

Sustainability Commission Meeting, August 3, 2026, Meeting Summary

Members in Attendance: Lynn Gregor, Julie Grant, Ash D'Angelo

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

Meeting Called to Order: by Lynn Gregor at 5:35 PM; roll call completed

Before the meeting began, it was noted that in the absence of Justine Gallow who is Chair of the Commission (excused for tonight's meeting), and given the resignation of Maryjayne Stone from the Commission, the members could either elect a Vice Chair to run the meeting agenda, or they could choose to have Staff run the agenda – members chose to hold the election with the results as follows:

- Nominations for the position of Vice Chair were discussed given Maryjayne's resignation from the Commission, and elections for same were held:
 - **Julie Grant made a motion nominating Lynn Gregor who accepted and hearing no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously placing Lynn in the position of Vice Chair.**
- Brief introduction to, and background was provided by, the Commission's newest member, Ash D'Angelo
- **Gas-powered Leaf Blowers: Council's motion for Sustainability Commission:**
 - Review of Council Member Heidi Shaffer-Bish's motion transcript was had, and the subsequent Commission member discussion highlights are as follows:
 - Context for how the motion came about was provided – a resident spoke during the public comment period of a council meeting to complain about the noise made by leaf blowers
 - Members discussed different sustainability and public health aspects of the issue, with questions on whether this issue is best approached from one or the other (or both) perspectives
 - Other initial ideas and suggestions for possible restrictions and/or regulations were discussed, noting cost implications to residents and/or the City would need to be considered
 - The process of how to get the Commission's recommendations (once developed) back to Council was discussed
 - The Commission will give their recommendations to the Community Development Department, Bridget will take same back to Council, and then Council will decide how to proceed on the issue
- **Sustainable Kent Award Program Framework Review:**
 - Members had several questions, ideas, and concerns regarding the program draft with highlights as follows:
 - Members requested more information about existing area award programs held through Portage Park District and Kent Environmental Council (KEC) regarding potential overlap of award categories and process for receiving nominations and making award selections
 - Staff advised they would reach out to these entities to clarify same
 - Suggestions to launch the program as part of Earth Day activities in April 2027, with a nomination deadline of August, to then hold the award ceremony as part of October Sustainability Month were made
 - Members would like to see clarification in the program framework that not all categories will be awarded every year
 - Members would like to find out whether KEC would like to assist with &/or be a partner in this award program
 - Staff will reach out to KEC with request

- Members would like to discuss this further at their September 8th Special Meeting
- **October Sustainability Month Activities Discussion:**
 - Designation of every October as Sustainability Month:
 - Bridget advised she had confirmed with the Mayor that a Resolution passed by Council to permanently designate October as Sustainability Month in Kent (in accordance with other national and international practices) would be more effective than issuing a proclamation
 - Bridget advised she will be drafting the Memo related to same and bringing the issue to Council's September meeting cycle
 - Members discussed Lights Out! At Plum Creek event
 - They decided they would like to hold this same event again given last year's event may have been impacted by poor weather
 - Staff will reach out to the speakers and Parks & Rec to find out availability
 - While not an activity for October, members discussed an idea related to observing Earth Hour, an initiative organized by the World Wildlife Fund that encourages individuals, businesses, and communities to turn off all the lights for one hour on a Saturday in March, usually starting at 8:30pm
 - It was suggested to possibly organize this ahead of Earth Month activities next year
 - Members discussed the idea to hold a Sustainability Fair during October Sustainability Month to showcase community sustainability work via booths/tabling and then hold the Sustainable Kent Award Ceremony as part of same
 - Members discussed holding sustainability events in schools
 - Bridget confirmed she spoke with Kent City Schools and the representative from same advised each school facilitates their own sustainability initiatives, handled by members of that school's staff
 - If commission members are interested in presenting to/having an event/sharing materials at the schools related to sustainability, the request does not have to go through the Board of Education, but the following process would need to be followed:
 - Commission members can contact the principal of the school to advise of project/event/presentation ideas
 - Principal will then connect the member to the appropriate school staff contact and the project can be collaborated on and developed from there with the identified person
 - Lynn noted October is Farm to School month, and she will look into same and share information with the commission members for further discussion
 - Members discussed the idea of having a Sustainability Commission presence at the Kent State Homecoming Parade
 - It was noted this may be too difficult to organize for this year, but members agreed it could be something to look at for next year
- **Good of the Order Discussion covered the following items:**
 - Ash asked about the process for submitting articles for the Sustainable Kent e-Newsletter as she would like to submit an article for the Fall 2026 edition
 - Bill Wilen, Bridget and Julie M. provided a recap of the 800 Mogadore Solar Project update that was provided to Council at their July 1st Council Committee meeting and answered members' questions regarding same

Adjournment: Lynn Gregor moved the meeting for adjournment and hearing no further discussion and with unanimous agreement, the meeting adjourned at 7:03pm.

Next Meeting: The next Quarterly Sustainability Commission meeting will be held November 2, 2026, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room.