whether there were any recycling plants in Ohio, or whether the state relies on exporting recycling materials. It was noted the Portage County Recycling Center takes care of recycling for the county and it was clarified with Justine whether Justine was referring to end-product purchasers being able to obtain the recyclables to make use of them. It was noted Portage County Recycling Center used to do their own separating and selling, but they have contracted with Waste Management to do same. It was noted City residents give their recycling (via curbside service) to Republic. Judy noted that where the recyclables go from there is proprietary information that isn't shared. It was mentioned that transporting and processing glass are big issues due to its weight. It was noted that glass is being recycled into certain paints and into fill for roads.

Julie M. alerted members to the Ohio Materials Marketplace (OMM) that is the result of a partnership between the OH EPA and a non-profit that hosts the marketplace software. OMM provides a searchable platform that allows people and entities to make connections around various goods that would otherwise be thrown away. She gave the generic example of a cement company whose generation process ends up creating a byproduct that would normally be thrown away. The OMM allows the cement company to post this byproduct on the platform that could potentially be used by another entity. An entity that could use that byproduct can connect with cement company on the OMM to negotiate obtaining the byproduct. Members asked whether they could see what's available and Julie M. advised she wasn't sure how much could be seen without establishing an account with the OMM – she noted she had these details after viewing an OH EPA webinar about the platform.

It was noted that new plastics are cheaper to produce than using recycled plastics for new goods. Members discussed the national program that turns recycled plastic bags into Trex benches. It was noted that various area groups, like the Universal Unitarian Church, the Lion's Club, and Kent Natural Foods collect plastic bags that after a certain poundage can be processed into park benches that are then donated to various agencies or organizations, usually for memorial purposes. It was noted that Kent Natural Foods is working to have one made for local community member Maurice Drake who had passed away. It was noted that Portage County Recycling Center and area grocery stores have bins to accept plastic bags for recycling as well.

Judy requested Julie M. share information about the City's Encouraging Environmental Excellence (EEE) award received from Ohio EPA. Julie M. advised the award program was meant to honor local governments and community achievements improving Ohio's environment through economic, social, and environmental sustainability initiatives. She noted the City of Kent submitted their application in April of 2024 and was alerted in December that the City was awarded a Silver level of achievement for the 2024 award cycle. The City recently

received the award materials, and Julie M. showed members the associated plaque, flag, and window sticker decal that were provided. She advised a digital award decal was provided that will eventually be added to the City's Sustainability Overview webpage. Julie M. noted staff is reviewing options for placement of the physical materials. Julie M. noted 2024 was the last award cycle as the OH EPA decided to discontinue the program.

Julie M. provided context for the OH EPA EEE award application itself, advising it consisted of descriptions of completed City initiatives that met required criteria across environmental, social, and economic categories. She noted while the application couldn't contain the City's entire sustainability history (and noted so much of this history includes important work done by community stakeholders), it was interesting to see many of the projects in one place. Julie M. noted she would like to use the application materials to help provide a narrative of the City's sustainability history that could be detailed on the Sustainability Overview page. Members requested Julie M. share the application materials with them for review.

MaryJayne advised she felt the Sustainability Commission should be nominated for the Kent Environmental Council Edith Chase Award as recognition for this work and to help bring attention to the community about the Commission itself. It was noted that the Commission had won the Portage Park District's award for Environmental Education back in 2019 and members discussed that nomination process briefly noting they believed Harrison Wicks, previous Executive Assistant to the City Manager and City staff liaison to the Sustainability Commission, had made that award nomination on the Commission's behalf. MaryJayne located the Kent Environmental Council Edith Chase award information noting the deadline for a nomination is February 21, 2025. MaryJayne noted she had previously nominated Kent Natural Foods once for the award and it won. She reiterated this would be a good educational opportunity for the Commission.

Members discussed whether or not these awards came with money and asked whether money could even be accepted by the City. Julie M. advised she thought Council must approve any monies being received and Tracy agreed, providing some examples of donations Council had to approve in the past.

Justine advised holding an Earth Day event would be a fun and educational opportunity to showcase the work the Sustainability Commission has and continues to do. Julie M. noted that the Commission will have a table at Kent State University's Earth Fest event that is scheduled for 11am-2pm on April 23rd and will be held on the Rizman Plaza if there is good weather, otherwise it will be held inside on the 2nd floor of the student center for inclement weather. She noted that she will be tabling to share about the City's CAP work, and members are welcome to help and share about the Commission as well.

Justine noted she and another store downtown hold Earth Day markets where they host sustainable vendors. She suggested hosting a litter march from campus into downtown where participants picked up trash along the way. Tracy described a Swedish sport where folks jog and pick up trash at the same time. Justine suggested the Commission could organize a similar kind of litter pick-up running event but as a possible fundraiser.

Judy asked whether a discussion of ideas for Earth Day could be added to next month's meeting's agenda under New Business. Members briefly discussed the process of getting items added to the agenda, and Julie M. advised as she understood it, Good of the Order was where members could bring items of interest and if needed, could vote to add an item for further discussion as part of next month's New Business agenda. Julie M. noted if the discussion under New Business continues beyond that meeting or warrants a recurring item, it then moves to Old Business until resolved. Tracy described the process for Council which is a little different from how it done on the Commission as Council's structure is different, but both processes ensure sunshine laws are being followed, and that topics for discussion are being given proper public notice. Julie M. noted that working sessions aren't part of the formal Commission meeting.

Judy motioned to add a discussion of ideas for Earth Day to the March meeting agenda, Julie G. seconded and Judy asked whether there was any discussion for the motion. Justine suggested that whatever events are decided on that they be held every year. She noted getting an event started can be hard, but once established it becomes easier to promote them and get folks excited about them, citing the Potter Fest as an example. She advised she had heard of a Soil Education week being planned for November. It was noted there may not be as many folks interested in Sustainability as there are interested in Potter. Justine acknowledged that as an issue but added she

felt other activities could be created that drew on activities many people enjoy, like running or something related to local breweries and/or sustainably produced beer – to have that activity feature an aspect of sustainability. Judy advised these and any other ideas can be discussed further for what can conceivably be done as a New Business item at the next meeting. Judy called the vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Judy asked whether there were any other questions or comments for the Good of the Order. MaryJayne advised she was curious about the status of the property on Mogadore Road by the railroad tracks that Bill Wilen brings up from time to time when suggesting a solar farm being installed there. MaryJayne advised she knew it was contaminated but asked whether anyone knew what it was contaminated with specifically. Tracy advised it has industrial contamination, and members noted this property is a designated brownfield. Julie G. suggested the contamination information might be able to be found at the Ohio EPA's website. Julie M. advised she thought there was a longstanding relationship between the current owner, the OH EPA, and the City around the mitigation efforts for the property and she advised she would talk to Bridget Susel, whom Julie M. thought would be familiar with the site issues, to see whether she had any additional information about the mitigation efforts.

Tracy advised there had been discussions about trying to put a solar farm on that property over the years, but she didn't know why that conversation had been nixed. Julie G. noted the community solar pilot bill that didn't make it out of committee during the last State legislative session contained a requirement that 500 megawatts out of 1500 megawatts for that pilot were specifically supposed to be generated on old brownfield sites. Judy asked Tracy why Tracy thought the conversation had been nixed. Tracy advised there was a reason why it couldn't happen, but she didn't remember what the reasoning was. Members noted that it is private property and speculated that the owners may not have wanted to sell the property, in addition to reiterating the City doesn't own the property. Judy asked how long it would be before mitigation got to the point where someone could build something there. Members noted the property was ugly, taking up space, and thought it would be a good idea to put solar panels there.

Julie G. asked whether there was an intention to build something there, like a restaurant or anything else. Julie M. reiterated the City doesn't own this property, and it is private property. She noted while she doesn't know any specifics on what it is contaminated with, her understanding was the nature of the contamination wouldn't allow for residential or commercial type development on the site. Members expressed concerns about the contaminants leaking into the river. Julie M. noted that to her knowledge, nothing is actively leaking into the river and the OH EPA mitigation efforts continue to contain and manage the site. Bill Wilen suggested that he thought he'd heard the contamination relates to oil. Tracy advised she remembered there was some seeping into the river, but she thinks that was around 10 years ago.

Judy noted when she first moved to the area in 2005, there was still a building on the Mogadore property with a company actively operating out of same. Julie G. asked if anyone knew what company was there and Tracy advised R&B, but she didn't know that they produced there. Julie G. felt it would be good to know more about it as there has been a nice development of parks around the river and she felt the Mogadore site looks dumpy and seems like a forgotten afterthought. Tracy thought at one point in time the City had been trying to buy it for \$1 but that never went through. Julie M. reiterated she would talk with Bridget about the brownfield site and get back to members about same.

Members discussed other properties in Kent that they thought were brownfields. Judy thought there had been a laundry or dry-cleaning site on 43 which Tracy advised was actually a very small property on Franklin. Judy asked about the property on Lake St. and whether it was owned by the City or was privately owned. Tracy asked whether Judy meant the old Ametek property on Lake St. and they agreed they were talking about the same property. Tracy advised the City had owned it but sold it to Smithers Oasis, who had intended to expand their business. Tracy advised it had been sold to Smithers for \$1, that it had been a brownfield site and there had been a lot of asbestos, but that the site was completely mitigated.

Judy asked whether there were any other questions or comments for the Good of the Order. Hearing none, she moved the meeting to Old Business.

Julie M. noted she has been periodically checking-in with the manager of the Water Treatment Plant (WTP), John Ellison, and Jim Bowling regarding the WTP Tour they are developing to address commission member concerns about various aspects of water safety related to fracking and other contaminants. Julie M. asked Julie G. to provide background information on the item for the new Commission members, as Julie G. initially brought the concern to the group last summer. Julie G. advised her understanding has changed since first asking about these issues, and advised she didn't know whether WTP staff had expressed concern to Council about their being able to find new aquifers. Julie G. noted she raised the original issues around area injection wells as she wanted an understanding of how Kent is protecting its water supply. Julie G. advised Julie M. has been working with the WTP about setting up a tour of the WTP. Julie G. noted she had hoped that tour would include seeing where the wells are specifically located, but understood that would not be possible due to security issues. Julie G. advised she's been on WTP tours before and doesn't feel like that is going to help her learn anything new about the issues. She advised she would be more interested in having Jim and John sit with the Commission and present on issues she raised. Julie G. reiterated some of her questions – what are the new regulations around PFAS and what is the WTP doing about fracking wastewater injection wells; how are they searching for a new aquifer, is the State of Ohio on board with or does it see any of this as an issue of concern for allowing new wells to be drilled and are these issues being kept in mind for the City of Kent.

Julie M. advised she had provided questions raised by members during their previous discussions of the issues to John and Jim. Julie M. noted Jim is a resident expert on aquifers, having studied them as part of his degrees. Julie M. noted that John and Jim had answered some of the Commission's questions via previous written correspondence and that she will resend to the group as a refresher and so the new members can review same. Julie M. advised John and Jim felt a tour of the WTP, in addition to a presentation, would be important to help explain some of the principles and processes that are part of the answers to the Commission's questions. Julie M. reiterated this presentation and tour are dependent on Jim and John's schedules, which are greatly impacted, but they are working on it. Julie G. felt that given it has been almost six months since the request was made, Jim and John may not ever have the time to put together a presentation and asked whether they could come to the Commission meeting and just have a conversation instead. Tracy suggested the tour be timed with the next Council election as new Council members are often provided with a WTP tour.

Judy mentioned one of the concerns John had expressed in the previous correspondence is that they are limited in finding places to drill new wells. Julie M. noted John had said this wasn't just because of fracking in the larger area, but it also had to do with proximity to existing and new infrastructure build-out in the area. Julie M. noted John's bigger concern was being able to locate and secure new water wells than it was contamination of the existing wells.

Julie G. advised she was surprised to learn WTP staff had given a presentation to Council about this when the Commission had asked for a presentation months before that. Julie M. asked Julie G. which Council meeting Julie G. was referring to, as Julie M. wasn't aware they had provided Council with a presentation on the issues the Commission had asked about. Julie G. advised she has a friend on Council that she was talking about these issues who advised Julie G. that staff have talked with Council about the issues, but Julie G. noted she may have misunderstood. Tracy noted Council meeting agendas, minutes, and associated meeting packets are available online for anyone to access. Julie G. advised her point was more that they had provided information on a very similar issue to Council but wondered why they hadn't provided the information to the Commission as well.

Julie M. advised her understanding, based on her meetings and the correspondence with Jim and John, was that they are designing a very specific presentation to answer the very specific questions the Commission had generated. Julie G. again asked whether Julie M. thought they had time to do that. Julie M. advised she believed they did, and they have told her they are working on it.

Judy felt, for a variety of reasons, that water is an important component of Sustainability. She noted water is discussed in the CAP, that the CAP asks businesses to track their water, that the City will be tracking their own City facility water usage. She advised it is a legitimate concern to know in general what the City's water situation is related to securing new wells, especially given that increasing drought is an anticipated effect of climate change in our region.

Julie G. appreciated Judy's concern and noted while wastewater injection wells were on her mind when initially bringing up these concerns (and are still a concern), she feels it is also important to understand what the City is thinking about regarding resiliency and protecting what water it has. Julie G. advised she covers the East Palestine train derailment environmental disaster and is concerned about what would be done if something like that happened in Kent. Julie G. asked whether the City has an alternate water supply and whether it has other renewable sources in place like collecting rainwater. Judy mentioned the example of PARTA utilizing water PARTA has collected on PARTA's property to wash the buses. It was noted the City had also offered rain barrel workshops and given them away to residents in the past. Judy asked Tracy what her experience was on Council addressing issues of water. Tracy advised they hadn't done much work with water at that time as water wasn't considered a dire issue and new water wells had just been drilled.

Julie G. asked whether the questions asked of John included how long the City's current water supply would last and why he's concerned about drilling the wells. Julie M. advised there wasn't a specific question about how long the current supply would last, but part of his answer to the questions posed related to fracking's impact on the water supply was that his larger concern was locating and securing new water wells in the future. Julie M. reiterated John had provided extensive answers and linked information in the previous correspondence members had received about testing done at the WTP. He had also described monitors that are set up to identify potential contaminants when/if they are 10 and 5 years out from possibly entering the water supply, which is why he was less concerned about fracking contamination. Julie M. noted if something were to happen like what happened in East Palestine, those monitors would pick up any contamination and provide a possible 5-10 year window to address any issues to Kent's water supply.

Judy asked Justine whether Justine was familiar with where Kent gets its water from. Justine advised as a renter, she wasn't sure, but she advised she knows people who use well water. Judy advised the City uses water from wells that are drilled down into and filled by an aquifer. Judy explained the difference between surface water supply sources and aquifer water supply sources. She provided the example of Akron utilizing Lake Rockwell as a water source that would be considered surface water and more easily contaminated. Judy explained that water in an aquifer has more protection as the surface water has to travel through layers of rock and soil to get to the aquifer, which also helps with some natural decontamination. Julie M. advised Jim, as an expert in this topic, wanted to provide the Commission with some detailed information about what this exact process around aquifers that Judy described entails and how it works for Kent.

Julie G. asked again whether Jim and John could just come to discuss this with the Commission as opposed to providing a presentation. Julie M. advised that while they have work that takes priority over this presentation and tour, Jim and John have repeatedly advised they are working on and still intend to provide them. Julie M. noted Jim and John have taken the answering of the very detailed and extensive questions that were asked of them seriously and want to provide the best response possible.

Judy felt there was a benefit to Jim and John creating this presentation as it could eventually be shared with Council. Judy noted the questions the Commission has asked of John and Jim are important for sustainability and if they can incorporate educating council about these issues, that would be a good thing. She felt ultimately the Commission wants to get Council as the legislative body to address the issues. Judy advised tonight's recap of the WTP tour discussion helped bring new members current on the topic, clarifying why it is on the agenda, and why it should remain an old business item.

Judy noted members usually move through the agenda items quickly, the meeting adjourns and there is time to hold the working session for the Commission by-laws update and review work. She noted it was important tonight to help welcome new members and orient them to the work the Commission is doing.

Tracy advised that the Commission's work felt intimidating given the terminology (World Kinect, decarbonization etc.) referenced in previous minutes and the various materials Julie M. had provided, noting she didn't know what they were referencing. Judy noted the more time spent at the meetings, the more all of this becomes familiar to members. It was noted much of the Commission work involves members learning about items as they go along, and that learning process involves getting clarification and/or asking questions about a lot of it. Julie M. noted she

is always available to talk or meet with members outside the meetings to help answer any questions and encouraged members to reach out whenever needed.

Julie M. provided a quick overview of the NOPEC services that had been provided to the City to support its CAP work which included \$40k of in-kind consulting services, noting that World Kinect was the consultant used for same. One of the reports generated by World Kinect was a Decarbonization Report that included separate informational assessments for onsite solar on up to two City facilities and an energy audit for four different City facilities. Julie M. noted these reports are under review by City staff. Bill noted his understanding was that this information and the reports were supposed to help the City apply for grants to assist with solarization efforts. Julie M. advised Bill is correct in that these kinds of reports and audits are necessary to help inform decisions and are generally required to seek funding and support for initiatives. Julie M. noted these reports and subsequent staff review are steps in that process.

Judy referenced the information Julie M. had previously provided members regarding examples of sustainability commissions or green teams found in other cities and asked members to review same ahead of the next meeting's working session. Judy suggested members could pull practices or items from same that they would like to recommend as part of the by-law review work.

Judy asked whether there were any further comments and hearing none, made a motion to adjourn. Mary Jayne seconded, discussion was offered and hearing none, the vote was held. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, March 3rd, 2025, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Overholt building.