

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## *May 17, 2006 - Meeting Minutes*

4:30 p.m. - City Hall – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor – Community Room

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- Members Present:** Ted Lupina, Bill Steinmann, Tom Hohm, Jim Jeakle and Steven Harlow
- Approved Absence:** Bill Hughes and Casey Gershon
- Staff:** Dick Skalski (Engineering Division), Carolyn Rutland (Staff Liaison)
- Others:** David Anderson (City Commission Liaison), Travis Meier (Applicant), Beverly DeVries (Applicant) and Tristan Brown (WMU Bronco Biodiesel)

Dick Skalski gave an update on the City's Trailways development. There is a planned link from Battle Creek to Kalamazoo along the Kalamazoo River. This link was originally to go to Allegan, but will connect instead to the Kal-Haven system, which starts east of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Skalski expects the City to contract in September for the portion from Westnedge Avenue to the start of the Kal-Haven Trail. Construction is expected to take about one month and the connection should be open by late 2006.

At Mayors Park on Kalamazoo's east side the trail goes across Red Arrow Golf Course under the Veterans Memorial Park north to where Portage Creeks joins the Kalamazoo Rive. There will be one abutment construction; MDOT will fund the rest of the bridges and other abutments and the trail north to Harrison Street, just south of the Amtrak railroad. This trail will eventually extend northward to Markin Glen Park and the Nature Center. It will bring bikers and others through downtown Kalamazoo, where they can take advantage of various amenities. This trail is integrated with Metro Garage, Amtrak, and the Intermodal Transportation System.

There is already a trail from Portage to Milham Park. Another non-motorized trail, the Portage Creek Trailway, will run to downtown Kalamazoo, by Bryant Mill Pond, to Alcott Street, and past the old paper mill and will connect with Mayors Park via Gibson Street. Considering environmental and funding issues, Mr. Skalski expects this project to take about five years. He expects there to be a public meeting in June about this trailway.

Is WMU interested in a connection(s) to its campus? The West Gateway project, which will be constructed in 2006, includes part of a connection from WMU that will eventually go to the Kal-Haven Trail. Or, regular municipal streets, Lovell and South, for example, could have designated bike lanes.

Tristan Brown presented an introduction to the WMU Bronco Biodiesel project. Biodiesel is an alternative fuel. Its benefits are that it is biodegradable, non-flammable, carbon-neutral, an excellent lubricant and solvent, free of sulfur and aromatic compounds, and made in the USA. The disadvantages are its higher freezing point than diesel (it gels without an additive or a 20/80 or 50/50 blend with diesel), shorter shelf life, higher cost if pure, and an appetite-stimulating exhaust.

Bronco Biodiesel is a project proposed by WMU chemistry and environmental science professors and funded with a \$425K grant from the President's innovation fund. Its goals are to develop a business entity under WMU, manufacture biodiesels, and provide this fuel to WMU and the City of Kalamazoo.

So far, the project has hired a plant engineer and is acquiring stock. The team has met with City Environmental Services staff to discuss possible production facility locations at the City Water Reclamation Plant. They have acquired equipment for tests for quality and safety and are investigating using yellow and brown grease.

A combined venture with the City would reduce grease contamination in the wastewater treatment process and establish a model for universities and municipalities for similar ventures. The City would receive a 20% biodiesel blend for its fleet vehicles. An appropriate fuel could be provided for City buses.

Benefits include jobs, money remaining in Kalamazoo, and reduced fuel costs (if the cost of diesel continues to rise). Environmental benefits would mean less carbon monoxide, less particulate matter, and fewer hydrocarbons released.

The ECC could participate by educating citizens about biodiesel and this project and supporting requests to the City Commission, Fleet Manager, and Metro Transit Director. All are welcome at 10 a.m. meetings on Fridays in WMU's McCracken Hall.

The following information emerged in response to questions: The cost is less than or equal to \$3.00-3.30/gallon. They expect to market the product for less than the wholesale price of diesel. The City's Pilot Plant is available for use, potentially rent-free. The grant has an 18-month schedule, at which time they expect to be up and running and selling fuel.

A motion was made that the ECC make a recommendation to the City Manager and the City Commission to support the Bronco Biodiesel however possible, in whatever ways are feasible and prudent. The motion was seconded and approved.

**APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF: [April 19, 2006](#):** Draft minutes were corrected as follows: Under Announcements, change "was" to "were." A motion was made to approve the minutes as corrected; the motion was seconded and approved.

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**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Dick Skalski's update on City Trailways was added. A motion was made to approve the agenda as corrected; the motion was seconded and approved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Bill Steinmann provided handouts about the County's program to clean up methamphetamine labs and about the emerald ash borer.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** Interviews of Applicants – Travis Meier and Beverly Devries were interviewed for membership on the ECC. Mr. Meier is a WMU student, lives in the Vine Neighborhood, and works on the Bronco Biodiesel project. Ms. DeVries is concerned about proper stormwater management and other issues covered by the City's Site Plan Review process. A motion was made that these applicants be recommended to the City Commission for membership on the ECC; the motion was seconded and approved.

**SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Wellhead Protection – Jim Jeakle reported that John Paquin is working on a Wellhead Protection Ordinance for the City; he will seek ECC comments at a later date.

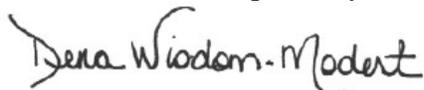
Asylum Lake – Kieser & Associates has been hired to do a water quality study, teamed with Carla Koretsky and Steve Kohler of WMU.

P/HAC – Ted Lupina will be the ECC representative to P/HAC.

Woods Lake – There was a public meeting on the Master Plan on April 19, 2006.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Transcribed and respectfully submitted,



Environmental Services Accounts Coordinator/Secretary  
Department of Public Services  
Environmental Services Division  
Harrison Street Facility