

## **Sustainability Commission Meeting, October 6, 2025**

### **Meeting Summary**

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

**Others in Attendance:** Bill Wilen, Julie Morris, Savannah Mallozzi, Morgan Hoover

Judy called the meeting to order at 5:36pm and roll was taken.

Judy opened the Good of the Order/Open Comments section of the meeting. Judy invited the guests to introduce themselves. Savannah and Morgan are both Law, Media, and Journalism students at Kent State University and are attending tonight's meeting to learn more about city governance as part of a class assignment. Morgan noted she is a senior studying public relation, applied communications, and marketing, and advised sustainability is a passion for her.

Judy 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 Wilen advised he was at the 10/1/25 Council Committee meeting for Democracy Day and was also happy to hear Julie M. provide information to Council about progress on the 800 Mogadore Rd solar project as part of her presentation
  - Judy provided background on the solar project for the Commission meeting guests
- On the continued topic of solar projects, Tracy noted an article she read about solar arrays being installed in California over their water canals that help to prevent evaporation while generating energy
  - It was reiterated that parking lot solar canopies are cost prohibitive at this time

Judy opened the Good of the Order discussion related to impacts of deer on area gardens. She provided context for why she wanted to bring this item to the group, noting growing local food and food accessibility are issues of sustainability. She was upset by her recent visit to the Thomas Anderson Memorial Garden on Walnut Street here in Kent where she saw the deer had decimated and eaten many of the plants in same. Judy also expressed that she had similar issues in her own garden at home, and she recently got a dog to help keep the deer away. Judy asked whether this was an issue members wanted to take up and address, and a discussion was had covering the following points:

- Members noted that in addition to garden and landscape impacts, deer pose a safety hazard for drivers
- Members discussed possible deterrents – fencing, applications of predator urine and/or other particular spices to spray around the garden, wire cages over garden beds, and they discussed Davey's remedy that was observed at the Commission's tour of the SEED Campus where a separate plot of plants that deer love was planted and used to redirect the deer towards same and away from other plants on the property
- Members discussed the issues of habitat encroachment and drought, and the need to provide habitat for animals/birds/pollinators etc. but noted the challenges of balancing that with human needs
- Members discussed the potential health issue of Wasting Disease – Julie M. pulled up information online from ODNR for a brief review of same
- Members discussed impacts of less natural predators on the deer in our area
- Members worked to clarify what they would do with this topic if added to their regular items of discussion
  - Members thought there could possibly be some kind of Commission-led monitoring, as well as education and outreach campaigns that could address:
    - A count of deer in the City
    - Staying on track with wasting disease or other public health issues posed by deer
    - Impacts to area gardens and possible solutions for same
- Members agreed to wait for more information and discuss the topic again at the November commission meeting
  - Julie M. will work to gather more information related to who at the City (if any) is looking at wildlife issues and/or deer, including any public health issues related to them, and whether the Kent PD has

any record of how many crashes in the City involve deer. She will also try to get more information from Davey about their deer garden, and reach out to Kent Parks and Recreation to see whether they have any information about how they address these issues (if any)

Judy 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 Judy moved the discussion to Old Business.

An update from the Events Committee was provided.

- Members provided backgrounds of previous years October Sustainability Month and the current October Sustainability Month Celebration proclamations for the meeting guests
- Members explained and recapped the three events that the City and Sustainability Commission were leading as their part in the community-wide celebration:
  - Proclamation of Sustainability Month – occurred on 10/1/25, it was noted this was one of the last items Mayor Jerry Fiala had signed before his passing last week
    - It was asked why the Proclamation wasn't designating every October as Sustainability Month and Julie M. provided information about a proclamation being a one-time thing, whereas to make something recurring it would require City legislation like a resolution or ordinance be passed
      - It was noted this is the first year doing this particular proclamation (distinct from how it had been done many years ago with the University) and it was suggested to try the celebration as a singular proclamation for a few years
        - If successful, people would become more familiar with the concept and grow in its activities and strong community would be helpful to support the possibility of legislation versus continued proclamations
  - Commission tabling at the Haymaker Farmers' Market on 10/11/25
  - Lights Out! at Plum Creek event on 10/19/25
- Members discussed their perceptions of community feedback on intentions of participation and reception of October Sustainability Month, as well as known activity by various community entities as part of the celebration, including community entities members had personally reached out to and engaged with around same
- Julie M. advised of an additional event, noting she had received an invitation from Kent Environmental Council (KEC) for either her or a Commission member to present as part of their 10/16/25 Public Program
  - The program is focused on recycling, and they also wanted to have the City share about the Sustainability Month Celebration
  - Julie M. noted Judy, as Chair of the City's Sustainability Commission and Chair of the Portage County Solid Waste District's Policy Committee, will be representing the Commission at same – members were fine with this
- Members discussed the possible activities and logistics for the upcoming tabling at the Haymaker Farmers' Market
  - Justine will create a poster board that market attendees can affix sustainable practices suggestions to via post-its
  - Members requested a large poster of the Proclamation and a banner that can be hung on the tent indicating October Sustainability Month Celebration – Julie M. advised she'd work to create same
  - It was reiterated that Todd Cartner, president of Kent Environmental Council and co-owner of Discover Bats Ohio, LLC will be sharing the table to provide information about bats and help promote the Lights Out! at Plum Creek event
  - Members settled on what tabling flyers, materials and practices to display and promote
  - Members settled on shifts – Judy and her husband Chad will get the tabling materials from Julie M. and help with the set-up and take down of same
- Members briefly discussed an overview of activities happening as part of the Lights Out! at Plum Creek event

- Members discussed the event tracking via materials counting that Julie M. does, and members suggested there be a discussion, possibly as a New Business item about obtaining a large metal sign/poster holder similar to one used in the Kent Free Library to help reduce the number of flyers being handed out (make more use of QR Codes) and to provide a sturdy frame that doesn't blow over

Judy asked whether there were any other items for the Events Committee and while not directly related to the Commission's Events Committee, but on the topic of injection wells, Julie G. noted that the City of Marietta, Ohio is currently voting to ask the State to cease approving more injection wells until more studies can be done on potential harms.

Julie M. advised Ohio House Bill 439 is in committee now and was introduced to prohibit surface application of brine from oil and gas wells. Julie G. noted these items cross over into her journalism work related to threats to the Ohio basin.

Judy noted the meeting was running overtime and asked whether there was a motion to table discussion on the remaining agenda items. Justine motioned to table same, Tracy seconded, and hearing no further comments, members passed the motion with unanimous approval.

Justine motioned to adjourn. Tracy seconded and hearing no further comments, members passed the motion with unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, November 3, 2025, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.