

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 20TH, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT:</u>	Paul Manstrom, Chair; Sharon Dever; Mary Clare Griffith; Ian Magnuson; Scott Schmidt; Gail Walter; Kevin Weller; Aaron Wright;
<u>EXCUSED ABSENCES:</u>	Phil Dietrich, Vice Chair; Eric Brown; Joe Bower
<u>STAFF:</u>	Malissa Drzick, Staff Liaison; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary
<u>OTHERS:</u>	David Anderson, City Commission Liaison to the ECC; Wayne Bond (ECC Associate Member); Bobby Glasser (ECC Associate Member) Lauri Holmes (ECC Associate Member);

1. 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. Schmidt, moved approval of the November 20, 2019 ECC agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 19, 2019):

- Ms. Dever stated that the contamination rate for recycling in the City of Kalamazoo is 6.9%. Approximately 11,000 of the 16,000 single-family households in the City of Kalamazoo participate in the recycling program.
- **Mr. Wright, supported by Mr. Schmidt, moved approval of the May 15, 2019 ECC Minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- None

5. COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- None

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/UPDATES/DISCUSSION:

City of Kalamazoo Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

- Mr. Manstrom met with Jamie McCarthy on Monday. She advised there has been nothing new to report to the ECC regarding the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan; she is waiting for more public feedback from the surveys.
- There will be a task force meeting on December 5th to analyze the results of the survey. An intern has been assigned to work strictly on the survey.
- Mr. Manstrom will talk with Ms. McCarthy about targets and a baseline for the greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ms. McCarthy hopes to have a draft of the Plan before the January ECC meeting. The ECC will review the draft plan and then it will be submitted to the City Commission for review.
- Discussion followed as to whether the County of Kalamazoo has a climate action resolution and, if so, does it stress the need for regional cooperation. Ms. Walter stated that she did not recall seeing that document.

Vermeulen Property Rezoning

- The planning staff has not received a request to rezone the Vermeulen property. The Asylum Lake Policy and Management Committee (ALPMC) would like to be ready to respond to a rezoning request when/if one is submitted by the developer because the Vermeulen property is adjacent to the preserve.
- The Future Land Use Plan designates the Vermeulen property for commercial use but there are concerns that commercial uses might not be compatible with that property. Mr. Manstrom will ask to meet with Christina Anderson regarding this issue.
- If there is enough opposition, the City of Kalamazoo might consider other options for that property. There are new City Commission members and they might have some influence on the decisions that are made about the Vermeulen property.

- A rezoning application would be reviewed by the Planning Commission and they would make a recommendation to City Commission on the rezoning request. Mr. Manstrom has witnessed the City Commission rejecting requests due to public opposition.
- The future land use map was in the previous Master Plan; the commercial designation might have been wrong in the past. Ms. Dever stated that the Vermeulen property was designated as green space back in the 1970's.
- Ms. Holmes referred to a letter from the planning staff to the developer in October 2017. There has been some debate as to the meaning of that letter. It is private property but there have been some examples of government telling people what to do with private property.
- The planning staff at the City of Kalamazoo are in the process of rewriting the zoning ordinance. There has been concern that the Natural Features Protection Overlay does not adequately protect the three preserves in the City (Asylum Lake Preserve, Kleinstuck Preserve and Bow in the Clouds Preserve).

December ECC Committee Election Coordination

- Mr. Wright is the only candidate for the Chair position on the ECC. An ECC member can nominate Mr. Wright for that position at the next meeting.
- Mr. Dietrich expressed an interest in continuing to serve as the Vice Chair of the ECC; Mr. Manstrom will contact Mr. Dietrich to make sure he is still interested.
- Empty seats will be filled on a first-come basis, based on the date the applicant applied to serve on the ECC. Mr. Glasser is the next eligible applicant. A motion can be made at the next meeting to approve Mr. Glasser to fill a vacant seat on the Committee. The new terms won't start until January 2020.
- There is a City policy about people not serving on more than one City board but there are exceptions; Mr. Glasser is the only hydro-geologist and his expertise is a valuable asset to the ECC.
- Mr. Manstrom will continue to serve on the ECC as an associate member until the Climate Action Plan is completed. There could be a discussion at future meetings regarding other applicants who might want to serve as associate members.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion about support for MLCV Request Regarding DTE IRP (Integrated Resource Plan) Decision.

- Mr. Manstrom received a letter e-mailed from the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV) in Lansing. The letter requests that the ECC approach the Mayor of the City of Kalamazoo about supporting the MLCV's efforts to make sure that DTE is committed to a rapid transition to renewable energy.
- The communication of support would need to be sent within the next couple of weeks. The following comments/questions from the ECC were discussed:
- Kalamazoo is not in DTE's service area; Consumers Energy provides gas and electric services for Kalamazoo County. There are some areas, such as Grand Rapids, where DTE is the gas supplier and Consumers energy supplies the electricity.
- Do other communities, who don't receive energy through DTE, have mayors who signed on to this effort? The MLCV could approach the City Commission or the Mayor directly, without involvement from the ECC.
- The Michigan MAUI (Municipal Association for Utility Issues) serves as a lobby for municipalities and issues with the public service commission. Mr. Manstrom suggested that the MLCV contact the Michigan MAUI. Entities must pay to be a member of MAUI and use their services. Detroit, Lansing and Grand Rapids are members of MAUI.
- The MLCV might be trying to collect statements of support to submit to the administrative law judge who is involved with this issue. This might help influence big energy suppliers to diversify their portfolio and reduce their carbon footprint. There is not a profit motive for them at this point, but widespread political influence might help motivate them to change.
- The ECC could still support this effort even if Kalamazoo is not receiving energy from DTE. The request from the MLCV is for the ECC to ask the mayor to sign the letter of support.
- Does DTE supply energy to areas southwest of Kalamazoo? Maybe the ECC could weigh in on how that could affect air quality in Kalamazoo due to emissions from other areas.
- If the plan is for DTE to continue with use of coal fired facilities, that affects social justice and the lives and health of people in Michigan. It was suggested that the ECC should review the whole plan if they are going to endorse it.
- Consumers Energy has a plan to reduce emissions by 90 percent by 2040, but there are issues with the plan. They are counting on reducing emissions by people reducing their energy use. Mr. Manstrom has the press release for the Consumers Energy plan. It was suggested that the Consumers Energy plan could be part of the sustainability strategy.

- Renewable doesn't necessarily mean carbon neutral. Instead of having a minimum standard such as 10 percent renewable energy, there is now a requirement to submit a rough plan to the MPSC regarding what you intend to do in the future. There is no minimum requirement or deadline for attaining goals on being renewable or carbon neutral.
- The minimum has been achieved by power companies in the past by buying power from smaller companies or by using carbon offsets, instead of using wind power or solar energy. Michigan is good at being ahead of the curve regarding environmental policy but efforts have not continued. The bottle deposit is an example. Michigan was the first to have the deposit law but it has not been updated since the 1980's.
- A 30 percent reduction by 2025 is the new goal; a 30 percent reduction over six years is the current national average.
- There is potential for wind power in the great lakes region but there does not appear to be much interest in pursuing that option. There was an effort by the City of Grand Rapids to install off-shore wind power to use for their intake pumps near Grand Haven. That idea was not well received due to the potential for negative impact on beachfront property.
- Discussion followed regarding the possibility of having wind power further out into Lake Michigan, but concern was expressed about possible transmission issues.

Report on the KEC Environmental Summit

- Mr. Bower was not present to provide a report. Ms. Dever advised that there is a summary available regarding the summit. People talked about issues, possible solutions and existing tools. The idea was to figure out what people want to focus on. About 45 people attended.
- Ms. Dever will forward information about the summit to Mr. Manstrom to share with the ECC.

ECC City Commission Liaison

- Commissioner Anderson stated that he would like to continue attending ECC meetings now that he has been elected Mayor. City Commissioners will be given their choice as to which City Board/Commission they would like to attend in their capacity as City Commission Liaison.

Potential Kleinstuck Preserve Land Acquisition

- The Stewards of Kleinstuck are raising money to purchase eleven acres at the north end of Kleinstuck Preserve. They already have the earnest money. They are working with an attorney to determine if this is viable option and, if so, they will do fundraising to come up with the rest of the money. The price for the eleven acres is around \$700,000.
- Ms. Holmes mentioned that the Kleinstuck Preserve has a neighborhood of people to help protect it. The Asylum Lake Preserve is not surrounded by a neighborhood. There could be 110 housing units adjacent to Kleinstuck Preserve if that land is developed for residential use.

Certification Program

- Mr. Bond mentioned that he sits on the Graduate Certification and Climate Change Policy and Management group at WMU. They are proposing a program that was just approved through WMU and will now be forwarded to the Michigan Public Universities Committee for approval.
- If approved, this will be a graduate certification program in climate change policy that will be available in the fall of 2020. It will be five to six classes for post-graduate students.

