

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 16, 2016 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul, Vice Chair (Acting Chair); Margy Belchak; Olga Button; Phil Dietrich; Matt Fletcher; Nora Gimpel; Lauri Holmes; Alex Maldonado; George Russo

EXCUSED ABSENCES: James Timmons, Chair; Chris Wahmhoff

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

OTHERS: Aaron Wright (friend of Matt Fletcher), David Nesius (former ECC member)

APPROVAL MINUTES (September 16, 2016)

Ms. Holmes, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved approval of the September 16th ECC Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Ms. Gimpel referred to the Kalamazoo Climate Change "Committee" and advised that it should be "Coalition."

Ms. Belchak, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved approval of the November ECC agenda as amended. There were no objections from the Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

- David Nesius, former member of the ECC and board member of Asylum Lake Preservation Association, was present. He referred to the EPA and concerns regarding its possible dissolution. He inquired if there is a plan for the Allied site without the ECC.
- Ms. Belchak advised that the EPA issued the Record of Decision (ROD) about 6-8 weeks ago. The ROD is 192 pages long and is available on-line.
- The EPA recommended option 2-D for clean-up of the Allied site. This would not be full removal of the contamination but it would reclaim some of the land for redevelopment. The soil would be mounded up, capped and monitored.
- The KRCC is optimistic that this is the right decision. If the contamination is trucked out, that would increase the risk for exposure along the way. It needs to meet protective requirements. It will be a few years before digging can begin on the Allied site.
- Ms. Belchak attended a meeting with Michael Berghoff, EPA Project Manager for Area 1; Diane Russell, EPA Communications; Paul Bucholtz from the MDEQ, Jamie McCarthy, and other members of the Kalamazoo River Water Shed Council; and members of the Kalamazoo River Clean-up Coalition. Information regarding why the EPA made this decision needs to be communicated to the public. The Coalition will be involved with the EPA on a close level regarding communication efforts and they hope to be involved with the design phase as well.
- There was a discussion at the meeting regarding bio remediation. The company that wanted to try that method couldn't prove that it would be effective. They have to stir the soil/contamination so it is composting. Option 2-D provides for that option someday. The Bio Path Company that proposed this method, no longer exists.
- Ms. Holmes commented that this is a good example of how community input can have an impact on a governmental agency. Ms. Belchak stated that in 2007 the community came together to discuss this issue with the EPA. Scraping back the soil/contamination and piling it up was not an idea they originally considered. This is federal land so if the EPA or the Super Fund is eliminated then there are questions as to what would happen to the Allied site.
- Ms. Gimpel inquired if there is an estimated time line for the design and remediation of the Allied site. Ms. Belchak stated that the design will take a few years and then the remediation can begin.

Environmental Concerns Committee Minutes

November 16, 2016

Page 2 of 4

- Mr. Paquin stated that he was involved with this process from the beginning of EPA proposing to dump Kalamazoo River PCB-laden sediment removed from the Kalamazoo River onto the Allied Site. He suggested that the ECC keep track of issues such as groundwater. Long-term ground water monitoring is required. The predesign/engineering stage is also important. If they pursue the large pile of waste on the site, there is a question if that site can sustain the weight of the waste and the fate of pore water and site stability.
- Mr. Paquin continued that NTH is one of the City's consultants for the Allied site; they design landfills. They discussed examples of catastrophic failures. This site has a lot of different materials, including paper waste. It will take a while to figure out how to design it. This site is the headwaters of all of the Kalamazoo River Superfund Operating Units and it is important to ensure anything adversely affect anything downstream.
- Mr. Fletcher referred to the corner of South Burdick and Maple and inquired if there are water testing sites/monitoring wells in that area. Mr. Paquin advised that some of the monitoring wells in that area are associated with a central wellfield study that was done in the early 1980's. Some are associated with Maple Street and other areas.
- Mr. Fletcher expressed concern that the contamination could extend northwest toward the wellfields. Mr. Paquin advised of other areas that were reviewed as potential sites to install monitoring wells associated with the Allied Site. Ms. Belchak mentioned that long-term ground water monitoring was part of the discussion.
- Mr. Dietrich inquired as to what measures would be taken to keep the waste from leaking out in the meantime. He heard there was an issue with the lining. Ms. Belchak advised there is no lining at this point, just a fence and a sign to keep people out. The PCB'S are in the paper waste, which is whitish in color and not water soluble. The EPA has data which indicates that contaminants are not moving or going into the ground water. The remediation would protect the area long-term and the fence could be taken down so the land could be used for recreation or development.

NEW BUSINESS

Deer Population Management Discussion

- Mr. Paquin mentioned that Mr. Timmons wanted to discuss this topic with the ECC, per the September meeting minutes. The Portage Environmental Board has dealt with this issue and they offered to provide a presentation and do a Q & A for the ECC. He inquired if the ECC would like to schedule someone to speak on this topic at a future meeting.
- Ms. Holmes inquired as to how the Nature Center dealt with this issue. Ms. Gimpel advised that the Nature Center closed down for a weekend. They brought in hunters to cull the deer and keep the population down. They donated the meat to a local food bank. The hunters volunteered to help with this event and there were signs advising that firearms were in use in the area.
- Ms. Holmes inquired if the event was successful or if more deer moved in and the problem continued. Mr. Nesius stated that he heard it was effective; more native species are showing up. They trained the deer to avoid that area so they don't have to cull them.
- Mr. Fletcher was in favor of having someone come to talk to the ECC about deer population management. Mr. Paquin advised that Ms. McCarthy is the Coordinator for the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council. She was on the Council when they were discussing this issue. There might be other qualified people who could speak to the ECC about this issue. Other board members were also in favor of inviting someone to speak on this topic. Mr. Manstrom mentioned that Portage hasn't had an actual hunt.
- Ms. Holmes inquired if anyone followed up with the retired Professor from K-College. He expressed an interest in talking to the ECC regarding this topic. He is a resident of Parkwyn who attended the Asylum Lake meeting a couple of months ago to express concerns about the number of deer in that area of Kalamazoo. Mr. Manstrom knows Dr. Les Tung and will talk with him about providing a presentation.
- Mr. Fletcher inquired if Ms. Gimpel could report back to the ECC regarding the results of the deer cull at the Nature Center. Ms. Holmes suggested getting input from the professor and the Portage Environmental Board at the next ECC meeting. Ms. Gimple will reach out to Jamie from the Watershed Council to find out if she or someone else from the Council could come to speak with the ECC. Mr. Manstrom stated that he would send an e-mail to Mr. Timmons to request his input.
- Mr. Nesius suggested looking back through the ECC minutes for more information. The September 16, 2009 Minutes have information regarding the culling of deer at the Nature Center.

OLD BUSINESS:

City of Kalamazoo Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 – Progress Report

- Mr. Fletcher advised that Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 is in the Design It stage as of November 1. City Planner, Rebekah Kik, has had some additional help and the City has been receptive to issues that were discussed. Someone expressed concern about one person receiving comments from 70,000 people.
- There have been improvements regarding how the public meetings have been run. There were 130 people at the September meeting. They are talking a different approach with regard to how the public meetings are conducted. They were looking for measurable results and the priorities of our community. It was difficult to get the desired results from the essay form that was previously used.
- At the September meeting, there were three exercises and seven stations. Each station represented one of the themed subjects of the survey, for example: Infrastructure. There were a dozen different topics and you could vote 3 stickers for each station. Better sidewalks, roads, lanes, covered Metro Transit shelters, etc. were some of the topics. The planners are also focusing on input from the neighborhood associations.
- Mr. Paquin inquired about the September 27th workshop and the October 27th visioning meeting. Mr. Fletcher stated that he did not attend the October meeting. He heard there were more than 100 people in attendance at those meetings. Ms. Kik has someone named Christina Anderson working with her now; Ms. Anderson was a planner in Chicago. Mr. Fletcher offered to forward the e-mail he received regarding the neighborhood meetings. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Kik will meet with each of the neighborhoods within the next six weeks.
- Mr. Paquin stated that he heard the process is on track now. He inquired if the ECC would still like to pursue their concerns in a letter or if the recent improvements make it unwarranted. Consensus is to not pursue letter at this time. Mr. Fletcher commented that the people who are working on the Master Plan update now are seeing the value of the one person/one vote concept and they are reaching out to organizations again. He suggested that Ms. Anderson or Ms. Kik could provide an update to the ECC at the January meeting.
- Ms. Holmes inquired if the ecological/environmental issues being addressed. Ms. Gimpel stated that she spoke with Ms. Kik and has been working with her in her capacity with the Nature Center and The Climate Change Coalition. They are working to write a climate action component for the Master Plan. People who are part of the coalition provided input regarding their priorities. The Climate Change Coalition is broken into sections and they consult with experts from those sectors. She talked with Ms. Kik about having those voices heard. Information from the Climate Change Coalition might be in a separate document that is part of the Master Plan or it might be integrated into the Plan. Ms. Gimpel has also been working with the faculty climate working group to gather input.
- Mr. Fletcher stated that he attended a public meeting in the Northside Neighborhood. A resident wanted him to explain sustainability to her. She didn't know what that meant to her. Ms. Kik will continue talking to the Climate Action Coalition as the Master Plan update continues.

