

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

June 16, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Aaron Wright, Chair; Wayne L. Bond; Sharon Dever; Rob Liekis; Dr. Melliush; Dr. Gail Walter

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Ian Magnuson, Vice Chair; Joe Bower; Bobby Glasser

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: No unexcused absences.

STAFF: Malissa Drzick, outgoing Staff Liaison; Jean Talanda, incoming Staff Liaison

OTHERS: Jeanne Hess, City Commission Liaison; Lauri Holmes, Associate Member

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order by Mr. Wright at 4:30 pm, after confirming a quorum of 6 out of 9 current 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 on Zoom to include role for recording purposes.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- There were no changes to the agenda.
- The agenda was approved as written.

APPROVAL MINUTES (05-18-2022):

- EPS Recycling Event did not include discussion of "annual", misunderstanding
- Peregrine has an "e" on the end
- In the future, hoping to list name/address of whomever is making public comment (for in-person guests).
- The May 18, 2022 minutes were approved, pending further review. Any additional corrections, additions or comments will be emailed to Mr. Wright and forwarded on to the recording secretary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Ms. Drzick: introduced new staff liaison, Jean Talanda. Ms. Drzick will discontinue liaison duties at the end of the summer.

NON-AGENDA COMMENTS BY OTHERS:

- Public Comment:
 - Lauri Holmes – former ECC member, currently a non-voting Associate Member:
 - Asylum Lake is owned by Western Michigan University (WMU) and the preserve has three main entrances: Parkview, Drake, and Winchell. The Parkview and Drake entrances have parking lots.
 - Asylum Lake Preservation Association (ALPA) is a council of 13 members including 7 appointed by WMU and 6 members from the neighborhood associations surrounding Asylum Lake.
 - The Winchell entrance is by far the shortest route to the creek and benches, and the path that is most accessible to young children, elderly, and less-ambulatory guests. Additionally, this entrance is the closest for a majority of residences within the City of Kalamazoo.
 - Previously, on-street parking was available along Winchell Avenue allowing easy access to this part of the preserve. Winchell Neighborhood Association has promoted and achieved an increase in and upgrades to bicycle lanes and paths along the local streets. While these updates are a welcome addition, it also prohibits on-street parking.
 - Negotiation between ALPA, Winchell, and the City has been ongoing for several months. A resolution to the problem was proposed by the City's traffic engineer Dennis Randolph. Mr. Randolph's proposal was likewise approved by ALPA. Mr. Randolph's plan includes: reinstating 120 feet of parking on the South side of Winchell Avenue, at the end of a dead-end street, while the North side would still have the bicycle lane.
 - Last Wednesday, a letter was received stating City is not pursuing restoration of on-street parking. Decision is based partly on the idea that the Winchell entrance is a minor entrance geared toward

those living in close proximity. Ms. Holmes and her neighbors find this is not the case, as the entrance has always been used by many who find the Parkview and Drake entrances to be too long of a walk to particular portions of usable greenspace.

- Ms. Holmes will attend City Commission on Tuesday to bring up this concern as well.
- Ms. Hess noted expansion of existing parking lots is under consideration, which still does not address the issue of accessibility.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/UPDATES/DISCUSSION:

- Sustainability Plan was presented, and a vote expected Tuesday June 21st. Chair Wright will re-read the ECC's recommendation at that meeting.
- Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
 - Need a new ECC liaison to the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council. No attending ECC members requested this position, so the ECC will wait for new membership to fill this position.
 - Public Services Environmental group is partnering with ZAG (Zoetis Volunteer Group) for a river cleanup on July 20th 10am-3:30pm, continue Ampersee and valley Trail area.
 - Krazy for the Kazoo cleanup event
 - Canoe the Kazoo event is September 17th
 - Comstock to Mayor's Riverfront Park (shorter paddle this year since Verburg Park is closed)
 - It was suggested the City consider partner with rental/launch businesses for all season long paddling options
 - Sign up with the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council (kalamazooriver.org)
 - Several other websites for involvement:
 - Kalamazoo Paddle Club on Facebook
 - canoemichiganrivers.com
 - kalamazooriver.org
 - protectyourwater.net (outreach for school groups)

NEW BUSINESS

- This is Wayne Bond's last meeting; there are currently 5 applications and 3 open seats.
- Chair Wright will contact the 5 applicants and invite applicants that have completed the application to interview at the July meeting. Chair Wright will also email the applications/interview questions to ECC members prior to that meeting for review.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board** – Mr. Glasser
- **Air and Water Quality** – Mr. Glasser, Mr. Wright
- **Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection** – Dr. Walter
 - Urban Bird Treaty: has a resolution from Oshtemo Twp joining as a partner; still waiting on Jamie McCarthy with the City of Kalamazoo; no luck with City of Portage yet. As mentioned previously the application process is more involved.
- **Waste Management/Litter** – Ms. Dever, Ms. Hess, Mr. Liekis
 - Ready for the next "project" now that the styrofoam has been officially taken over
 - July 23rd next Recycling event and will again include electronic recycling.
- **City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission** – Mr. Magnuson
- **Tree Committee** – Dr. Walter
 - Has not met (no items on the agenda).
 - Discussion ensued regarding tree committee's involvement with the tree inventory and planting.
 - Dr. Melliush recommends noting in the View from the Curb how/who to contact regarding choosing which trees will be planted in the curb lawn. Dr. Walter noted individuals would need to contact Public Services Forestry Division to determine if your curb lawn is to be planted and what species of trees are available, and residences should be able to choose from those options. The care of the trees was mentioned in the View from the Curb. It was also noted that it is unlikely to take down a healthy tree in the curb lawn, even if it is an invasive species, since there is currently a deficit of trees.
- **Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council** – Ms. Dever, Ms. Holmes
- **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board** – Mr. Liekis
 - Not enough for a quorum.
 - New splash pad at Lacrone Park; fitness court at Upjohn will open in August. The fitness court was funded by a grant (National Fitness Campaign) that was previously used during COVID shutdowns
- **Wellhead Protection Program Committee** – quarterly with Jean Talanda, City of Kalamazoo

- *Kalamazoo River Watershed Council*
- *Odor Task Force* – Mr. Wright

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- No Callers.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.