8. Subcommittee Reports

Natural Features Protection (NFP) Overlay Board

- Mr. Glasser stated that the NFP Board hasn't had any cases to review recently. They are looking at phase II of the overlay, which is a review of additional parcels that might need to be included in the overlay. They are also looking at the zoning ordinance and how that relates to the overlay.
- The Planning Department has a WMU intern who is a graduate student with GIS experience. He is looking at programs that will take mature trees and slope, etc. into consideration. That will help the NFP board decide if those areas are worth incorporating into the overlay.
- The City of Grand Rapids has a tree cover plan and they advocate for 40 percent tree cover. That is outside the scope of natural features protection. Jamie McCarthy had mentioned that some neighborhoods are petitioning the City of Kalamazoo to replant trees along certain streets.
- There is language in the Overlay regarding natural preserves versus human-constructed preserves, which are not "natural" features, and what should be protected with the overlay. The Review Board is working on defining what a "preserve" is and updating the natural features overlay map.
- Ms. Holmes mentioned that there are certain things the overlay doesn't protect. However, the NFP Overlay Review Board involvement with a recent development had a positive impact on the site plan.

Air and Water Quality

- Mr. Wright stated that he attended the Odor Task Force meeting on November 20th, Jim Cornell from the City of Kalamazoo's water reclamation facility ran the meeting. Also in attendance at the meeting was a Mill Manager from Graphic Packaging, a representative from the County of Kalamazoo, four or five people from City of Kalamazoo facilities, including James Baker, Director of Public Services. Jon Hoadley's Legislative aid and Monica Brother, the Air Quality Specialist from EGLE, also attended the meeting.
- Mr. Cornell showed a new data collection system and odor monitoring software the City has with maps that are predictive. The program can go back in 15-minute increments to show data that was collected during that time frame.
- There are six onsite odor monitors, including the following locations: the water reclamation plant, Borgess Hospital, the police station at the corner of Gull Road and Riverview Dr., and Verburg Park.
- There is an overlay of data on a city map and you can see a plume of color, which indicates the intensity of the aroma that has been detected by the sensors. Red indicates the most intense aroma. The waste water treatment facility began using this program on October 9th.
- By the time someone arrived to investigate complaints in the past, the wind had shifted and the odor was gone. The process can be adjusted to ameliorate the smell based on what humans will be there.
- Mr. Wright stated that the aroma at the water reclamation plant stays pretty close to that property. There was no data available from Graphic Packaging. Deputy City Manager, Jeff Chamberlain was also at the meeting and he suggested looking at all of the data.
- The manager from Graphic Packaging advised that the chances are better that Graphic Packaging will invest in the technology now that they see how it works. They have the software but would need to put monitors at Graphic Packaging.
- There was a lot of science being discussed regarding the smell, it is decaying organic matter. The aroma is not waste coming from the water reclamation plant, it is generated from the process used to recycle paper fibers at Graphic Packaging.
- Mr. Townsley from Graphic Packaging talked about changes in their process, they will double their output after the expansion is completed. They are using a proprietary blend of ingredients called Redox to help mask odors. They haul away solid waste five to six days a week now vs. three or four days a week. Moving the waste more quickly helps reduce the chances of odor lingering in the area.
- Graphic Packaging is also using a UV (ultraviolet) system to help reduce odor. The Redox system is an acidic compound and will require Graphic Packaging to ask the City of Kalamazoo for a variance on the pH balance of waste that is being processed through the water reclamation plant. They are one of five industries that has a huge flow to the water reclamation plant.
- Mr. Wright inquired if the water reclamation plant can handle the chemical compound used for odor masking. Mr. Chamberlain advised that city staff members are following up with regard to the consequences this chemical will have at the water reclamation plant.
- Ms. Drzick stated that data is being analyzed for capacity purposes. If the water reclamation plant receives no warning about the change in chemical composition of the flow coming from Graphic Packaging, there could be issues for the City of Kalamazoo with regard to biological compliance with the state.
- The water reclamation plant has ranges of pH that are required. If there is an increase in the flow of certain chemicals, that can change the alkalinity and pH balance of what the waste water plant is processing.
- Mr. Wright stated that the task force is waiting to see if Graphic Packaging will follow through and track the aroma coming from their facility and then adjust their process to get rid of the smell permanently.
- Mr. Cornell advised that the City of Kalamazoo spent money to address odor issues at the water reclamation plant. It used to be centralized approached and is now decentralized.
- The representative from Graphic Packaging said they did several things to reduce odor at their facility. The Task Force did not talk about a next meeting, but they have been meeting every two to three months. Mr. Cornell offered to come to an ECC meeting in the future. Meetings have been every two to three months.
- Commissioner Anderson thanked Mr. Wright for his focus on this issue. Mr. Wright stated that kids from Northeastern Elementary have their own odor committee. They sent questions to the Odor Task Force such as, Am I going to die from this odor?"
- Commissioner Anderson commented on the positive side of the Graphic Packaging expansion; they do good work and they are a recycling facility. The expansion might create more jobs but the increase in production could create more issues with the odor. The expansion might provide the City with leverage to ask more questions about the odor issue.
- Graphic Packaging spends \$12,000 per month on UV lighting and a million and a half dollars on the Redux. The City spent three to four million dollars over a two-year period for odor management at the water reclamation plant. Sharing the software with Graphic Packaging would be ideal, but the data could be costly to Graphic Packaging.
- Mr. Glasser stated that the Air and Water Quality Subcommittee met recently. They discussed the climate resolution and the need for quantitative values regarding air quality in Kalamazoo. The subcommittee decided to look at what kind of monitoring network and data is available to put numbers to the air quality issues.

- Commissioner Anderson referred to the congestion mitigation funds received by the City of Kalamazoo through CMAC (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement - federal funding) due to air quality issues. Air pollution blows into Kalamazoo from Gary, Indiana and Chicago, Illinois, which are west of Kalamazoo. He suggested asking KATS (Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study) about who does air quality testing that qualifies the City of Kalamazoo to be CMAK funded.
- Mr. Wright stated that Monica Brothers advised that representatives from the State of Michigan met with Graphic Packaging regarding an odor mitigation plan they submitted. There is a possibility of enforcement action against Graphic Packaging, which has not been done previously.
- There were no updates regarding the Allied Paper site.
- Mr. Manstrom stated that the subcommittee will meet with the President of the Woods Lake Neighborhood Association to find out if issues regarding salination of Woods Lake are worse if he has any ideas on how to resolve these issues.
- John Paquin arranged for more timely leaf collection in the area around Woods Lake in an effort to address issues with salination of the lake. Road salt accumulates in the fallen leaves and leaches out into the lake. Salination is also an issue with other bodies of water in the Kalamazoo area.

Wildlife and Natural Resources Protection

- Mr. Bond made contact with White Buffalo, the organization that did the deer cull overview for Michigan. He is waiting for a response from his contacts with White Buffalo and the Department of Natural Resources.
- It was suggested that the ECC should be proactive regarding Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in order to be prepared for possible issues next year.
- Ms. Walter did not find the name of the compound used in the aerial spraying for EEE this year. She will send information to the ECC regarding a deer management webinar she participated in last week for the Stewardship Network. The webinar was conducted by a consultant and writer who monitors deer impacts in parks in the Ann Arbor area. Ms. Walter will also forward a list of publications regarding deer management.
- Deer are an apex predator when it comes to Oak trees. If there is more than 15% browse of Oaks, there is no Oak regeneration. The webinars are free if you listen to them live, and there is no charge for listening to the recorded webinar. Deer culls were not addressed in the webinar, it was mostly about the impact on parks and natural areas. Ms. Walter has a report from White Buffalo, they managed the deer cull in Ann Arbor.
- Ms. Walter referred to the climate emergency resolution and inquired what power a municipality might have to override regulations that prevent people from doing smart things from an environmental perspective, such as using solar panels or clothes lines (instead of clothes dryers). Commissioner Anderson advised that the City can pass an ordinance on anything at any time.
- Ms. Walter reported that there were approximately two dozen bird fatalities as a result of bird/building collisions at the WMU College of Health and Human Services at the end of the 2019 fall migration. That number is less than the number of bird fatalities recorded at the end of 2018.
- Commissioner Anderson stated that the Oakwood Neighborhood Association met with the City Commission recently. One of their complaints was being overrun with deer. The idea of a deer cull would be controversial but good science might help people understand why it might be necessary. He referred people to the ECC. There are not enough apex predators to control the deer.

Waste Management and Litter

- The subcommittee did not officially meet but Ms. Dever received clarification regarding details of the City of Kalamazoo recycling program.

Planning Commission

- The Planning Commission approved an expansion for the Thermo Fisher parking lot. The Chick-Filet application was approved. The site plan from the YWCA for a 14-unit building on Axtel St. will be reviewed by the Planning staff.

Tree Committee

- No Report

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council –

- Ms. Dever attended the November ALPMC meeting; she is preparing to take over from Mr. Manstrom as the ECC representative to the Council.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

- Ms. Dever stated that she did not receive a response from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board regarding her e-mail. Mr. Wright will follow up with the Board.

Wellhead Protection Program Committee

- Ms. Drzick stated that John Paquin retired from his position at the City of Kalamazoo. She was not sure who will be taking over that position. Ms. Talanda offered to provide quarterly reports to the ECC regarding wellhead protection.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary