

## **Sustainability Commission Meeting, August 4, 2025**

### **Meeting Summary**

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

**Excused:** Tracy Wallach

**Others in Attendance:** Bill Wilen, Julie Morris

Judy requested Julie M. run the agenda for the meeting. Julie M. called the meeting to order at 5:36pm and roll was taken.

Julie M. opened the Good of the Order/Open Comments section of the meeting.

Julie M. opened a discussion related to Julie M.'s staff update, and Julie M. provided information in response to items and questions that arose out of same:

- Bill asked whether there were any new solarization plans for buildings at KSU and/or any of the communities that Julie M. holds monthly meetings with
  - Julie M. advised they all have various solar projects, but she didn't have any specific details on same
  - Members discussed the feasibility and costs associated with solar canopies as an option for parking lots and buildings, as well as different examples of same they were aware of
    - It was noted that solar canopies are considerably more expensive than roof-top or ground mount arrays
  - Members discussed maintenance of panels and impacts of snow on production
- Members asked for an update on the City's RFQ for the solar project at 800 Mogadore Rd
  - Julie M. advised the bid closed on 7/29/25 and that two bids were received
    - Next steps involve reviewing the bids and selecting the consultants
- Julie M. advised Dan Morganti started today in his role as the City's new Assistant Community Development Director - she noted that along with Bridget, he will eventually be assisting with the City's sustainability work
- Members discussed the Davey Tree Seed Campus Tour that has been scheduled for August 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Maryjane noted she will not be able to attend due to conflicts with her work schedule
  - Julie M. advised members that they need to send their RSVPs to Bridget by August 11<sup>th</sup>
- Members discussed the need to reschedule the September commission meeting as it falls on Labor Day
  - Enough members can be present to make quorum on Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup> and they decided to reschedule the meeting to same

Julie M. asked whether there were any other items for Good of the Order and hearing none, moved the discussion to New Business. No items were on the agenda for New Business, and no one had anything to add, so Julie M. moved the discussion to Old Business.

An update from the Events Committee was provided, which also included a related discussion of the Dark Skies and bird migration initiatives agenda item.

Justine reviewed her list of the possible events and associated promotional ideas for October as Sustainability Month that had been discussed at the 8/11/25 Events Committee meeting. Members discussed the goal for the associated proclamation being drafted and that is intended to be issued by the mayor at the October Council Committee meeting. Members noted Sustainability Month could be an invitation to the Kent community (businesses, organizations, schools, faith communities, residents, etc.) to celebrate and showcase their sustainability efforts. The discussion generated some specific suggestions as follows:

- Work with Main Street Kent to promote a night where people choose to go to a downtown business or restaurant that engages with sustainable practices

- Work with Main Street Kent to offer the opportunity to downtown businesses to showcase and share what sustainability work they are already doing during the month of October
- Have the Commission host a meeting in September for business entities interested in sharing about their sustainability practices, or work with Main Street Kent to facilitate same
- Similarly, work with the Haymaker Farmers Market to provide its vendors with an opportunity to highlight their own sustainable practices at their market stalls during the month of October
- Request the Sustainability Commission table at one of the earlier Saturday Haymaker markets in October to share about Sustainability Month and sustainability work the City has been doing
- Host a “Lights Out” event at a City and/or County park that includes education from experts about area wildlife and associated impacts of light pollution – also to provide an opportunity to enjoy the night sky
  - It was suggested to reach out to Todd Cartner, co-owner of Discover Bats Ohio, and current president of Kent Environmental Council (KEC), as he is an expert on bats who might be able to provide some of that wildlife education during the lights out event
  - There was discussion to eventually hold these periodically throughout the year – i.e. for meteor showers, and/or around peak migration times etc. – and to eventually hold them in non-park, more lighted areas of the City
  - Maryjayne noted she designed the current display at the Kent Free Library called “Look Up” that features books about stars and sky-related items
  - There was brief discussion around achieving a Dark Skies rating for the City and it was noted this is harder to achieve, but Pittsburgh was able to do it
    - Members agreed to continue to investigate rating requirements – Maryjane and Julie G. will share research they have done with Julie M. and it was noted a future commission meeting could be devoted to a presentation on same
- Issue a special edition of the Kent Sustainable News e-Newsletter where entities can submit brief articles about what they did for Sustainability Month
- Utilize City media channels, the Sustainability Listserv and encourage area entities to share about Sustainability Month via their own networks and channels as well – provide a City-designed informational flyer to share
- Julie G. recapped information she had shared about the Save Ohio Parks organization that is offering community presentations about fracking which could be considered for a possible event during Sustainability month
  - It was noted this is an advocacy group and the City most likely would not be able to host a presentation from them – Julie G. advised if the City can’t then it may be best to share the information with a different group like KEC

Members asked whether it was ok to share information about October Sustainability Month before the Proclamation is issued. Julie M. advised yes, Bridget had confirmed it can be shared about ahead of the Proclamation. Julie M. advised members could share generically that the City intends to designate October as Sustainability Month, state the basic goal for entities to showcase their sustainability efforts during that time, and that more specific information will be provided soon. Julie M. advised the Events Committee will be meeting again on August 11<sup>th</sup>.

Julie M. noted for tonight’s meeting, members could decide on what events the Commission would like to hold during October and provide some final suggestions for the Proclamation draft so that the Events Committee could get to work exploring feasibility and planning of the selected events, design the associated community promotional materials, and finalize the Proclamation.

Julie G. made a motion to have the Events Committee explore the following three events to be held by the Sustainability Commission during October Sustainability Month: Tabling at one of the Haymaker Farmers’ Markets in October, hosting a “Lights Out” educational event at one of the City parks, and potentially hosting a presentation from the Save Ohio Parks group. Justine seconded and hearing no further comments, members passed the motion with unanimous approval.

Members discussed the Proclamation draft, and reviewed Judy's suggested edits to same. Members discussed previous years' Sustainability Month proclamations, the overall framework and purpose of the current Proclamation, as well as whether the three pillars of sustainability (environment, economy, and social) could be integrated into same. It was noted that the focus on environment and health had been deemed during Staff review to be appropriate at this time for the City's Proclamation, but community entities can showcase any and all of the pillars of sustainability as they see fit with their own work. It was noted this Proclamation is directly related to the Education and Outreach component of the City's Climate Action Plan.

Members provided specific language suggestions, edits for clarity, as well as possible edits for the arrangement of statements. Julie M. made note of the specific suggestions which will be reviewed by the Events Committee at their 8/11/25 meeting for integration into an updated draft of the Proclamation. It was noted once the updated draft is complete, it will undergo another Staff review, and that version will be brought to the Commission at September's meeting for a final review and approval.

Given the meeting had run past time, Julie G. motioned to table the remaining meeting agenda items. Judy seconded and hearing no further discussion, members passed the motion unanimously.

Julie G. motioned to adjourn. Justine seconded and hearing no further comments, members passed the motion with unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, September 8, 2025, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.