

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 16, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Manstrom, Chair; Joe Bower; Mary Clare Griffith; Gail Walter; Aaron Wright;

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Phil Dietrich

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: Brandi Crawford

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

OTHERS: Lauri Holmes; Ian Magnuson, ECC Applicant

1. ROLL CALL (Excused Absences)

- A quorum of members was present.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- There were no changes to the agenda.
- **Ms. Walter, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the agenda as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

3. APPROVAL MINUTES (December 5, 2018):

- Under Bird Safe Building Design, Ms. Walter, Dr. Keele and Ms. Griffith will submit the grant to the Office of Sustainability.
- Mr. Manstrom referred to the first page, last bullet point, the advisory committee met with the developer but they were not an advisory board to the developer.
- **Mr. Bower, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- None

5. COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

- None

6. PRIORITY BUSINESS

Consideration of and vote on Ian Magnuson ECC application

- Mr. Magnuson's application and resume were provided. He attended the last two ECC meetings and was engaged in the conversation. He has a background that would be compatible with the ECC and the Climate Action Plan.
- **Ms. Walter, supported by Mr. Wright, moved to recommend to the City Commission, the approval of Ian Magnuson to the Environmental Concerns Committee. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**
- There are now three vacancies on the ECC, which is an eleven-member Committee. The Bylaws were changed to reflect that quorum means a majority of active members rather than a majority of seats.
- Mr. Bower offered to ask the CCL or Sierra Club if any of their members would be interested in applying for a seat on the ECC. ECC members must be City of Kalamazoo residents.
- Mr. Wright mentioned that diversity should be taken into consideration. It would be nice to have ECC members reflect various City neighborhoods.
- There was a brief discussion about the possibility of changing the ECC meeting time. Mr. Manstrom advised that the ECC has considered changing the meeting time but never acted on it. For every argument there was a counter argument.

Nominations and voting for 2019 ECC officers

- Mr. Manstrom offered to continue as Chair but he will term out at end of 2019.
- **Mr. Wright nominated Mr. Manstrom as Chairperson for the ECC. With a voice vote, the nomination carried unanimously.**
- Ms. Walter mentioned that nominations don't require a second.
- Mr. Wright stated that Mr. Dietrich was agreeable with serving as Vice Chair when he spoke with him. The Vice Chair would run the meetings when the Chairperson is absent and would also assist the Chairperson as needed. The Vice Chair normally takes the Chair position when Chairperson leaves.
- **Mr. Wright nominated Mr. Dietrich to serve as Vice Chair of the Environmental Concerns Committee. With a voice vote, the nomination carried unanimously.**

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/UPDATES/DISCUSSION:

City of Kalamazoo Climate Action Plan

CAP Update

- Mr. Manstrom advised that Jamie McCarthy is scheduled to be at next ECC meeting to provide an update on the CAP.

Natural Features Protection Overlay Update

Recent developments

- There is a six-month deadline to have the overlay completed. Jamie McCarthy and Christina Anderson will be working on the overlay as the first priority in developing the Climate Action Plan (CAP). Mr. Magnuson, Ms. Walter and Mr. Bower expressed an interest in attending the meeting with Mr. Manstrom and Ms. McCarthy. Mr. Manstrom will contact Ms. McCarthy to set up the meeting regarding the Climate Action Plan.
- The Natural Features Protection Overlay Committee is scheduled to meet on February 20th at 4:30 p.m. That group will have more meetings over the next few weeks to develop a draft of the overlay.

Jamie McCarthy presentations at February ECC meeting

- Ms. McCarthy intends to invite representatives from other environmental groups to the February ECC meeting. The objective is to provide a progress report on the CAP.
- Mr. Manstrom announced to the Asylum Lake Policy and Management Council (ALPMC) and there might be other environmental groups at the next ECC meeting.
- Ms. McCarthy will initiate the invitations, probably at the beginning of February. If more than 30 people RSVP, a larger room will be reserved for the meeting. As far as Mr. Manstrom was aware, the invitations will only be sent to environmental groups but it will be a public meeting.
- Ms. Holmes emphasized the need to consider not only what is on the property to be developed but also the impact on neighboring properties. Mr. Manstrom commented that the salinity of Asylum Lake, erosion, light pollution, etc. should all be considered.
- Ms. Holmes stated that the developer offered \$10,000 to move the historic house from the Vermeulen property to a different location. Mick Lynch advised that the house was constructed of brick made on site in the 1840's. The bricks are finished on the outside but not on the inside and they would crumble easily if moved. A company in Muskegon might consider moving the house for six figures. The house would have to be delivered across town for Mr. Lynch to take it.

Kalamazoo Air Quality

Response to ECC Memo to City Attorney?

- The memo was forwarded to the City Attorney's office after the October ECC meeting. Mr. Manstrom and Ms. Drzick have not received a response. After the December meeting, Ms. Drzick requested an update but still did not receive a response.
- The memo pertained to information from Wall Street 24/7 stating that Kalamazoo has some of the worst air quality in the Country. Mr. Manstrom suggested that if this is no longer a timely issue, it can be removed from the ECC agenda.

Update by City on Graphics Packaging and City Meetings

- Ms. Drzick reported that Graphic Packaging implemented a new process regarding the chemicals they use to degrade cardboard waste, which is the source of most of the odors. As far as she knows, they have already started the process.
- Mr. Wright will contact Monica Brother, the DEQ Air Quality Monitor, to find out if more complaints have been lodged. Ms. Drzick mentioned that when the aroma was being investigated, complaints were tied to warmer weather and windier days.

Bird Safe Building Design Update

- Ms. Griffith is following up regarding the campus awareness event. She is also putting together information to submit a grant to the Office of Sustainability on Campus for a demonstration project and for further monitoring. The grant proposal is due in March. The plan is to collect data before and after the installation to see if it helps.
- There was a vote in December to have WMU implement bird safe building design with new buildings. She was not sure about how they will retrofit existing buildings. Ms. Walter will stay in touch with the architects for the new development.
- Bird safe building design is moving outside of campus to the rest of the community. Ms. Walter spoke with Linnea Rowse, Conservation Program Manager, at Michigan Audubon who is working on the Michigan Bird Friendly Community Program, which is just being developed. The Michigan Bird Safe Bird City would be a sub-set of that program
- There are four components to the Michigan bird-friendly community: 1. safe passage, which includes windows and lights out at night; 2. Use of native plants and creating wildlife corridors; 3. species specific conservation; 4. Outreach and education. Linnea from Michigan Audubon offered to give a presentation on the community program.

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- Ms. Walter would like to create a program to include City staff and City Commissioners, which would tie into the CAP and the Natural Features Overlay. She would like to encourage Kalamazoo to become a bird-friendly city.
- She queried the best way to move this initiative from campus to the greater Kalamazoo Community. It wouldn't have to be a large venue event. The information could be provided to City staff and City Commissioners and then it could go to a public meeting.
- Mr. Wright inquired regarding the rationale for recommending the bird-friendly program to the City of Kalamazoo. Ms. Walter advised that it would be good public relations; people need nature. It is a good way to get students involved with nature. The consequence of getting rid of native plants is that it reduces the amount of food available for birds, which could lead to the extinction of many species of birds. Mr. Wright suggested showing an easily identifiable effect on the ecosystem.
- Ms. Holmes suggested that the ECC could sponsor a meeting and invite the Planning Commissioners, City Commissioners and City staff to let them know how the bird-friendly city initiative could tie in with the Climate Action Plan. The recommendation might have more impact if the information is coming from the State level.
- Mr. Magnuson suggested getting someone from the County on board with this initiative. They are building a new court and might be interesting in this discussion. Mr. Bower suggested that the ECC and the Kalamazoo Audubon Society could host the event.
- Ms. Walter will write up something more specific with the rationale for adopting a bird-friendly initiative. Detroit is a bird-safe city; their designation is through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Mr. Manstrom stated that sub-committees will be formed to help create the CAP. It is a commitment made in the Master Plan. The reason for having the Master Plan is to make Kalamazoo a more livable city and that would be part of the rationale.
- Ms. Walter advised that the WMU Student Association asked for the bird-safe building design initiative to be considered. It was her understanding that if the Student Association writes a resolution regarding this initiative, that WMU would probably comply. She has not heard if it is going to be part of their official policy; she will follow up with them.
- Mr. Bower met with Nathan at the Nature Center to talk about environmental education. The bird-safe building initiative would be aligned with that. He inquired if it would be appropriate for the ECC to partner with the Nature Center and try to raise the profile of this initiative in Kalamazoo. Lots of research goes through the Nature Center, it is a state-wide organization. Mr. Manstrom will be meeting with Nathan next week.
- Mr. Manstrom suggested that the Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum would also be a good partner. Ms. Walter will contact the Department of Natural Resources to discuss this initiative.

PFAS Update

- Ms. Drzick stated that the PFAS issue in Parchment has been addressed. They will be required to do a lead and copper study to ensure that the new chemicals and the corrosion control are working properly.
- Parchment is an older community with many lead services. Lead tests indicate that they are at level 22, which exceeds the EPA action level of 15. The infrastructure is what cause them to exceed the acceptable level. Mr. Bower mentioned that the EPA wanted to drop the acceptable level to 10 or 12 but cities sued.
- The City of Kalamazoo has been providing free water filters and lead testing to Parchment residents. Switching Parchment over to City of Kalamazoo water required flushing the water lines. That caused lots of movement in the water/pipes. Ortho phosphate is used to coat pipes that could leach and there are new compliance requirements. City of Kalamazoo personnel monitor the Parchment water system every day.
- As soon as the City of Kalamazoo is officially in charge of the water system for the City of Parchment, they can look at funding the lead service replacement in Parchment. The switch over might happen by the second or third quarter of the year.
- Typically, Ms. Drzick would receive 4 to 6 calls per day requesting lead testing. Since the letters were sent to Parchment residents, she has received 128 calls since the beginning of the year. Even if there is a copper line, the City of Kalamazoo will test for lead.

Allied Paper Superfund Site Update

- Mr. Manstrom has been tracking the EPA website. The Allied Paper site in the City of Kalamazoo is scheduled for remediation in 2020. The EPA is asking for applications for a citizen advisory group to cover all 7 or 8 sites along the river. Applications are due next Monday.

ECC Member Recruitment

- Refer to previous discussion. Mr. Wright suggested making a pamphlet and sending it to neighborhood associations via e-mail. The information could also be posted on the ECC Facebook page. Environmental Action in Kalamazoo is the name of the website. Mr. Wright requested that the link to the Facebook site be provided to the ECC members again.

Sub-Committees and Reporting Responsibilities

- Mr. Magnuson offered to attend the Planning Commission meetings and report back to the ECC. The Planning Commission meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on time limit for return of termed out ECC members.

- Ms. Holmes would like to be back on the ECC as soon as possible. The bylaws state that a former member must be off the ECC for one term (3 years) before reapplying but the bylaws can be changed. This topic will remain on the agenda for further discussion.

9. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Planning Commission – No report

Kalamazoo Environmental Council

- Mr. Bower will forward information regarding the legislative brunch. Every two years the KEC hosts an event for member organizations and others. Jon Hoadley is the host and he is an environmentalist. Legislators from around the state are scheduled to attend. The brunch is free. It will be held in Lansing on February 5th at 10:30 a.m.
- Various member organizations have been asked to put together a policy priority with the League of Conservation Voters and it will be unveiled in two weeks. The policy outlines the goals for the first 100 days, the first two years and the last two years of the administration.

Tree Committee – No report

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council

- Mr. Manstrom advised that the ALPMC discussed the NFP overlay at their last meeting. They are also trying to coordinate controlled burns in the Asylum Lake Preserve for early spring.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

- Mr. Wright has not been able to attend the PRAB meetings for several months. They have a new website for the Parks Master Plan, which was available for public input through the end of December. The plan talks about fixing up current parks and possible new green spaces.

Wellhead Protection Program Committee

- Ms. Talanda will report on the Wellhead Protection Committee at the next ECC meeting she attends. Ms. Talanda might attend ECC meetings quarterly after Ms. Drzick returns from maternity leave.

Other Organizations We Should Be Monitoring? – No report

- Ms. Walter advised that she will not be able to attend the March ECC meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary