

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## October 16, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

<b><u>MEMBERS PRESENT:</u></b>	Paul Manstrom, Chair; Eric Brown; Sharon Dever; Mary Clare Griffith; Scott Schmidt; Gail Walter; Aaron Wright;
<b><u>EXCUSED ABSENCES:</u></b>	Phil Dietrich, Vice Chair; Lauri Holmes (ECC Associate Member); Kevin Weller
<b><u>UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:</u></b>	Ian Magnuson
<b><u>STAFF:</u></b>	Malissa Drzick, Staff Liaison; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary
<b><u>OTHERS:</u></b>	Bobby Glasser (ECC Associate Member); Wayne Bond (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.
- **Ms. Walter, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the October 16, 2019 ECC agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (September 18 2019):**

- There were no changes to the minutes.
- **Mr. Bower, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the September 18, 2019 ECC Minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Ms. Drzick stated that the ECC information on the back of the City's View from the Curb publication will be removed temporarily because there are no vacant seats on the ECC at this time.
- Ms. Dever advised that there will be a Kalamazoo Environmental Council Summit on the evening of October 16th. Environmental organizations in the area will be meeting to figure out solutions to environmental issues. The summit will be held at the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

### **5. COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

- None

### **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/UPDATES/DISCUSSION:**

#### **City of Kalamazoo Sustainability and Climate Action Plan – Progress Report.**

- Ms. McCarthy is in Lansing at the Great Lakes Remediation and Redevelopment Conference. She stated in an e-mail update that the first of three sustainability meetings was held at the Farmers' Market on Bank St. Mr. Manstrom spoke at that meeting, Ms. Dever and Ms. Griffith were also present. There were approximately 50 people in attendance.
- The meeting was held to solicit ideas from the public on how to make Kalamazoo more sustainable as we face climate changes.
- The sustainability survey was launched at that meeting. Mr. Manstrom will send a link to that survey to the ECC members. There isn't a deadline for the surveys to be submitted by the public. That process will continue until adequate information has been received by City staff.
- Mr. Manstrom will talk with Jamie McCarthy about setting measurable goals and a baseline for the Plan. The City of Kalamazoo is committed to moving forward with the Plan and it is hoped that it will be productive.
- Mr. Glasser reported that City Commission candidates and mayoral candidates were invited to a meeting in the Milwood Neighborhood. Someone mentioned at that meeting that Kalamazoo doesn't have a solidified Climate Action Plan but one is being created.
- Discussion followed regarding the deadline to have the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan created. The original goal was January, but there hasn't been another meeting and it might take time to work on the goals. Ms. McCarthy is moving forward with the goals.

**City Commission Climate Emergency Resolution - October 21<sup>st</sup> City Commission Agenda Item**

**ECC Participation in Meeting**

- The Climate Emergency Resolution is on the City Commission Agenda for Monday. Commissioner Anderson advised against having long lines of public speakers waiting to comment on the Resolution.
- Efforts have been made to limit the number of speakers. Mr. Manstrom will make comments at the City Commission meeting on behalf of the ECC.
- This will be the last meeting for some of the City Commissioners. Approving the Resolution would send a message that this is a priority for the City of Kalamazoo.

**Additional Support for Resolution**

- Mr. Manstrom spoke with Denise Keele about getting more support for the Resolution at the City Commission meeting, such as the Presidents of Kalamazoo College, Western Michigan University and other civic leaders. The City Commissioners should hear from people other than environmental activists.
- People were encouraged to send e-mails to the City Commission in support of the Resolution.

**Allied Paper Site Remediation**

- No report

**Vermeulen Property Rezoning**

- The deadline has passed to submit a rezoning request for the November Planning Commission meeting. There is a Drive and Shine Car Wash going up on W. Main at the former Davenport College site. A Drive and Shine is proposed for the Vermeulen property, which is adjacent to the Asylum Lake Preserve.
- Mr. Bond mentioned that there is a Drive and Shine Car Wash next to the Rivertown Mall in Grand Rapids. That facility also does oil changes, tire rotations and free vacuuming.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**2020 Committee Officers – Discussion on Succession**

- Mr. Manstrom's term is over at the end of 2019. Mr. Dietrich indicated that he is not interested in serving as the Chairperson; Mr. Wright is interested in that position. Mr. Dietrich would like to continue serving as the Vice Chair. This will be on a future agenda for further discussion.
- The ECC will probably meet in December and have an election of officers. Mr. Manstrom will continue to attend the meetings as an alternate until the Sustainability and Climate Action plan is completed. None of the other ECC members are terming out in 2019. Mr. Dietrich's term will be over in 2020.
- Mr. Glasser will be a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Committee when Mr. Manstrom's term is over. Mr. Glasser already serves on the NFP board and there is a policy stating that a person cannot serve on two City boards. The City Clerk's explanation was ambiguous regarding this rule.
- If a person has special skills that benefit the board, that could be a factor in overriding the policy. Mr. Glasser is the only Hydro-geologist on the ECC.
- Mr. Manstrom is the ECC representative to the ALPMC (Asylum Lake Policy and Management Council). Ms. Dever has agreed to take his place on the ALPMC.
- The ECC Bylaws are on the shared drive. The officers have special responsibilities regarding members who don't attend the meetings. Officers are normally elected in January, but the election will take place in December of 2019.

**8. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**NFP Review Board**

- Mr. Glasser stated that the NFP Review Board reviewed one small variance case regarding a slope. The applicant had an engineered plan and the Board agreed it was fair. Otherwise, the buildable area was not sufficient.
- The new planning intern has expertise in GIS. Some Waterways and water bodies in the City of Kalamazoo don't have natural features protection around them and the Board is looking at that. Some parcels are bigger than others.
- The Board is discussing other criteria to determine an NFP zone rather than just the water feature. They are looking at what else might need to be included in the NFP Overlay and determining what kind of vegetation to include. Besides water features are there forested areas that should be incorporated into the overlay.

**Air and Water Quality**

- Mr. Wright received an e-mail from Jim Cornell at the Waste Water Reclamation facility asking if Mr. Wright is available to attend a meeting of the Odor Task Force in October or November.

- Monica Brothers from EGLE received an odor mitigation plan from Graphic Packaging. EGLE will make recommendations which will be provided to Graphic Packaging. Ms. Brothers hasn't received complaints lately about the odor generated by Graphic Packaging but it is usually worse in the summer months during hot weather.
- Mr. Wright inquired if he could invite Ms. Brothers to attend the Odor Task Force meeting but was informed that was not advisable. There is a threat of enforcement action from the State level.
- Ms. Walter heard that Graphic Packaging will be getting a tax write off to expand their facility. Mr. Wright was uncertain if he would be allowed to participate in those meetings or if he could just observe. He is not sure if the new facility is for production and if the vats that are the source of the odor will remain the same.
- Ms. Drzick advised of the City's intentions to talk about a plan for monitoring the odor so they have a background of where the smell is coming from. They might add more sensors on City property to pick up on the odor. They also might add cinnamon scent to the air and let the sensors capture how much of the aroma is wafting.
- Mr. Wright advised that the Air and water Quality Subcommittee did not meet in October.

#### **Wildlife and Natural Resources Protection**

- Mr. Bond inquired if there have been any ramifications regarding the spraying for EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) Spraying took place north of Kalamazoo in rural areas. People were concerned that the spraying might also affect the bee population in addition to the mosquito population that was being targeted.
- Ms. Walter advised that the spray was supposedly active for only 12 hours. The spray will kill off all insect populations in the area where it is sprayed, as well as aquatic organisms. It will wipe out dragonflies and they are the main predator of mosquitoes. The decision to spray was made by the Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Schmidt suggested the possibility of releasing dragonflies as a more environmentally friendly alternative to spraying chemicals.
- Ms. Walter called the Department of Human Services to state concerns about the environment related to the spraying. If the spraying wipes out the natural predators of mosquitoes, the mosquito population will only get worse. If the weather gets warm again, the mosquitoes will flourish but the dragonflies will be gone.
- Enough people from Kalamazoo and Portage wanted to opt out and those areas were not sprayed. She didn't hear any negativity as a result of the spraying or if the spraying effectively decreased the mosquito population. Ms. Dever heard that 1,500 people responded to stop the spraying.
- Mr. Wright mentioned that someone in Calhoun County passed away recently from EEE. He inquired if it is appropriate for the ECC to follow up with EEE issues. It was suggested that the Subcommittee (Ms. Walter and Mr. Bond) could research the product that was used for spraying.
- The cold, rainy weather early this year incubated the mosquitoes. EEE issues tend to show up in mid to late summer. There needs to be enough of the EEE virus built up in susceptible populations in order for it spread.
- The reservoir population for EEE is birds, but birds don't get sick from EEE; horses are the most susceptible. Deer and people are usually resistant to EEE. The species that become sick and die from EEE are referred to as dead-end hosts.
- Ms. Griffith questioned the definition of "Eastern", which includes the Midwest. Ms. Walter stated that there are multiple types of Equine Encephalitis.
- Ms. Walter stated that a downtown development group (formerly DKI) is looking at a project to develop an alley in Kalamazoo between Portage street and an adjacent parking structure. The alley is under the Peregrine Falcon nesting box.
- There is a survey on line to share your suggestions to make the alley a more friendly area. They are looking at a way to bring people from the parking structure to the Kalamazoo mall and make that area attractive. Lights over the alley or loud music would be problematic for the birds.
- There are always carcasses in the alley from the prey the Falcons have captured. Ms. Walter was not sure the development group is considering having tables in the alley. Mr. Manstrom will forward the link from Ms. Walter to the ECC members.
- Mr. Glasser referred to a story on M-Live stating that Muskegon is looking at doing a deer cull this fall. Mr. Wright suggested that the ECC could look at how other communities deal with their deer population.

#### **Waste Management/Litter**

- Ms. Dever advised that the subcommittee reviewed the City of Kalamazoo's recycling contract with Republic Services. Mr. Schmidt spoke with Wendy Burlingham, she is the recycling representative from the City. The contamination rate is 6.9% in the City of Kalamazoo.
- Approximately 11,000 of the 16,000 single-family households in the City of Kalamazoo participate in the recycling program. Less than half of City residents are recycling. The subcommittee will look at the contract for trash and investigate how that works.
- Mr. Schmidt stated that the contract provides rules for recycling based on out how many dwelling units are in a building. Republic gets paid the same regardless of how much recycling they take. It is transported to Indiana to be sorted and they sell it to be reused. The cost goes up each year. The incentive would be to do less and make more \$\$\$?

- Republic Services is supposed to let residents know if some of the material in their bin is not recyclable. They are supposed to clean up with a broom around the recycling container if recycling is on the ground.
- Recycling is voluntary in Kalamazoo but not in certain other municipalities. The subcommittee is looking into the cost of recycling vs. the cost of throwing items in the trash and if there is a way to tax trash.
- Michigan landfill space is inexpensive and trash is being imported to Michigan. The subcommittee will look into how that can be changed.
- Mr. Bower mentioned that Governor Snyder wanted to impose a tipping fee of 39 cents, which is a tax, but that was not approved. That would increase the value of recycling. Ms. Drzick mentioned that what leaches from landfills is known to have PFAS.
- Commissioner Anderson stated that a large number of housing units in the City of Kalamazoo are multi-family. They don't have the same recycling service and he was not sure how that is counted. Commercial businesses have to pay for dumpsters, they are not provided through the solid waste millage. Mr. Schmidt stated that the City's contract includes houses and multi-units.
- Ms. Walter advised that a residence with less than five units would not have-curb side recycling; if there are more than five residential units in the building, they would have curb-side recycling.
- The subcommittee is looking into the possibility of making trash more expensive to incentivize recycling and if it is possible to impose a fine on litter. People in other countries are paid to pick up litter. City of Kalamazoo employees are paid to pick up litter in LaCrone Park. Commissioner Anderson mentioned that Kalamazoo's sister city, Numazu, Japan has no litter.
- Ms. Walter referred to a parking lot that was used for tailgating and there was a lot of trash left at that site. Mr. Manstrom commented that might be an example of cultural indifference fueled by alcohol. Part of the Burning Man culture is to remove everything that people bring to their events.
- Mr. Schmidt suggested putting tops on the trash cans. Ms. Walter stated that she went back to the parking lot on Sunday and it was clean. Mr. Manstrom mentioned that WMU used to use volunteers to pick up the trash.

**Planning Commission**

- No report.

**Tree Committee**

- No report.

**Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council –**

- There was a brief, special meeting at the University Roadhouse to approve the governing documents. There were not enough Council members present at the September meeting to approve the documents. There was no formal meeting in October.

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

- Mr. Wright advised that this is a slow time for the Parks & Recreation Department. In the minutes they discussed improvements to the Farmers Market. Money has been set aside for those improvements.


**Wellhead Protection Program Committee**

- No report.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary