

Sustainability Commission Meeting, December 1, 2025

Meeting Summary

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

Others in Attendance: Bill Wilen, Julie Morris

Judy called the meeting to order at 5:41pm and roll was taken.

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

Julie G. asked whether Julie M. had received any communication from Lynn Gregor who was inquiring about applying to the Sustainability Commission but was a day late with her application. Julie M. advised she had not heard from Lynn but advised Julie G. that Lynn would have to contact the Clerk of Council for more information.

Judy noted Lynn's name appears on the interview list for the upcoming Council Committee meeting on 12/3/25 so Lynn most likely was connected to what was needed for the application. Members briefly discussed Judy's intention to reapply for another term on the Commission, and Judy noted she will be interviewed as well at the 12/3/25 Council Committee meeting.

Members discussed whether Commission members, Julie M., other City staff, or Tracy as a Council person-elect could provide input on and/or questions for applicants for Council to review. Julie M. reiterated Bridget Susel advised that isn't allowed as the appointment process is entirely within the purview of Council.

It was noted one of the changes made in the updated Bylaws (to be reviewed later in the meeting) was that a current Council person can also be a full-voting member of the Sustainability Commission, meaning Tracy could remain on the Commission when she starts her position on Council in January, and that any Council person in the future can be a member of the Sustainability Commission.

It was asked whether the number of members on the Commission could be increased and Julie M. advised most likely no, as that falls within the purview of Council's Standing Rules of Order for Boards and Commissions.

A motion was made by Tracy to move the Revised Ordinance discussion agenda item to Good of the Order so that it, along with the Required Meeting Frequency Change agenda item, could be discussed together. Justine seconded, and hearing no further comments, members passed the motion with unanimous approval.

Julie M. began a discussion around the meeting frequency change (moving from monthly to quarterly meetings) by reviewing the memo Bridget Susel had provided regarding the change. Highlights from this discussion were as follows:

- This was a financial decision by Budget & Finance, Law, & Community Development Directors to address compensatory/overtime issues
 - Sustainability Commission meets the most frequently of any board
 - The amount of tabling and staffing events on weekends and evenings by the Sustainability Coordinator contributed to issue
 - The proposed Bylaws address this by providing Commission members with the ability to solely staff after-hours community engagement activities instead
 - Discussion was had around fluctuation of involvement of Commission members in tabling activities over the years

Julie M. reviewed the Core elements of the Bylaws and members continued discussion around the entire document contents, with highlights and concerns raised as follows:

- Review of the proposed Bylaws document
 - Summary of Bylaws Committee work that generated an initial ordinance/bylaws draft for review by Staff and the Legal department was had

- Members discussed ways the working session and ad hoc meetings could help them decide what topics to focus on and prepare presentations and/or other information to give directly to Council and/or the community
 - Members discussed the Sustainable Kent e-newsletter as an informative record of ways the City and Commission have helped educate the community around the CAP and other sustainability work, and the progress that is being made
- Members expressed frustration that tonight’s meeting was the first opportunity the group as a whole had to review and discuss the proposed Bylaws together and that the draft was going to be presented without their input at Council’s Committee Meeting on Wednesday
- After consideration of the concerns raised during the Bylaws review discussion, members decided they wanted to voice their disapproval of the meeting frequency changes and overall process by having a statement made at Wednesday’s Council Committee Meeting
 - A motion was made by Julie Grant to have Judy as the Commission Chair make a statement to council advising that while the Commission understood the City’s financial need to reduce the frequency of the Commission’s meetings, the members disapprove of this decision and felt it would reduce their capacity to conduct Commission business and participate in the civic engagement they have volunteered for - Justine Gallo seconded the motion, which, without further any further comments, passed unanimously

Julie M. noted the additional information on the deer impact issue she had received, synthesized and sent out to members for review. Julie M. also briefly provided members with current State legislation being considered that affect solar projects for their information – House Bill 303 and Senate Bill 231 that address community solar projects, and Senate Bill 298 that addresses virtual net metering.

Julie G. motioned to adjourn. Maryjayne 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 February 2, 2025, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.