Status of draft letter of concerns from ECC regarding Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 survey process.

- Mr. Manstrom inquired about the draft letter Mr. Timmons was working on regarding ECC concerns about Imagine Kalamazoo.
- Mr. Fletcher, supported by Mr. Dietrich, moved to not proceed with the letter of concerns at this time. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Kalamazoo River – Refer to previous comments regarding the Allied site under Comments by others on Non-Agenda items.

Kalamazoo Environmental Council

- There was a brief discussion as to whether or not this organization is still active. Mr. Manstrom was informed that they don't meet in the summer but he hasn't found evidence of a meeting in September or October. Mr. Nesius advised that they met at the Nature Center about two months ago.

Portage Environmental Board – No report

City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission

- Mr. Manstrom advised that there was a discussion at the October Planning Commission meeting regarding the rezoning of 59 parcels between E. Michigan, Gibson, Pitcher and Mills Street, including a strip of land owned by the Nature Center. The proposal is to rezone these parcels from industrial to mixed use. Development on this property would be subject to the downtown design standards. There was some misunderstanding about what the rezoning would mean and this agenda item was postponed.

Environmental Concerns Committee Minutes

November 16, 2016

Page 4 of 4

- Mixed use would include residential uses, stores, commercial uses, etc. This land had been an industrial area. Rezoning of these parcels might facilitate expansion of the downtown area to the east.
- Mr. Fletcher mentioned that housing is a concern and that is one of the things they would like to have in that location.
- Ms. Holmes commented that there is less industry in that area now. Mr. Manstrom advised that representatives of some of the remaining industries are concerned with the proposed rezoning, which allows for new development close to the street with parking along the back. There is concern with parking along the river, which is not an environmentally sound plan. This application was not on the November agenda.

Tree Committee

- The Tree Committee did not meet in November.

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council

- Ms. Holmes stated that the council is working on bylaws, etc. They need to determine where WMU has jurisdiction vs. where the council has jurisdiction.
- A representative from WMU Public Safety was at the meeting. He advised that Asylum Lake is a safe place. Two incidents reported were unfounded but the media didn't talk about that. Public Safety cannot declare there was a false accusation unless they have evidence to take someone to court.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – No report.

City Master Plan- Refer to Imagine Kalamazoo update under old business.

Wellhead Protection

- Mr. Paquin advised that the City received another \$70,000 from the MDEQ to fund ongoing projects. The public outreach is continuing.
- City staff is working with local breweries regarding safe and reliable water and the importance of it to consumable goods. There are approximately nine breweries that use Kalamazoo water. On December 1st they will have a tour of the Central Water Pumping Station. The goal is to get more testimonials regarding the importance of safe water. Water is 90 percent of beer and coffee and that is something people can relate to.
- The groundwater modeling for wellhead protection zones will be updated.
- Collaborative efforts are continuing with Public Safety regarding chemical storage; 30 Public Safety officers have been trained. The Fire Marshall is on the Wellhead Protection Committee.

Climate Change Coalition –

- Ms. Gimpel advised that the next steering committee meeting is scheduled for December 2nd from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. They will have a speaker to discuss climate change issues. The meeting will be held at the Nature Center in the Glen Vista Auditorium.
- The Coalition has been partnering with the City of Kalamazoo about integrating climate change language into the Master Plan process and that will be a part of the discussion at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Mr. Dietrich, supported by Mr. Fletcher, moved to adjourn the November 16, 2016 meeting of the Environmental Concerns Committee. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by: _____
Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
Staff Liaison

Date: _____