

Sustainability Commission Meeting, November 3, 2025

Meeting Summary

SC Members in Attendance: Judy Nelson, Julie Grant

Excused: Tracy Wallach, Justine Gallo, Maryjayne Stone

Others in Attendance: Bill Wilen, Julie Morris

Tracy and Justine had notified Julie M. earlier in the day they would not be able to attend the meeting, and Maryjayne let Julie M. know right before the meeting started that she was experiencing car troubles and wasn't going to be able to attend. As such, there ended up being no quorum for the meeting.

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

Julie M. advised that while the meeting agenda items couldn't be opened for discussion, she did have some information to share that she received regarding her queries related to the impacts of deer on area gardens. Julie M. advised she had heard back from the Eric Gorczynski, Environmental Technician at the City's Health Department, and from Angela Manley, Director of Kent Parks & Recreation Department. Julie M. read the correspondence received and advised she would send the information out to all Commission members via email this week. Julie M. noted she was still pending a response from the Kent Police Department regarding deer-involved crash information.

Julie M. noted she had talked with Leah Graham, Sustainability Coordinator at Kent State University to see whether Leah knew of anyone on campus who might have information about these issues and Leah suggested Julie M. reach out to Rebekkah Berryhill, Grounds Manager at Kent State to ask about any impacts and associated deterrents they use for deer, if any. Judy also asked Julie M. to reach out to Davey Tree to see whether more information about their deer garden could be obtained. Julie M. advised she'd work to do so.

Judy noted that folks in her neighborhood have shared they are having a lot of trouble with racoons and groundhogs and noted that perhaps this topic needed to be expanded to not just impacts of deer, but to consider the interactions between wildlife and humans within the City. Julie G. noted she had read an article in the Cleveland Plain Dealer a while back that discussed controlled hunting in Cleveland Metroparks. Judy noted she is not suggesting culling deer as an option to deal with these concerns. Judy suggested this could become an educational campaign to help provide suggestions for folks who have problems with deer eating their gardens, or other negative interactions with other wildlife.

Julie G. had to leave early to obtain transportation, but as she was leaving, she asked how the Lights Out event went given the rain that occurred on the event day. Julie M. and Judy recapped a little bit of the event and described the component at the end where folks turned their flashlights on and then off again to experience the difference it makes. It was noted it would be nice to have a much larger set of lights in the park itself to have been able to turn off to make it more dramatic. It was noted the event will be discussed in the coming months to determine what went well and what could be improved for possible future events.

Judy and Bill stayed and continued to discuss items from the staff report. Bill asked for clarification around the solar project being developed for the 800 Mogadore brownfield in Kent. It was noted there is only one consultant firm hired, Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. (CEC) and that when Julie M. references consultants (plural) she means there are multiple individuals working as part of one consulting team at CEC. Julie M. and Judy recapped the 800 Mogadore solar project for Bill and the consultant's role in helping to shape same.

Julie M. advised there are several current legislative bills in the Ohio House and Senate that have to do with community solar and virtual net metering that would be useful for solar projects in the state. She advised she will work to provide the exact bill numbers for the older bills (one in the Senate and one in House – each addressing community solar) in the email she sends out to Commission members next week – but the newest one in the senate is SB298 and would allow for virtual net metering to be assigned to one owner. Julie M. provided examples

of the differences between community solar and virtual net metering. Julie M. noted that with the increased need for energy generation to support Ohio's grid, she hoped same would encourage passage of the legislation.

Judy noted an example of radiation experiments done at Chernobyl using different plants to help remediate contaminated soils there and wondered whether there could be similar studies allowed at the Mogadore site if/when the solar project is installed. Julie M. noted that the property is under active remediation by the Ohio EPA which entails a very specific process and requirements (in addition to the site being privately owned) such that other outside studies would not be possible anytime soon if ever. Julie M. noted there have been studies done in other areas showing sunflowers are excellent at cleaning soils, and a brief conversation was had about agrivoltaics in general.

Judy asked about solicitation for the special edition of the Sustainable Kent e-newsletter that will focus on the October Sustainability Month Celebration. Julie M. noted she will be sending content solicitation emails to individual folks and entities she has already had contact with regarding same and will be putting the call out via the sustainability list-serv as well, which will all go out this week. Judy asked Julie M. to inform her about what kind of response Julie M. receives to the solicitation efforts. Judy noted she is considering submitting an article about the "Refuse" aspect of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in recycling efforts.

Judy asked Bill whether there were any updates regarding Kent Environmental Council's (KEC) work. Bill advised they are working to secure topics and speakers for their next public programs which are held on the third Thursdays of each month at the Kent Free Library. Bill mentioned they might be looking at fabric recycling. Judy suggested KEC also consider inviting Davey Tree to come to a future public program to talk about the sustainable aspects of their SEED Campus and the plans for the public arboretum, noting Davey to be an important resource and renowned company headquartered here in Kent. Bill and Judy asked that Julie M. mention the suggestion to president of KEC, Todd Cartner, when she next meets with him.

Having no other items able to be discussed, the meeting ended at 6:18pm.

The next Sustainability Commission meeting will be held Monday, December 1, 2025, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.