

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

September 15, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Aaron Wright, Chair, Ian Magnuson, Vice Chair, Sharon Dever, Wayne L. Bond, Rob Liekis, Nicole Olweean, Eric Brown

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Dr. Melliush, Bobby Glasser, Dr. Gail Walter, Joe Bower

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: No unexcused absences.

STAFF: Malissa Drzick, Staff Liaison; Raelee Olson, Recording Secretary Interim; Amanda Cockroft and Tawaun Chestnut, I.T.

OTHERS: Jeanne Hess, City Commission Liaison; Lauri Holmes, Associate Member; Jamie McCarthy, Development Project Coordinator; Dr. Denise Keele, Professor at WMU in Political Science & Environment Sustainability

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order by Mr. Wright at 4:35 pm, after confirming a quorum of 6 members.
- Recording/Streaming of the meeting was confirmed, with community members joining via a link posted on the City's Facebook page.
- Members to adjust name to include role for recording purposes.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL MINUTES (July 21, 2021):

- The minutes were approved as written.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- No announcements.

NON-AGENDA COMMENTS BY OTHERS:

- Public Comment: Katherine Sukis feels the deer presence makes the city special and helps morale and is appalled at the fact that people are destroying the habitat and trying to get rid of them. She feels the deer should be respected and the citizens need to share their land.
- Cheryl Berea also shares her opposition to a deer cull and believes this would not be an effective solution and feels like the survey and results could have been biased and thinks a third party needs to do the data collection.
- Eponine Garrod reaffirms her opposition to a deer cull. She explains that there is an understanding that there is no deer cull happening now but there is concern given that there were questions about deer culls on the survey that was provided and as citizens they would like to voice that concern. She agrees that she feels like there could be bias in this survey and data and agrees with statements from the previous month's meeting that people should be provided with the raw data. She also asks the ECC to be respectful of the community's concerns as she felt that some people in the committee were not very understanding of the concerns regarding the deer cull.
- Iris Potter also called in about the deer cull voicing her opposition to a deer cull and that there are other options for yard and garden management regarding deer. She believes that the communities need to learn to work with the deer and that the City's time and money should go to other issues that communities have. She also hopes that the raw data from the survey will be released and has sent on resources about living with deer onto Mr. Wright.
- Tom Duffield called in to oppose the deer cull as he feels it makes no sense to manage the deer by reducing population.

- Mr. Wright addresses these concerns saying the deer survey is not on the agenda this month because they are waiting on the report. He did speak with Pete Kushner who is putting the report and recommendations together for a deer management plan so hopefully they will be able to read through the report next month. Pete would then come to the next ECC meeting to discuss the report

OLD BUSINESS:

- Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Update
 - Have not yet received a draft yet, city staff is still putting it together. Chad Oberdorster is reviewing the City's greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Mr. Oberdorster says that the review is going well and Consumers is being very receptive and they are also working the City of Lansing. It is now just a matter of getting all the data and putting it into a report. 2019 will be a baseline and hopefully goals can be made from there. He is doing this project pro bono and as a part of his master's program as well.
 - Mr. Magnuson asks what the scope of the emissions inventory is. Mr. Oberdorster answers that the inventory is community wide within the city boundaries. This looks at air and rail transportation and other things within the city that is producing greenhouse gases. Mr. Magnuson then asks how supply chain issues work when doing an inventory only within city boundaries. Mr. Oberdorster responds that they are trying to look at the composition of materials being sent out of Kalamazoo that counts towards emissions. There is scope 1, 2, and 3 within this project. They are going to try to get as many fine details as they can but when the information needed is not available, they will use a program like ICLY to gather data at a broader scope to get an estimation. Mr. Magnuson asks what the timeline for the project is and Mr. Oberdorster says he is going through a cohort right now and he hopes to have it wrapped up to use with the cohort and depending on response rate it will hopefully be done before the end of the calendar year.
 - Mr. Wright asks if 2019 data is being used for baselines, how frequently will the data be compared? Mr. Oberdorster answers that the cohorts he is working with currently typically review it every two to three years to make it manageable. It helps them have measurable goals to check in on. He doesn't want to speak for the city of Kalamazoo but would think that it would not be reviewed every year but every couple of years or so.
- MDHHS Air Quality Data Review Update
 - Mr. Wright reads an email from Bill Farrell which states that the Department of Health and Human Services has completed their review of the sampling data for hydrogen sulfide and are currently in the process of writing a health assessment with the goal of determining if the hydrogen sulfide and other chemicals pose a health risk in the community. They are also composing a fact sheet on hydrogen sulfide to be released in coming weeks. This fact sheet will include information on health effects as well as potential sources of exposure of hydrogen sulfide.
 - Mr. Magnuson mentions that Graphic Packaging International continued tax abatement discussion will be held at 6:30 the following Monday. Mr. Magnuson then shares his opposition to the extension of the tax abatement.

NEW BUSINESS

- Sustainable Food Production- Ms. Olweean
 - Ms. Olweean wants to know if the group would be interested in adding this as a subcommittee and becoming more interactive with how this subject affects the environment, not necessarily just the people.
 - Ms. Dever expresses her interest in learning more about the subject.
 - Ms. Holmes asks for more clarification as to the goal of this potential subcommittee.
 - Ms. Olweean responds she hopes to develop another committee that is connected to other organizations like many of the other subcommittees to keep track of sustainability and food production. She intends for the ECC to show their support and advocate for these sustainable food groups and share information with the community.
 - Ms. Holmes then asks what kinds of farms and gardens, and food production Ms. Olweean is referring to.
 - Ms. Olweean responds that she is focused mostly on the growing of foods but there are many new movements that are getting attention and is open to input on the subject.

- o Mr. Magnuson seconds Ms. Dever in that he would like to learn more about the subject and loves the idea.
- o Mr. Wright agrees and is curious to know the benefits and drawbacks to small scale farming and production within an urban area versus large scale farming where you can cut costs because things are produced at a larger scale. He would also like to know if the community gardens are being kept up and active. Mr. Wright suggests that Ms. Olweean could reach out to his friend from the Co-Op group to talk on this subject. He says that there may not be enough room to add this as an actual subcommittee, but it can potentially be left as unfinished business on the agenda to be talked about later.
- o Mr. Brown says that if he had time for another subcommittee this would be the one he would partake in. He thinks it is worth it to see if a subcommittee like this could be formed.
- o Mr. Magnuson adds to Mr. Wright's comment saying that Chris Dilly from the co-op group is very responsive.
- o Mr. Wright shares that he would like to know about the waste end of food production.
- o Mr. Brown suggests that the subject should be brought up again when more members of the committee are present because some people may be up to joining another subcommittee.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- ***Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board*** – Mr. Glasser
 - o Not present to report. Mr. Wright states that he hasn't heard anything new.
 - o Mr. Wright asks as an aside if Ms. Dever had an announcement. She responds that she sent an email with a link of things that are going on via the nature center that involves the community and environment with many different events.
- ***Air and Water Quality*** – Mr. Glasser, Mr. Wright
 - o Mr. Wright hopes to get an update with what is going on as to the clean-up at Portage Road and Burrdick at the Superfund site.
- ***Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection*** – Dr. Walter, Mr. Bond
 - o Dr. Walter is not present to give an update
- ***Waste Management/Litter*** – Ms. Dever
 - o Mr. Wright is still working on a spreadsheet of people that have done litter pick up in the past and hopes to put together a map soon.
- ***City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission*** – Mr. Magnuson
 - o Nothing to report
- ***Tree Committee*** – Dr. Walter
 - o Mr. Wright states that the tree committee did not meet last month so there is nothing to report. Hopefully the tree committee will be moving forward and reviewing a possible new tree ordinance that looks at the urban tree canopy and what we can do to increase the canopy.
- ***Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council*** – Ms. Dever, Ms. Holmes
 - o Most of the last meeting was budgeting so nothing new to report
- ***Parks & Recreation Advisory Board*** – Mr. Liekis
 - o Mr. Liekis is not present to report
- ***Wellhead Protection Program Committee*** – quarterly
 - o Ms. Drzick will invite Ms. Talanda to join in the next meeting
- ***Kalamazoo River Watershed Council*** – Ms. Olweean
 - o Ms. Olweean was added to the groups Google drive but has not received any communication from the group. It appears their last meeting was held in July.
 - o Mr. Wright messaged someone from that group and would like for someone with a scientific background to present to the ECC about the multiple issues that are going on in the Kalamazoo River.
- ***Odor Task Force*** – Mr. Wright
 - o Mr. Wright called into the city commission meeting about the contingent tax breaks. Many of the contingencies the city is asking for are already in place. Graphics Packaging has installed 16 odor monitors and are sharing the data with the odor task force and EGLE. One contingency was quarterly reporting and Mr. Wright isn't sure if that will continue or not. They Monica Brothers is planning to have a public zoom meeting sometime in October to share odor monitoring data from EGLE's monitors and to share a summary of data going further back.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.