

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Manstrom, Chair; Phil Dietrich, Vice Chair; Eric Brown; Joe Bower; Sharon Dever; Ian Magnuson; Gail Walter; Kevin Weller; Aaron Wright;

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Scott Schmidt; Mary Clare Griffith;

STAFF: Jamie McCarthy, Development Project Coordinator; Jean Talanda, Staff Liaison; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

OTHERS: David Anderson, City Commission Liaison to the ECC; Denise Keele, Associate Professor of Political Science & Environmental Studies, WMU; Lauri Holmes, ECC Associate Member; Wayne Bond, ECC Associate Member; Bobby, Glasser, ECC Associate Member; Tim Tesar; Steve Kohler; MaryAnn Renz; Rob Roznowski; Donna McClerk,

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL (Excused Absences)

- Mr. Manstrom completed roll call and determined that a quorum of members was present.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- There were no changes to the agenda.
- Mr. Wright, supported by Mr. Weller, moved approval of the June 19, 2019 ECC agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (August 21, 2019):

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

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- None

5. COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- Ms. McClerk advised that the global climate strike is scheduled for Friday, September 20th. Participants will assemble at the WMU flag poles at 12:30 pm. They will march to downtown Kalamazoo starting at 1:30 p.m. The strike event will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Arcadia Festival site. There will be speakers, live music, art, etc.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/UPDATES/DISCUSSION:

Climate Action Plan

- Ms. McCarthy stated that the sustainability team has been working on a public survey. They are trying to determine the level of understanding, the amount of concern and the willingness to change behavior regarding climate change and sustainability.
- The survey will be launched at an event to be held on September 26th. It includes ten questions and is focused on how often people are thinking about climate change and how well informed they feel they are the impacts of climate change locally, regionally, nationally and globally.
- The survey asks the following questions:
- When do they feel that climate issues might impact them or if they not concerned about climate impacts?
- How concerned are people that climate change might impact their lives and in what ways: food, fuel, health care, quality of life, safety? etc.
- What changes in Kalamazoo are they concerned about, such as flooding, extreme hot or cold days, water or air quality, Wild life, agriculture/food production? etc.
- What is your willingness to take action or are you not interested? Are you making changes to use less energy, less water, reducing waste/recycling, using public transit, using alternative fuel or renewable fuel? etc. Tell how you might need more help to get to where you want to be.
- What influences willingness to change behavior? Cost savings, economic benefit for community at large, social benefits, economic benefits, incentives, rebates? etc.
- What do you think is the level of responsibility at the state, local and national level, etc.?

- The survey also addresses natural features and demographic information and inquires how the respondents prefer to receive information from the City of Kalamazoo about sustainability.
- Mr. Roznowski is a WMU student with experience in social surveys and he has provided input regarding the sustainability survey. The sustainability team will prioritize information they receive from the community.
- The City of Kalamazoo Planning Staff is partnering with the Office for Sustainability at WMU. They have an annual sustainability celebration in the fall, which will be held at their building on campus.
- They will organize a bike ride to the Kalamazoo Farmers Market at 5:30 p.m. on September 26th, where the City will be holding its first community sustainability meeting, which will last approximately two hours. The focus of this meeting is to announce the goals and targets of the Climate Action Plan and launch the survey.
- Discussion will take place regarding what topics the Climate Action Plan should cover from the public's perspective.
- Information will be provided at tables that are set up to focus on aspects of people's lives they can change to be more environmentally responsible. There are eight topics.
- Maps will be created for Phase 2 of the Natural Features Protection Overlay.
- City Commissioners and ECC members are encouraged to attend the public meetings.
- Free tamales from Marias will be provided at the public meeting in the Vine Neighborhood.
- The Planning staff is taking volunteers to assist and provide information to the public. Ian and Kevin volunteered to help at the event.
- The survey will be on the City of Kalamazoo website in Spanish and English. Mr. Bond suggested that students might be able to assist with the translation into Spanish.
- The completion date for the Climate Action Plan depends on the number of responses and amount of information received. Paper surveys will be provided to neighborhood associations to deliver at their meetings and return to Ms. McCarthy.
- There are two interns working with Ms. McCarthy this fall on the Climate Action Plan. One of the interns is from Kalamazoo College, the other one is a WMU graduate student.

Draft Climate Emergency Resolution

- Mr. Manstrom provided the draft Resolution for review and input by the ECC. When the edits are completed, the ECC can vote on approving the Resolution and then figure out the next steps to hand off the document and what the next part of the process will be.
- The Kalamazoo Climate Change Coalition and the ECC collaborated on the Resolution and there have been a couple of suggestions for changes to the document. The heading will be determined in the second step of the process.
- The City of Kalamazoo Resolution focuses more on local issues with references to national and international efforts. If the Resolution is approved by the City Commission, the next step is to ask adjoining municipalities to join the effort. City staff and the City Attorney will review the proposed Resolution.
- The deadline for the City Commission Agenda is 10 days before the City Commission meeting. If the updated language in the Resolution is approved by the ECC, it might be possible to get the Resolution on the October City Commission Agenda.
- After adjusting the wording of the Resolution based on comments made at the ECC public meeting, the following motion was made: **Mr. Dietrich, supported by Mr. Bower, moved to accept the language in the Resolution as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**
- Ms. McCarthy advised there is a two-week lead time for City staff to provide the Resolution to the City Clerk's office and have it placed in the City Commission Agenda. There would be a legal review during that time period.
- There is an option for the ECC to submit the Resolution for the City Commission Agenda, which would help speed up the process, rather than having it submitted by City staff. Commissioner Anderson commented that City departments don't make recommendations to the City Commission. City staff would talk to the City Manager and he would make the recommendation.
- The heading of the Resolution was adjusted to show that it is from the ECC rather than the Community Planning and Development Department and the Public Services Department.
- Mr. Manstrom will submit the Resolution by e-mail with a cover statement and a cc to City staff members by close of business on September 19th.
- Dr. Keele stated that the climate strike is Friday and she will report the unanimous vote by the ECC on the Resolution. She would like to share the updated version of the Resolution on the public Google drive folder before the strike.

Vermeulen Property Rezoning

- Ms. Holmes reported that there has been no request from the developer to rezone the former Vermeulen property. The deadline for the October Planning Commission meeting has passed.

- Eventually, the developer intends to build an elaborate Drive and Shine car wash at the corner of Asylum Lake Preserve. He plans to have three Drive and Shine car washes in Kalamazoo.

Allied Paper Superfund Update

- Ms. McCarthy reported that the Panelite parcel, in the middle of former Allied Paper site, has been owned by the State Land Bank for quite some time. The City of Kalamazoo won't be held liable for contamination when they take over ownership of that parcel. It will be used for access to the Allied site and for the remedial design of that property. The City of Kalamazoo should be receiving the deed to the Panelite parcel shortly.
- The EPA and the Environmental Trust are working with a consultant at Tetra Tech on the remedial design. They have identified areas to excavate, where the road will be, what will stay on the property and what won't. They will be working through the design phase over the next six to nine months.
- The Record of Decision states they will consolidate contaminants on site, maybe at the southern end of the property. The City wants as tight of a footprint as possible for the contamination in order to leave a bigger footprint for redevelopment. They are hoping the property will generate tax dollars. Funds will be set aside from the Environmental Trust for maintenance of the site.
- There is a lot of land on the site that is at a higher elevation. The flood layer is covering the impounded area; the dam was removed. The hydrology of the area is important, and they don't want the river to move the contamination; there have been erosion issues. The design should be protective of those soils. There is not a lot of flood plane area on the site. There is still paper waste on the site and that will be a big excavation area.
- It is expected that the flood plane will stay as is. The 100-year flood plane is not the same as it was 30 years ago. The flood plane on that property is just the creek. More work up-stream might change the volume of water that goes through that area. There is a grade change on that site and the elevation in that area is quite high.
- Dr. Keele inquired what the use can be on the surrounding development after the City takes ownership of the Panelite property. The EPA classifies the uses for the surrounding area, such as parks, businesses, industries etc. Ms. McCarthy did not have information about what the use will be. The Record of Decision is on the EPA website.

7. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Natural Features Protection Overlay.

- Mr. Glasser stated that the last couple of NFP meetings were cancelled. There have been no official items to review yet.

Air and Water Quality

- Mr. Wright reported that Graphic Packaging is looking to make a major expansion and bring in new jobs to Kalamazoo and Athens, Ohio.
- Hopefully, there will be an update at the next ECC meeting about the meeting between the City of Kalamazoo and Graphic Packaging.

Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection.

- Ms. Walter advised that monitoring for bird/building collisions during fall migration started last week on campus. Seven birds were found in eight days.
- Mr. Magnuson is forwarding an article regarding West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis in the deer population.
- Ms. Walter advised that the State of Michigan declared a state of emergency regarding EEE, which includes Kalamazoo County.
- EEE is at the highest level in 18 years; three people have died. Also, a number of horses and deer have died from EEE. Limiting time for outside activities is recommended, along with the use of Deet, until the first frost.
- A "dead-end host" does not pass along EEE. She was not sure if deer are in that category but will try to get more information. That could be a concern to add to the deer issues.

Waste Management/Litter

- Ms. Dever stated that the Waste Management and Litter subcommittee obtained a copy of the contract the City of Kalamazoo has with Republic Services. The subcommittee will review the contract and bring recommendations to the ECC next month.
- Mayor Hopewell is pushing to increase state recycling rates. Mr. Wright's class will make a presentation to other classes about increasing recycling.

- Mr. Brown stated that the goal of the subcommittee is to bring a recommendation to the ECC next meeting to vote on. The focus now is procedure and possible violations of the contract. There was a suggestion to print something on the lids of recycling containers regarding what is and is not recyclable.
- Mr. Bower inquired if there are any communities who don't practice single-stream recycling. Much of the single-stream recycling is wasted because it is contaminated. Mr. Weller stated that the subcommittee will look into that.
- There is a motion with Jon Hoadley to begin a campaign to develop a bottle deposit bill, that would include water bottles. Fred Upton is currently the sponsor. There may be a citizen referendum if that effort is not successful. There is an 89% return on bottles that are currently covered by the bottle deposit. The sub-committee is looking at what other communities do. Michigan is falling behind with recycling efforts compared with what other states are doing.
- Mr. Glasser mentioned a faith-based liter reduction initiative in the Milwood Neighborhood. He is working with a pastor to get extra dumpsters and make them available to the homeless population and others who might need them. If they put a filled bag in the dumpster, they will get coupons for food, etc.
- Ms. Talanda recommended an app called Recycle Coach that provides details about the City of Kalamazoo recycling program. There is information about how to protect our water resources at protectyourwater.net. Hazardous waste disposal has been increased by ten-fold. The Krazy for the Kzoo river cleanup on the Kalamazoo River is scheduled for October 5th. More information is available on the Kalamazoo Watershed Website.

Planning Commission

- The Planning Commission has been discussing medical marijuana facilities and the expansion of the WMU industrial park.

Tree committee

- Mr. Dietrich reported that Consumers Energy wants to clear the right-of-way through the Winchell Neighborhood in order to make improvements to the power lines at Parkview Avenue and east to the substation.
- The permit is contingent upon having a public meeting in the Winchell Neighborhood. Consumers Energy is planning to remove hundreds of trees as part of this project.

Asylum Lake Policy and Management Council

- Mr. Manstrom reported that the ALPMC has been tracking silt and erosion from the June rain event at BTR2 (phase 2 of the Western Michigan University Business, Technology and Research Park). WMU hired Kieser & Associates to test the run-off for contaminants. They found no arsenic in the samples they took.
- The Council is considering retaining Kieser & Associates to determine what has changed since 2008 with regard to storm water run-off that is reaching Asylum Lake.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

- No report

Wellhead Protection Program Committee

- Ms. Talanda reported that there will be a Wellhead Protection Committee meeting on October 7th. The Committee is expanding with new members. They will invite a guest speaker from Lansing Board of Water and Light to discuss the potential lowering of criteria for PFAS.
- Lansing is similar to Kalamazoo with regard to having drinking water supplied from ground water and having a similar population. Kalamazoo has a unique system with different pressure districts.
- Changing the PFAS criteria might mean that some of the City's well fields can no longer be used. Funding is not available to put treatment facilities at every wellhead. The "protect your water" ads could also be affected if the criteria are adjusted.
- The Committee will invite officials from Cooper Township to the Wellhead Protection meetings as the City is hooking up their residents to City water and decommissioning wells in Cooper Township.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary