

Sustainability Commission Meeting, May 11, 2026, Meeting Summary

Members in Attendance: Lynn Gregor, Justine Gallo, Maryjayne Stone, Julie Grant

Others in Attendance: Tracy Wallach, Bill Wilen, Bridget Susel, Julie Morris

Before the meeting was called to order, an informal and brief discussion around the 800 Mogadore Solar project was had while waiting for several members to arrive. It was noted CEC (the project consultants) has provided the array layout and suggested next steps given current private ownership of the site, as well as advised that at this time, the project is dependent on State legislation passing to move it forward. Brief review of those legislative bills (two related to Community Solar and one related to virtual net metering) was also had, and it was noted it while one of the Community Solar bills (HB303) has forward movement, it is unclear whether these will make it out of committee during this year's legislative session.

Meeting Called to Order: by Julie Morris at 5:40 PM; roll call completed

- **Officer Elections:**

- Nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair were discussed and elections were held
 - Brief review of Commission vacancy was had
 - It was reiterated the process of filling the vacancy remains under the purview of the Clerk of Council and Council itself
 - It was noted that if an application has been received, the Clerk of Council processes same and it is usually presented at the next available Council meeting after the application is received
 - It was noted that elections will be held annually at the first commission meeting after the new year
 - Today's election will amount to the position being filled through the end of 2026 with new elections being held then in 2027
 - **Justine made a motion nominating herself as Chair, Julie G. seconded and hearing no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously**
 - No other member was nominated for the position of Vice Chair
 - It was noted that in the absence of a Vice Chair, staff can run the agenda should the Chair be unable to make a regular meeting

- **Proposed Bylaws Review and Discussion covered the following topics:**

- **New Provisions in Bylaws and Suggested Edits:**
 - The proposed Bylaws draft reviewed reflects additional feedback from members that was provided at the 2/9/26 Commission meeting
 - Members took time to look through the proposed edits which generated a discussion on further concerns and related questions
 - Given the change to the Council appointment to the commission in the Bylaws edits, a question was asked regarding potentially setting up a governing board for the Sustainability Commission similar to how the Health Department and Parks & Recreation Department have them, which allows for a Council person to both sit on and vote as a member
 - It was noted those department governing boards were created under the City Charter and this issue could be brought to the Charter Review Board for consideration during their next review process scheduled to begin in 2030
 - It was noted this would most likely need to be considered for all boards and commissions for consistency

- Context of the need for the By-laws review work was provided, reiterating that in addition to clarifying the Commission’s work and purpose given the changes adoption of a CAP and creation of a full time sustainability staff person has created, it was also necessary to remove the commission Bylaws from a codified council process such that the commission will have the power to update their own Bylaws moving forward without needing to go before council for approval of same
 - There was concern that the Article I Objective and Purpose section of the Bylaws limited the commission to only doing work related to the CAP and not other issues of sustainability
 - There was confusion about language used in the last sentence of the Article I Core Component 2 Education and Outreach paragraph on p.2 of the proposed Bylaws – the intent was discussed and members felt clarifying language would be needed
 - There was concern about Article II Membership’s general “interest in sustainability” requirement being too broad and it was suggested that more specialized skill sets be requested
 - Bridget noted that the City can be sued if it asks for particular credentials
 - It was noted that boards and commissions are open to volunteers with all experiences and backgrounds
 - Questions about how to get commission items before Council for review were discussed, and options for and examples of how were provided
 - This led to discussion around possible topics the commission could work on, which was decided to be a focus of their June Special Meeting
 - **After discussion, the suggested edits to the proposed Bylaws draft included clarifying and adding language for:**
 - Article I Objective and Purpose section: Add “as well as any other environmental or sustainability issues” after the phrase “any future updates to the CAP,” so that it reflects an expanded purpose
 - Article I Objective and Purpose, Core Component 2 Education and Outreach: add clarifying language to the last sentence of that section to better reflect Staff’s role in helping approve events the Commission can attend if the Commission hasn’t had a chance to discuss or approve the event themselves due to timing of the invitation
 - **Lynn motioned to adopt the new Bylaws which will contain the additional language as discussed for the sections of Article I, Julie G. seconded and hearing no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously**
- **Commission Meeting Frequency:**
- Quarterly meetings that staff attend were confirmed as required due to staff overtime limits
 - The differences between work sessions and special meetings were reviewed (as outlined in the Bylaws and the “How-To” associated instructional document provided), along with the protocols for how to call and conduct them
 - It was noted there are no limits on how many of either of these kinds of meetings can be held, and Staff will not attend them but can if members want them to and the meetings are held during business hours
 - Members discussed the desire to continue holding monthly meetings that they can all attend, which would be like a standing Special Meeting for same
 - **Lynn motioned for the commission to hold a Special Meeting on the first Monday of each month, excluding months when the regular quarterly meeting is scheduled, Julie G. seconded and hearing no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously**
 - It was decided the first Special Meeting will be held June 1st with the second scheduled for July 6th, both starting at 5:30pm in the City Hall’s Community Room
 - Bridget will request the doors be unlocked for these meetings

- It was noted that these will be public meetings given the potential for quorum, but they do not have to be cancelled if it turns out a quorum will not be had on the given day – any of the members who do attend can still have discussions, they just won't be able to vote in those instances
- **Good of the Order Discussion covered the following items:**
 - **Cuyahoga River Days Event Participation Discussed:**
 - Justine confirmed she will attend and lead the No-Sew T-Shirt bag activity
 - **Designation of every October as Sustainability Month:**
 - Members discussed the previous annual proclamations by the Mayor to designate October as Sustainability month, noting it would be better served as a permanent designation
 - **Maryjayne motioned to request the Mayor make a proclamation this year to permanently designate October as Sustainability Month in Kent, Justine seconded and hearing no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously**
 - Bridget advised she will work to get this on a Council agenda this summer so that it can be in place by October
 - Members expressed interest in working with the Kent City Schools to share about climate change but weren't sure whether this would be allowed by the schools
 - Bridget advised she will reach out to superintendent Tom Larkin to ask

Adjournment: Maryjayne motioned, Justine seconded, and hearing no further comments, members passed the motion with unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 7:11pm.

Next Meeting: The next Quarterly Sustainability Commission meeting will be held August 3, 2026, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.