

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

May 18, 2016 **DRAFT** MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Margy Belchak, Olga Button, Matt Fletcher, Lauri Holmes, Paul Manstrom, James Timmons, Philip Dietrich

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Nora Gimpel, Chris Wahmhoff

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: None

STAFF: John Paquin, City Staff Liaison; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

OTHERS: Alex Moldonado, WMU student, applicant for ECC.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Timmons called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

APPROVAL MINUTES (April 20, 2015):

Mr. Manstrom, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved approval of the April 20, 2015 minutes as submitted. There were no objections from the Committee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

There were no changes to the agenda.

Mr. Dietrich, supported by Mr. Manstrom, moved approval of the agenda as submitted. There were no objections from the Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Mr. Timmons advised that Mr. Glazer was not notified until May 18th that the ECC requested he attend a meeting to discuss his application to the board. The board members are looking forward to meeting Mr. Glazer at the June meeting.
- Ms. Button provided a mailing from the Sierra Club with their recommendations of who to vote for at the November election.
- Mr. Timmons stated that for anyone interesting in the Colony Orchard issue, the BTR Park II Advisory Board is scheduled to meet on May 31st at 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. That meeting is not open to the public. They are also scheduled to meet on June 20th (times to be announced) at the Oshtemo Township Community Center and that meeting is open to the public.
- There is a 100-foot border next to the preserve and there is a question as to whether WMU will maintain that or if it will be maintained under condominium association rules.
- Ms. Holmes suggested that people who are concerned about the environment attend the June 20th meeting to ask questions regarding the 100-foot space between Drake Rd. and the development since that is contiguous with the Asylum Lake Preserve. Whatever takes place in that location will have a huge impact on the environment.
- The condo association is arranging plots of land to build on, which takes it out of the hands of everyone but the owners. It is important to protect the preserve. They might be open to receiving information from the community.
- Colony Woods Orchard was designated as part of the preserve but it was re-designated 10 years ago as part of the BTR park. WMU and people who are developing it have a certain sensitivity to the land.
- There was a student movement to save the orchard but that did not succeed. The land is in Oshtemo Township but it impacts the City of Kalamazoo.

NON-AGENDA COMMENTS BY OTHERS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Preview of By-Laws

- There was a brief discussion about the need for clarification regarding removal of Committee members. Section 2.11 in the by-laws states that members must attend 80% of the meetings and there was a suggestion to change that to 75% or state that the ECC, at their discretion, can vote members off the Committee. The ECC went many years without a quorum and they wanted a mechanism to keep members.
- **Mr. Fletcher, supported by Ms. Holmes, moved to change the by-laws to state that if an ECC member has three unexcused absences (75% attendance rate) in one year, they will lose their seat on the Committee. Any such member will be offered an associate membership; they do not have to accept the associate membership. An excused absence means the Committee member would have to notify the committee prior to the meeting that they will not be present. The designation of "excused" will be determined by the Chair. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**
- **Mr. Dietrich, supported by Ms. Belchak, moved to accept the revised ECC bylaws. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

b. Imagine Kalamazoo – Sustainability Survey

- Mr. Fletcher reported that the sustainability and infrastructure group and the neighborhood group met on May 5, 2016. This was their first meeting since January. Rebekah Kik, City Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the six stages of what Imagine It is: Imagine it, Plan it, Design it, Discuss it, Draft it, Promote it. They are currently in the "Plan it" stage.
- One of the biggest issues with master plans in the past was a lack of measurable components (there was no data to glean from the previous master plans). The last City of Kalamazoo Master Plan was approved in 2010.
- Ms. Kik stated that 1,060 people filled out the Imagine It survey; she was pleased with that number. She is still taking the surveys.
- Some residents advised that they were not sure how to answer the questions on the survey. Feedback from the public indicates they don't like the City's website; it is too cumbersome/fragmented. There was positive public feedback about the City's weekly newsletter.
- Mr. Kik referred to a program that shows which words were mentioned most in the survey. That helps determine the priorities of the community. Mr. Paquin stated that he would try to get that information (graphic) from Ms. Kik.
- Mr. Timmons inquired if the committee needs to do something now. Mr. Fletcher stated that the Sustainability and Infrastructure Committee will meet again next Wednesday. The ECC doesn't need to do anything at this point. The Planning Department is still taking feedback from the survey.
- Ms. Kik volunteered to make another presentation during the planning stage. Mr. Paquin mentioned that the tour of the Wastewater Reclamation Plant will take place at the June ECC meeting. He suggested having an update about the Master Plan in July. He will ask if Ms. Kik can provide an update to the ECC. Ms. Holmes indicated that the handout regarding the Master Plan is vague. Mr. Fletcher advised that he heard similar comments at the meetings he attended. Mr. Paquin suggested framing the questions so Ms. Kik can provide more specific details. Mr. Fletcher stated that the last page of the handout has six items which are more specific to Kalamazoo.
- Mr. Fletcher was advised that there was added stress to City staff as a result of the additional work from the Master Plan process. Therefore, Ms. Kik decided to bring in temporary staff to help with the secretarial work. They have also hired someone from Wightman and Associates.
- Ms. Belchak inquired if there were any results from Blue Ribbon Panel regarding how to generate more income for the City of Kalamazoo. Mr. Paquin advised that they narrowed the options. He will inquire about getting an update.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Member Term Status

b. Current Vacancy

c. Two Applications Received: Alexander Maldonado, Robert Glasser

- The ECC voted to remove Todd Ide from the Board so there are two vacancies. Mr. Maldonado was present at the May meeting.

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- Ms. Holmes mentioned that Mr. Maldonado is a student. She inquired if his schedule will allow him to attend the ECC meetings. Mr. Maldonado responded in the affirmative and stated that he has three more years of college before he can graduate and he will be available for the ECC meetings.
- **Mr. Fletcher, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved to appoint Alexander Maldonado to fill one of the vacant seats on the Environmental Concerns Committee. There were no objections from the Committee.**

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- ***Kalamazoo River*** –
 - Ms. Belchak stated that the Kalamazoo River Clean-up Coalition met last month. There was no news from the EPA.
 - Diane Russell from the EPA is putting together a Community Action Plan. She asked if the KRCC would help create the plan.
 - The KRCC rejected taking on the role as official community liaison from the EPA because they want to be independent of the EPA.
- ***Kalamazoo Environmental Council*** –

Mr. Manstrom stated that he did not attend the meeting; he is not sure if they met. Mr. Paquin stated that Don Brown, Connie Ferguson and Davis Nesius are part of the Kalamazoo Environmental Council. Mr. Manstrom advised that he would stop by the Brown residence to find out if this group is meeting.
- ***Portage Environmental Board*** – No report.
- ***City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission*** – The Planning Commission did not meet in May. They are scheduled to meet in June.
- ***Tree Committee*** –
 - Mr. Dietrich stated that he attended the May Tree Committee meeting. The Tree Committee reviews requests to cut down trees in the City right-of-way. Todd Pryor is the Chair of the Tree Committee.
 - Typically, the Tree Committee requests that two trees be planted for every tree that is removed.
 - The road/intersection at E. Main /E. Michigan is being reconfigured and several trees have to be removed as part of that project.
 - The Parks and Recreation Department is working on a new plan for the Crane Park Triangle. The Pine trees with “X’s” on them will be removed from the triangle. Adams Outdoor Advertising offered to pay for the tree removals so they aren’t blocking their billboard. There is no irrigation in the triangle yet so they can’t plant any new trees at this point.
 - Consumers Energy will be reconstructing high voltage power lines in the Winchell Neighborhood. There have been several power outages in that area and they want to improve the right-of-way and cut the trees back further. There were approximately 50 people at the May Tree Committee meeting.
 - Some residents of the Winchell Neighborhood first heard about this project when representatives from Consumers Energy came to their door asking if they would sign off on part of the easement.
 - Most of the trees to be removed are on private property; only a small number of them are on City property.
 - Three representatives from Consumers Energy were at the meeting to answer questions. They advised they would reach out to the Winchell Neighborhood Association to address concerns of the residents.
 - Representatives from Consumers Energy advised they would not use eminent domain during this project.
 - Permits to cut the trees in the City right-of-way were not granted at the May meeting, but will be considered again at the June meeting.
- ***Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council***–
 - Mr. Timmons advised there was a discussion about whether or not to put in a handicap-accessible trail from the Gibbs house. That does not fit with initial Master Plan for trails but it would be less expensive. They referred it to an engineer who will go out and look at it.
 - They discussed having a burn on the property but they are waiting for more appropriate weather conditions in order to proceed.
- ***Parks & Recreation Advisory Board*** –

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- It was stated that the Clerk's office could not find documentation indicating that the ECC has a seat on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and that there may be open positions that an ECC member could apply for.
- Mr. Fletcher recalled that Mike Wetzel stated that the ECC had a voting position on PRAB.
- Mr. Timmons inquired if it is necessary for the ECC to have a representative on PRAB. They publish their minutes every month. Ms. Button stated that she could review the minutes.
- **Wellhead Protection Committee**
- Mr. Paquin advised that the Wellhead Protection Committee will be meeting next week.
- Contaminant source inventory updates and risk assessment updates are ongoing with Fleis and Vandenbrink.
- They are working with Public Safety regarding a chemical inventory database. They have the right to know for firefighting and it is important to have that information for risk assessment for the drinking water supply.
- The movie and radio ads and Metro bus ads are ongoing.
- The proposals for the next grant period are out and they are due in mid-June. The committee will decide which project to pursue. There is a maximum grant amount of \$70,000 per year.
- **Kalamazoo Climate Change Coalition** – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:05 pm.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____
Recording Secretary

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Staff Liaison

