

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## JUNE 21, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Paul Manstrom, Chair; Matt Fletcher, Vice Chair; Phil Dietrich; Nora Gimpel; Lauri Holmes; Olga Button; Alex Maldonado; Aaron Wright

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Chris Wahmhoff

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:**

**STAFF:** John Paquin, Staff Liaison; Christine Kosmowski; Environmental Programs Manager; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

**OTHERS:**

### **1. ROLL CALL (Excused Absences):**

Mr. Manstrom called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

### **2. APPROVAL MINUTES (May 17, 2017):**

There were no changes to the Minutes.

**Mr. Dietrich, supported by Mr. Fletcher, moved approval of the May 18, 2017 ECC Minutes as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Mr. Fletcher, supported by Ms. Gimpel, moved approval of the June 21, 2017 ECC Agenda as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Mr. Paquin advised that the City of Kalamazoo is pursuing the use of green energy. You can designate where your energy comes from. Consumers Energy has a certain amount of energy that can be allocated to the City of Kalamazoo and the City is pursuing that option. The ECC could support that effort through a resolution. This relates to sustainability and the interests of the ECC. There is nothing in writing at this point but they might start with the water reclamation plant.
- Mr. Manstrom mentioned that Consumers Energy has a green generation program that Kalamazoo College participates in.
- Ms. Gimpel inquired if the Foundation for Excellence is related to that effort. Mr. Paquin was not certain but stated that might help promote it.
- Ms. Button advised that about 10 years ago Oshtemo Township offered a green energy alternative and she paid more for that option.

### **5. COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Mr. Dietrich inquired about the recent wastewater discharge. Mr. Paquin advised that the recent discharge was captured at the plant. They have a capture system with pipes that contained it before it ran into the river. Steve Rochow could provide more information and the media release would provide more details. The DEQ said the City didn't have to report the discharge but it was reported by the City.
- Mr. Fletcher inquired if there is funding/grant money allocated for lead pipe removal in Kalamazoo. Mr. Paquin stated that the Foundation for Excellence is providing another half million dollars, in addition to the amount that was already budgeted, which is four or five times more than was available last year. There are 411 lead removal

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slated for 2017. Just over half of those are associated with road construction projects in Kalamazoo Township, which will be coordinated with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County. The rest of the lead pipe locations are within the City of Kalamazoo. Some of the service renewals are being coordinated with MDOT or other road construction projects and some are based on where the lead is. Mr. Fletcher requested that this topic be placed on a future ECC agenda. He mentioned that overviews regarding the lead removal project are sometimes in the weekly City of Kalamazoo e-mail that is sent on Friday.

- Mr. Wright mentioned that the Climate Action Plan was not on the agenda and should be added.
- Mr. Manstrom advised that there is a bike trail through the west side of town (In the Township) called the Westwood Wiggle. The trail runs from Turwill and Canterbury to Berkley and Grove St. The City received a donation to extend the trail from the West Main Mall area on Drake Rd. to the base of Academy St. at Kalamazoo College. Discussions are on-going with regard to extending the trail across Academy Street and into downtown Kalamazoo. This is an on-road trail rather than a dirt path. The donation is for signage to mark the trail, which is on residential roads.

### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Interviews for ECC member openings.**

- Mr. Manstrom stated that he hasn't heard from Matt McClelland. Toby Ward could not be present but he is still interested. Emily Murphy withdrew her name. Two applicants were present at the meeting: Katie Stevenson and David Kroening.
- Following a discussion at the last meeting, ECC members submitted up to three questions each to be considered as interview question. There were a total of about 25 questions submitted.
- After a brief discussion, the following statement and questions were chosen for the interviews: "The Environmental Concerns Committee is a volunteer group focused on environmental issues. No previous experience is required. Whether you arrive as a volunteer, an educator an environmental sciences professional or have any other environmental bonafides, our only prerequisites are an interest in environmental issues and a commitment to show up once a month, 12 times a year." 1. Why do you want to be a member of the Environmental Concerns Committee? 2. What environmental issues most interest and/or concern you and why? 3. The ECC meets monthly at 4:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month. Does this meeting date conflict with your current schedule? Can you commit to the ECC on this date and time? 4. What skills and/or experience do you feel you possess that will help you make a contribution to the Environmental Concerns Committee? 5. Have you previously served on similar committees or boards? If so, what motivated you to apply for the ECC and what do you hope to accomplish here? 6. We have experienced a rapid turn-over with the ECC members. The success of our group depends on its individual members demonstrating a long-term commitment to the ECC and this community. Are you willing to commit to at least one, three-year term? 7. When you encounter people who have different views of things than you do, what kind of reaction do you have, how do you deal with your reactions and how do you deal with the other person?
- Ms. Stevenson answered the questions as follows: 1. She lives in Kalamazoo and has a background in environmental science. She is curious about the concerns of the community and would like to take those concerns to a higher level and see a positive change. 2. Climate change and factory farms; she tries to eat less meat during the week. She thinks people could make a big change if they follow that example. 3. She works downtown for Metro Transit and gets off work at 4 p.m. so it would not be an issue for her to attend the meetings. 4. She has a Bachelor's degree in environmental and sustainable studies. She participated in the Environmental Sciences Club at Henry Ford Community College, Students for Sustainable Earth at Western Michigan University, and she volunteered at the sustainability office at Western Michigan University. 5. She has not been on any boards/commissions. The clubs she participated in had the power to educate but not to make changes. The ECC has the power to make positive changes. 6. She can commit to one, three-year term on the ECC. 7. Education is key. Even if she doesn't agree with someone, she takes their standpoint into account. It is important for people to educate each other.
- Ms. Holmes inquired about the discussions Ms. Stevenson was involved with at the clubs meetings she attended. Ms. Stevenson advised there were discussions regarding climate change and how to be more sustainable. For example, not driving as much or driving more than flying, using less water, etc. are ways to support sustainability.
- Mr. Fletcher mentioned that Ms. Stevenson is a Special Projects Coordinator with Metro Transit. He inquired if her job touches on any environmental issues. Ms. Stevenson stated that it does sometimes. She is a GIS analyst; part of her job is to map out trails. Some buses are electric which is more environmentally friendly and that is a step in the right direction. Solar panels will be installed on some of the City's bus shelters. The shelters need to have sun on them during the day in order to light up at night. The goal is to have the solar shelters in high-traffic areas.

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- Ms. Button mentioned that sometimes ECC members have to edit or read things. She inquired if Ms. Stevenson would you be willing to do that outside of the ECC. Mr. Stevenson responded in the affirmative.
- Mr. Kroening answered the interview questions as follows: 1. He is an Engineering student (civil engineering and mechanical engineering). There are lots of environmental Issues and he is always looking for ways to take positive action. Serving on the ECC is a good place to start with positive change in Kalamazoo and other areas. 2. His main interests/concerns are sustainability and transportation. Transitioning from gas to electric vehicles is an interest. It is important to get recharging stations for people to have electric vehicles. 3. He has no conflict with the ECC meeting schedule. 4. He has no previous experience with environmental boards or commissions. 5. He studied environmental issues at WMU. He looks at sustainability issues as they relate to engineering. He sees problems from a different angle than someone else might. It is helpful to have people with different viewpoints working together to solve problems. 6. He is able to commit to one, three-year term with the ECC. He appreciates Kalamazoo and wants to stay in Kalamazoo after he graduates. 7. He is not an emotional person and likes to listen and understand before reacting. He is open-minded.
- Mr. Maldonado inquired about Mr. Kroening's environmental education. Mr. Kroening stated that he took a class on environmental sustainability.
- Ms. Holmes inquired if Mr. Kroening is currently employed; he stated that he is not. Education is his main focus at this point and takes up most of his time. He has been looking for internships and part-time work.
- Ms. Gimpel commented that Mr. Kroening is a veteran and has lived in various places around the world. She inquired if he thought that experience might bring a different perspective to the ECC. Mr. Kroening responded in the affirmative and suggested looking at how other countries, such as Germany, are dealing with sustainability; it is a big issue there. We can look at what other cities do and maybe apply their practices in Kalamazoo. He learned something in the military called an "After Action Review" which focuses on what was done, why it was done and how it could be done better. He continues to use that process.
- The applicants were advised that the ECC would follow up with them regarding the outcome of the interviews and they were excused from the meeting.
- The ECC members were in favor of making the standardized questions part of the future application process. Mr. Fletcher made a motion to use these interview questions as a frame work for future ECC applicants.
- Ms. Holmes suggested forming a sub-committee to further refine the interview questions.
- Ms. Kosmowski suggested making sure the questions are in line with the opening paragraph, which mentions that no previous experience is required. Some of the questions refer to skills and experience. She inquired as to how the decision would be made if some applicants have an environmental background and others don't. Mr. Paquin suggested that the ECC members could vote a secret ballot; the most votes would appoint new members. Mr. Fletcher mentioned a prior conversation regarding "first in, first on" as a means of choosing applicants.
- Ms. Kosmowski inquired as to what would happen if there was only one opening and one applicant? Would anyone ever be rejected? Mr. Manstrom advised that no one has been turned down for ECC membership during the time he has been involved with Committee.
- Mr. Manstrom inquired if the ECC would like to recommend these two candidates and if the applicants who were not present should be considered. The ECC was not in favor of considering the applicants who were not present.
- **Mr. Fletcher, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved to recommend to the City Commission the appointment of Katie Stevenson to the ECC. With a voice vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.**
- **Mr. Fletcher, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved to recommend to the City Commission the appointment of David Kroening to the ECC. With a voice vote, the motion carried with a majority vote. Ms. Holmes abstained from voting.**
- Mr. Manstrom mentioned the need to recruit other members. Mr. Maldonado stated that he only found about this group because he picked up a flyer with details about the ECC. He suggested updating the City's website; people don't even know the ECC exists. There could be more standardized outreach and maybe a packet of information about the ECC or an on-line resource. The information could include details about the board members, what they are trying to do and what they are looking for.
- Mr. Fletcher suggested going to the City of Kalamazoo website and looking under boards and commissions to find out who the board members are and when their terms expire. He inquired if there is anyone on the Committee who could build a website for the ECC. Mr. Maldonado stated that he has three websites. He suggested having some unification and more organization and reaching out to more diverse applicants.
- Mr. Paquin stated that the website is being revamped; Neal Conway is the contact person for that project. Mr. Maldonado inquired as to how the ECC could put information on the website. Ms. Holmes commented that the ECC

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has not caught up with existing technology. Mr. Paquin suggested that Mr. Maldonado capture those suggestions and provide them to City staff to pass along to Mr. Conway.

- Ms. Kosmowski inquired if a subcommittee should be formed to look at vacancies. Mr. Wright was in favor of that idea. He expressed frustration that the meeting had been going on for about an hour and a half and there had not been any discussion about environmental issues.
- Ms. Gimpel stated that some of the applicants are people she knows because of the outreach she has been doing. There is diversity within the WMU students. Mr. Wright mentioned that the ECC does not look like the City at large, he inquired if other committees have a similar composition. He inquired if efforts are being made to recruit members. Mr. Paquin cautioned against discriminating against anyone.
- **Ms. Gimpel, supported by Mr. Fletcher, moved to create a sub-committee to review ECC membership procedures.**
- Mr. Wright commented that coming up with interview questions/protocol is different than outreach.
- Mr. Wright, supported by Mr. Fletcher, moved to create a one-page description of the ECC interview process.
- Ms. Kosmowski inquired as to what the charge and the intent of the committee would be. It is important that people understand why they are here. Mr. Dietrich stated that he would be willing to serve on that committee.
- **The charge of the sub-committee is to create a one-page document of interview questions with an introductory statement explaining the function of the committee. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**
- Ms. Kosmowski suggested that the sub-committee report back to the ECC and consider the issues in phases.
- Mr. Manstrom, inquired if there was a motion to defer the rest of the agenda items? Ms. Holmes mentioned that there was a discussion last month about postponing the rest of the agenda items until July because of the interviews.

### **7. OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **By-Laws**

- Mr. Paquin stated that he incorporated everything to date from the suggestions in the minutes and a separate e-mail from Ms. Button. The by-laws will remain on the agenda under old business.

#### **Revised 2016 Annual Report**

- Mr. Fletcher suggested voting on the Annual Report at the June meeting. Mr. Manstrom mentioned that some dates were wrong: 2015 should be 2016 on the 1<sup>st</sup> page.
- **Mr. Fletcher, supported by Ms. Holmes move approval of the ECC Annual Report, contingent upon the dates being corrected.**

#### **Deer Population Management (postponed)**

#### **Wood Lake Water Quality Discussion (postponed)**

#### **Master Plan**

- Ms. Holmes requested an update regarding the visioning process for Imagine Kalamazoo. She would like to know if the plan deals with environmental issues. Ms. Gimpel stated that Rebekah Kik and Christine Anderson discussed the completed process at a recent City Commission meeting. Mr. Fletcher will forward the information he has on the master plan. The City Planner or City Manager do not always have control over issues that are of concern, such as racism.
- Ms. Holmes inquired if the ECC would be presented with the plan as-is or if they have a responsibility to provide input regarding environmental concerns to take into account for the next 10 years. Mr. Paquin stated that the ECC is always relevant to the Master Plan; they can provide opinions and resolutions.
- Ms. Holmes inquired if the plan can be revised; the priorities stated in the Master Plan will have funding. Who decides those responsibilities? Ms. Gimpel stated that there is a 90-day comment period but she was not sure if it is just open to City Commissioners. Ms. Holmes commented that this could have impact on how grant money will be spent. She inquired if the ECC has relevant things to say about that.
- Mr. Fletcher suggested asking Rebekah Kik to provide an update to the ECC and inquire if changes can still be made to the plan.
- Mr. Maldonado stated that July 7<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for comments on the draft Master Plan. The final document will be presented to the City Commission on July 17<sup>th</sup>, which is prior to the next ECC meeting. Ms. Holmes commented that it would not make sense to have Ms. Kik attend the next meeting if there is no longer an opportunity for input. Mr. Paquin suggested sending an e-mail to Ms. Kik to obtain further details.

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- Mr. Manstrom advised that master planning is never ending and it is flexible. The ECC influence regarding environmental issues in Kalamazoo will not subside when the plan is finalized.

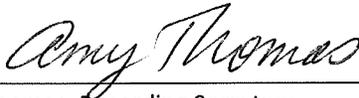
**Miscellaneous**

- Ms. Kosmowski reported that the No Water/No Beer Festival was successful. She made comments about the City's efforts to protect water.

**8. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS (POSTPONED).**

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

- Mr. Manstrom, supported by Mr. Maldonado, moved to adjourn the June 21, 2017 ECC meeting. There were no objections from the Committee.
- The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20 p.m.



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Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary