

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

JUNE 20, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Manstrom, Chair; Phil Dietrich; Mary Griffith; Lauri Holmes; Gail Walter; Aaron Wright

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Matt Fletcher, Vice Chair; David Kroening

STAFF: Malissa Drzick, Staff Liaison; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

OTHERS: David Anderson, City Commission Liaison

CALL TO ORDER

- Mr. Manstrom called the meeting to order at 4:35 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (MAY 16, 2018):

- There were no changes to the Minutes
- **Ms. Holmes, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the May 16, 2018 Minutes as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- Mr. Manstrom requested the following additions to the Agenda:
- Add under new business, Ms. Drzick will look into finding someone to speak with the ECC about flood planning.
- Add a discussion regarding information provided from Alex Maldonado.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Ms. Walter advised that the Peregrine chicks are flying now.
- Commissioner Anderson advised that a proposal was approved to build housing where the police station was near the library at Lovell and Rose Streets. The lot runs from Lovell to Cedar.
- The proposal is for a four-story building with commercial businesses on the first floor. The building might be LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certified. AVB and Hinman will collaborate on this project, which will have 135 units.
- One hundred and twenty of the units will be market rate, 14 will be work force housing/affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined as 60% of area median income or less. Sixty percent to 120% is what has been described as the "missing middle", sometimes referred to as work force housing. The National Low Income Housing organization has done studies to show what wage per hour would be necessary to rent a two-bedroom apartment. \$16.00 per hour was roughly what you would need to make to rent a two bedroom apartment in the Kalamazoo area.
- The United Way has been focusing on the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) group, which might also be referred to as the working poor.
- The new development at Lovell and Rose is a Brownfield site and there will be funding tied to that designation. It is also in a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ), which allows property owners to pay only half of property tax rate for a certain period of time. The NEZ was expanded to include this area. Brownfield tax credits are available as well. The taxes are collected over a period of time to allow remediation to be done over time on that site before the construction can begin.

NON-AGENDA COMMENTS BY OTHERS:

- Ms. Holmes requested that Ms. Walter provide her presentation regarding bird-friendly buildings at a future ECC meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

City of Kalamazoo Climate Action Plan

- There will be a meeting on Wednesday, June 27th from 6 to 8 pm. At the Nature Center regarding the CAP. Sara Jo Shipley has invited people who have an interest in the CAP to attend the meeting. She has an October deadline to come up with actionable goals.
- Ms. Shipley sent an e-mail advising there will be six subcommittees for the CAP. Mr. Manstrom plans to attend the meeting on the 27th and volunteer for the Energy and Buildings Committee.

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- For further information, Ms. Shipley can be reached at shipleys@kalamazoo.org. Mr. Manstrom will ask her to add the ECC members to her e-mails regarding the CAP.
- Ms. Holmes mentioned that the ECC identified important climate-related topics about a year and a half ago. Mr. Wright advised that information is on the ECC shared drive.

Natural Features Protection Overlay

- Mr. Manstrom advised that there have been no recent meetings regarding the overlay. The developer of the Vermeulen property is proposing to use four of the 17 acres for a car wash.
- Ms. Holmes stated that few people in the community know about the purchase of this land and the plans for it. She is sending e-mails to the Friends of Asylum Lake to keep them informed. She will let people know when public input will be important.
- Ms. Holmes sent e-mails to over 100 people last week and most of them had no idea this was happening. She circulated a sign-up sheet for people who would like to have their e-mail address added to the distribution list.
- There is a mechanism to reach the Winchell Neighborhood with information. Winchell residents are concerned about the commercial strip along Stadium Dr.; it's in their backyards.
- Ms. Griffith inquired regarding the timeline for approval of the overlay. Mr. Manstrom advised that the process could take a while and there will be opportunities for public input.
- Ms. Holmes mentioned that a lot of people don't use social media. She contacted the Gazette and was told that a reporter would probably contact her but that was three weeks ago.
- The house on the Vermeulen property was built in 1840 and it will be demolished if someone doesn't relocate it.

East Side Persistent Odor Update

- Ms. Drzick advised that City Commissioner Anderson was involved in a meeting regarding the Eastside odor but she has not heard the results. She will ask for an update.
- City Commissioner Anderson, James Baker and Jim Cornell were talking with a Manager at Graphic Packaging. There was another meeting Monday. The heat makes the aroma worse. A majority of waste water is under ground but some solids are above ground. There is a difference in smells people are complaining about. There is an ongoing Issue at Borgess Hospital regarding the aroma.
- Another recent issue has been PFAS (Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances). The DEQ is asking the City to regulate PFAS in Kalamazoo. It was previously thought that carbon regulates PFAS but recent studies have shown that it doesn't.
- Someone needs to figure out methods for testing and removal of PFAS but the DEQ doesn't have a process for that yet. A majority of local issues comes from one facility. If issues at that plant can be controlled, the amount of PFAS reaching the waste water plant will be reduced significantly and then adjustments can be made to the waste water process to reduce PFAS.
- PFAS is a chemical that is used for water proofing by textile manufacturers and tanneries, etc. It is also used in cookware. It is bio-accumulating and is being found all over the world. Someone did a blood study and they couldn't find anyone without PFAS in their blood. There will be new detections and regulations in 2019. They don't know how to remove, regulate or treat it yet but there will be a significant cost associated with that. It needs to be reduced in products.
- PFAS was used by the Wolverine Company. It travels to remote areas in the water and gets into the food chain. With regard to the Wolverine case, it got in the food chain and people were dying. When a local study was done, a majority of it was coming from one facility near Graphic Packaging.
- Mr. Wright spoke with Monica Brothers, a DEQ Air Quality Agent for the Kalamazoo region. They have had a few more complaints about the aroma near Riverview and Paterson. On April 17th, she requested that Graphic Packaging develop an odor management plan. They have requested an extension to the 21-day deadline and they are working with a consultant to come up with solutions. The deadlines are not associated with any enforcement action.
- It wasn't clear if Graphic Packaging hired a consultant (contractor) or if they were referring to discussions with the City as "consulting." Ms. Brothers was not aware that Graphic Packaging has been communicating with the City of Kalamazoo regarding the odor issue.

2017 Annual Report

- Mr. Manstrom was not able to provide a draft of the Annual Report because he is still tracking down the necessary data.
- Commissioner Anderson mentioned at a prior meeting that the Annual Report would be provided to the City Commission to keep them informed.

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- So far, the draft report contains a list of resignations and new members, presentations, issues the ECC has dealt with and what the ECC's role is as far as recommendations and bylaws changes.

WMU Bird Friendly Initiative

- Ms. Walter will provide presentations to the architects and to the landscape facilities groups at WMU in July. She is also working with two professors to plan a campus awareness and education campaign for this fall. She will provide an update with more details at a later date; it is just in the planning phase now.
- Mr. Manstrom requested that Ms. Walter provide the dates of the presentations. He will try to get Susan Lindeman and Victor Garcia from Kalamazoo College to participate. Ms. Walter stated that the first presentation will be on July 17th at noon. The second presentation will be on July 19th from 12:45 until 2 pm. Both presentations will be held at the WMU Facilities Management building off Oliver St. She has a list of 19 campuses that have made a commitment to be bird-friendly.
- Mr. Manstrom referred to the new Consumers Credit Union building in Oshtemo. The new building has a substantial amount of glass, which is not bird friendly. HOK was the architectural firm for that project. They are one of the four largest architectural firms in the world.
- Ms. Walter will be providing a presentation to an architectural firm in Ann Arbor. The presentation will be broadcast to their offices in other cities.

NEW BUSINESS

Flood Planning

- The ECC was in favor of having Ms. Drzick arrange for someone to speak at a future ECC meeting about flood planning.

Discussion Regarding Data from Environmental Websites

- The ECC was in favor of having Mr. Maldonado proceed with updating the environmental information for Kalamazoo. Mr. Manstrom will advise Mr. Maldonado to proceed with the updates.

Worst Cities Ranking/Kalamazoo Air Quality

- Wall Street 24/7 and USA Today published a list of ten cities with the worst air quality. Kalamazoo appeared on the list but was later removed. The on-line magazine has articles which are mostly related to finance. They used 8 data points such as crime statistics, median income, air quality, etc. to rate the cities.
- According to the article, the average city has 6% of days that are either ozone action days or some other indicator of poor air quality. The data indicated that Kalamazoo had 15% of days with bad air quality. The article also stated that Kalamazoo has some of the worst air quality in the country.
- Mr. Manstrom questioned if the data is accurate and, if so, is it an environmental concern. Mr. Wright spoke with Ms. Brothers at the DEQ about the article; she had not heard about it. Ms. Brothers advised that Kalamazoo is in the average to good category regarding air quality.
- Kalamazoo gets pollutants that travel over Lake Michigan from Gary, Indiana and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, etc. He noted that Gary, Indiana (known air quality issues) was not on the list of 50 worst places regarding air quality. Pollutants drop at the lake shore and air quality can be worse in that location.
- Commissioner Anderson advised that KATS (Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study) has discussed this topic at their meetings. KATS receives CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) funds. A certain level of air quality is required in order to qualify for congestion mitigation activities. The activities might include sequencing of stop lights to allow traffic to move more rapidly through congested areas. Certain rural areas to the west and southwest are also part of the region that would be trying to qualify for that funding. The southwest prevailing winds can bring contamination to the area. We can do congestion mitigation but that will not change what prevailing winds bring in.
- Mr. Wright stated that Ms. Brothers provided links/websites for the ECC to look at to get idea of air quality in Kalamazoo compared to other areas. Mr. Wright suggested that maybe this topic could be added to the July agenda for further discussion.
- Mr. Manstrom tried to contact Wall Street 24/7 to find out why Kalamazoo disappeared from the second list that was published but he has not been able to contact anyone with that organization.
- Mr. Dietrich mentioned that USA Today has a website with information listed under 50 worst cities. Kalamazoo is still listed on that website. Mr. Wright will review the data and provide a summary.
- Commissioner Anderson will attend the KATS meeting Wednesday and inquire who gathers the data for these studies.

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SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Kalamazoo River Issues (KRCC, KRWC, Allied, etc.) - No report.

Planning Commission – No report.

Tree Committee

- Mr. Dietrich advised that the Arbor Day celebration went well. Trees were planted in Spring Valley Park and people showed up for the event. He was not able to attend the Tree Committee meeting the next day.
- Consumers Energy had to clear some trees in the park. The new trees were not planted under the power lines. People were upset that the existing power lines were visible after the trees were trimmed. The Forestry Supervisor provided some resistance to the proposal from Consumers Energy but they need to clear the trees to maintain the power lines.
- The biggest demand for permits from the Tree Committee comes from Consumers Energy. The Tree Committee tries to limit the scope of the projects as much as possible and obtain replanting grants from Consumers Energy. The objective is to keep the power lines running and safe but cut as few trees as possible. He welcomed input from the ECC regarding that approach.
- Consumers Energy has a permanent seat on the Tree Committee. Consumers Energy and Todd Pryor (the Forestry Supervisor) are pushing to have trees planted more thoughtfully. For example, small ornamental trees could be planted under the lines rather than a Maple Trees, etc. The Tree Committee is limited to making decisions about City trees/trees in the right-of-way.
- Mr. Wright mentioned that human safety is a big concern. Linemen have a dangerous job taking care of power lines. They need to clear the lines to make access safer.
- Mr. Dietrich advised that the CAP (Climate Action Plan) proposed canopy protection.
- Trees will be cut at Crane Park in conjunction with the reconstruction of Betsy Ann Place. The Tree Committee granted the permit and listed the trees. Most of the trees are in poor condition.
- The creek behind the liquor store (Bottoms Up) on Stadium Drive is not a natural creek bed. Siberian Elm trees in that location are breaking up the culvert. The Tree Committee granted a permit for more appropriate trees to be planted in that location.

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council

- Ms. Griffith offered to contact professors (Steve Kohler, etc.) and ask if they can contact students about attending the public meetings regarding the rezoning. Ms. Holmes advised that information will be sent out advising when the Planning Commission will discuss the rezoning of the Vermeulen property. It would be helpful to have public input at the Planning Commission meetings.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

- Mr. Wright is hoping to attend the next PRAB meeting.

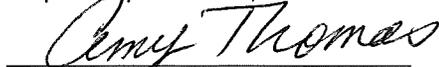
Wellhead Protection Program Committee

- Ms. Drzick will ask Mr. Paquin to provide an update regarding the Wellhead Protection Program.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary