

October 20, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

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

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Joe Bower, Bobby Glasser

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

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order by Mr. Wright at 4:33pm, after confirming a quorum of 7 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 September 15, 2021:

- The minutes will be further reviewed, and any additional corrections, additions or comments will be emailed to Mr. Wright and forwarded on to the recording secretary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Ms. Dever shares that the next styrofoam drop -off is October 30th from 10am- 1pm
- Ms. Hess shared that the commission may be going back to in person meetings which may also impact committee meetings and she will let the committee know when a decision has been made. She would like to know people's preference as to Zoom or in person meetings. They must go back to in person by January 1st.
 - o Mr. Wright prefers in person meetings but understands other people's concerns and would like to know if hybrid meetings could be held.
 - o Mr. Bond is okay with in person meetings if there is a significant forewarning about when they will be going back to in person.
 - o Mr. Magnuson would like to know the reasoning behind going back to in person meetings given the fact that Kalamazoo County is still in phase 3 and what the parameters are for determining going back to in person. He would also like to know if the meetings will still be live streamed.
 - o Ms. Hess says that the Commission can only be virtual through December 31st because of the emergency order that was voted on.
 - o Ms. Drzick says that she has not received anything regarding going back to in person meetings but many departments in the city are having in person meetings.
 - o Ms. McCarthy says that she also hasn't heard anything about committees going back to in person meetings but in general committees follow what the Commission is doing. The feedback from the group is helpful in determining what committees will do because there must be an in-person quorum.
 - o Ms. Hess will follow up with the City Manager's office on the subject.
 - o Mr. Magnuson asks if the emergency order could be extended or if it's based on statewide guidelines.
 - o Ms. Hess says she believes it is based on statewide guidelines.

- o Mr. Wright says that since the City Commission is meeting in person November 8th and moving forward that he thinks that would mean the ECC will also meet in person starting in November, but he will keep the group updated.
- o Ms. Dever states that she prefers online meetings.
- Malissa states that this is Raelee's last meeting taking minutes and Amber Jane will be back at the next meeting.

NON-AGENDA COMMENTS BY OTHERS:

- No comments currently

OLD BUSINESS:

- Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Update- Jamie McCarthy
 - o Ms. McCarthy thanks some of the ECC members and Dr. Denise Keel for their help in refining a prioritization scoring sheet over the last 6 weeks.
 - o There are also other internal review committees, and the Plan is moving through these committees, and they are providing feedback. They are trying to wrap this stage up by the end of the month into the first week of November.
 - o An early draft will be given to the ECC so the members could look at it and give their feedback.
 - o They are planning on sending out the first draft to the public in mid-November. This will be in conjunction with some videos to help community members digest the plan. They will also have other events and take the plan to other committees. This will last throughout December and then any feedback will be reviewed, and alterations will be made.
 - o In November and December Ms. McCarthy would like to join the ECC meetings to give as summary of the plan and discuss how to access information and how to provide feedback.
 - o The final plan will hopefully be released around the 1st of January.
 - o In the meantime, people can visit the project website. People will be able to download the plan when it comes out and provide feedback through the site.
 - o They plan to be at the farmer's market in November and will be at many committee meetings coming up/
 - o Ms. Hess asks if the styrofoam collection event on October 30th would be too soon to start sharing the Plan. Ms. McCarthy says that the Plan will not be ready by then nor does she think the handouts will be, but she will get with staff and try to get some sort of poster made up.
 - o Mr. Magnuson asks what kind of feedback the project is expecting from the community review in November and December that hasn't already been captured by the other community engagement events.
 - o Ms. McCarthy says that the prioritization of projects isn't something the community has seen but it has been influenced by the sustainability survey and it's a good way to come full circle and show the community what the plan is going to be recommending based on department priorities. The community can then give input as to whether they think the plan is on track with community concerns.
 - o Mr. Wright asks how the Plan will save the city money for those who aren't as incentivized by sustainability alone.
- EGLE Air Quality Monitoring
 - o There is a page on the EGLE website dedicated to the Graphics Packaging site and all the things that have been done at Graphics. It provides background information, permits, and the odor task force data portal where community members can file comments among other things. There is also a report of the geospatial monitoring of the air around Graphics and an Odor Management Study which Mr. Wright plans to go through the report and come up with questions for Graphics before the next Odor Task Force meeting.
 - o Mr. Wright's understanding is that there isn't data to support the claim that the hydrogen sulfide levels around the plat rise to a level that becomes a concern for people's health. There are high enough levels to smell it though.
 - o The City Commission approved the tax break issue with Graphics. Bronson Hospital released a report that said there is a 14-year discrepancy in life expectancy for the people living in that zip code around Graphics versus the surrounding areas. He would like to know if it is not due to the odor issue, what is causing this discrepancy? Mr. Wright will provide the report to the group.
 - o Ms. Olweean says that she may be able to help find information about the discrepancy in mortality because there are many factors that can feed into it including factors like poor mental health.
 - o MDHHS is finishing a data review of air quality data using the data on the website and are working on a report.

NEW BUSINESS

- Sustainable Food Production- Nicole
 - Ms. Olweean will be presenting later.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- ***Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board***– Mr. Glasser
 - Not present to update
- ***Air and Water Quality*** – Mr. Glasser, Mr. Wright
 - No updates. Mr. Wright is hoping to catch up with Mr. Glasser next month to talk about the river and Allied Paper site.
- ***Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection*** – Dr. Walter, Mr. Bond
 - No information on the deer survey.
 - Dr. Walter says that the MDHHS and Michigan Department of Agriculture are recommending that people stay alert that ticks and mosquitos are still very active and there are still some cases of EEE in horses and West Nile Virus cases are still popping up throughout the state.
- ***Waste Management/Litter*** – Ms. Dever, Mr. Schmidt
 - Mr. Wright says that he hasn't made any progress yet on the spreadsheet and map for where litter pickups have occurred.
 - Ms. Dever reiterates that the styrofoam drive is in ten days.
 - Dr. Walter says that Bronson is starting a styrofoam recycling program and is wondering if it coincides with Ms. Dever's efforts.
 - Ms. Dever says that she spoke to Bronson when she was getting the styrofoam program started and they weren't going to be able to work together because Bronson had to have paid employees working their program because they have a compactor.
 - Mr. Wright will forward the email that Dr. Walter received about the Bronson styrofoam drive.
- ***City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission*** – Mr. Magnuson
 - There was a proposal for the expansion of a daycare, a multilevel housing unit, and Christina Anderson went over rezoning updates that they've been working on so nothing major to report
- ***Tree Committee*** – Dr. Walter
 - Nothing the report
- ***Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council*** – Ms. Dever, Ms. Holmes
 - Spoke about the updates to the stormwater treatment plan and the 17 acres above the Vermuelen property
 - The report to the council was from the Asylum Lake Preservation Association and they had issued a statement in 2019 saying that we would be willing to accept limited commercial development along Stadium provide that the rest of the property was kept as a buffer. Since then, many have tried to negotiate with the owner of the property to make plans. ALPA feels like this property needs to be made part of the preserve and they would be happy to assist in whatever efforts are needed to make that happen.
- ***Parks & Recreation Advisory Board*** – Mr. Liekis
 - They are back to in person meetings
 - There is a large giraffe statue that they are planning on putting in at Crane Park and they are working with the local Master Gardener Association so it is promising that they will plant more natives.
 - On the Imagine Kalamazoo website they are going to put a ranking system on upcoming park projects so the community can weigh in on park projects
- ***Wellhead Protection Program Committee*** – Jean Talanda
 - Should be presenting in the next couple of months
- ***Kalamazoo River Watershed Council*** – Ms. ***Olweean***
 - They have started doing meetings again on the 3rd Monday of every month
 - Matt Diana from the MDNR provided updates on the Morrow dam and the impacts of the oil spill. Areas are recovering well from the oil spill, and they are still assessing. As far as the sediments from the Marrow dam, they are negotiating with the owners of the dam about what the clean-up will look like. They are monitoring what species are being impacted (it appears mostly small mouth bass and muscles). They are monitoring in phases because of how the sediment is moving downstream. We should encourage the public to look for accountability from the dam owners and to not lose momentum because the public input accounted for a most of the progress they were able to make with the dam owners.
 - The council mentioned that the Kalamazoo River Greenway meeting is November 3rd and seasonal events are wrapping up for the year.
 - Mr. Wright wonders what Dr. Cornheiser's opinion will be on the dam in his upcoming participation at the meeting.

- **Odor Task Force** – Mr. Wright
 - Have not met

Other Topics

- Mr. Wright states the Dr. Walter sent an article about Pittsburg where they have made an effort to shut off light at night to reduce light pollution. Dr. Walter explains that lights at night confuse birds, insects, and even trees. The lights out initiative also has a positive effect on sustainability, and this is why many cities are starting to partake in these actions so it is very exciting that a city like Pittsburg has started doing it and maybe Kalamazoo should look into in and participate in the future.
- Mr. Magnuson and Mr. Bond express their desire for at least a weeks notice if the next meeting is going to be in person.
 - Ms. Hess says that she has heard back from Manager Ritsema that Jeff Chamberlain is working on this currently and committees will have to go back to in person meetings in January but until then there will be some grace for committees to ease back into in person meetings.
 - Mr. Wright says that he would like a hybrid meeting but if they can't do a hybrid meeting, they will just stay as online meetings until January. He will share updates as he gets them.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.