

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

July 19, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sharon Dever, Chair; Dr. Gail Walter; Steve Romanelli; David Benac; Bobby Glasser; Rob Liekis

ABSENT: Dr. James Melliush; Rachel Jondle; Thomas Dewhirst

STAFF: Karen Rutherford (recording secretary)

OTHERS: Jeanne Hess, City Commissioner
Jean Talanda, COK

ROLL CALL:

- The meeting was called to order by Chair Dever at 4:30 pm, after confirming quorum was met.

ASSURANCE OF LIVE STREAMING (Facebook/You Tube)

- Recording/Streaming of the meeting was confirmed, with community members joining via a link posted on the City's Facebook page.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (7/19/23)

Motion made to approve the Agenda and was supported. With a voice vote the motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for 6/21/2023

- Dr. Walter stated there is a change on the last page under Subcommittee Report, under the Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection, the word "attached" should read "attacked."
- Chair Dever stated under Subcommittee Report, under Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council, it states "tugboats". She asked to remove "tugboats" and have it state, "The water quality issues due to road salt and more that have been in the process to improve are being worked on and seem promising. Discussions on how the Land Management Plan will be implemented have been started."

Steve Romanelli motioned to approve the minutes from June 21, 2023 and was supported, as amended. With a voice vote the motion was approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Individual/Announcements - None

- News/Educational Items – Chair Dever mentioned the recent news article regarding the Wastewater Treatment Plant where 1.5 million gallons of partially treated wastewater was discharged.

COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- None

PROCEDURAL ITEMS (AS NEEDED)

- Vice Chair determinations? – It is open.
 - Chair Dever stated Rachel Jondle told her she will oversee the Planning Commission Subcommittee.
 - Chair Dever asked the Committee if anyone was interested in the Vice-Chair position. There were no responses.
- New Applicants
 - No applicants applied.

ONGOING BUSINESS

- Jean Talanda – Wellhead Update
 - Jean Talanda provided a handout to the Committee. She noted she works on wellhead protection as well as stormwater compliance and any of the environmental liability sites for the City. She reviewed the handout.
 - It was asked how many production wellheads we had and why are we down to 90. Ms. Talanda stated there used to be 130+. Many of the wells are very old dating back to the 1930's and 1940's. For Central wellfield, with technology, we have been able to reduce the number of wells and make them higher capacity and more efficient. In 2018 there was a PFAS issue and there were some very small wellfields that had traces of PFAS. Nothing that exceed the health standard. We put them in a temporary "no use" status as we work out a new plan. Those wells can be used again. We took out a couple of small well fields in the Milham area that were old and not functioning. We are working with the State who has asked us to reduce the point of entry into the system. They want us to have less variation in water quality from station to station because they were all built differently at different times.
 - Chair Dever stated not all PFAS is regulated in general. Are there any PFAS amounts that are not on the regulated list or in process of regulation. Ms. Talanda stated it has been a couple of years since she evaluated that data, but it was not persistent. There was never a pattern or health issue. She doesn't keep up on this and James Baker or Joe Bonhomme could give more information.

- It was asked if we know the origin of the volatile organics, why would we use a wellfield where we know we are pulling contaminated groundwater as a source of drinking water. Ms. Talanda stated there were well done studies on the BOC's, where they came from, and there is nothing to report. As she understands it, they do not really need the air strippers any longer. They still monitor. They like them because of the iron removal. They are working on their methodology of how they go about doing change outs, cleanings, and update equipment.

- Asylum Lake/Zoning Update

- Chair Dever stated the second draft was completed and comments closed. The City plans to do a third draft. She noted she was shown a letter from the Open Drive Winchell Neighborhood Association that noted another suggestion in the Natural Features Protection Overlay Standard Section 50-6.2. She read the current language and the proposed language change. She read the reason for the change. She explained they do not like the proposed language change because they are saying it is stripping the integrity a bit and it is not aligning with the original intent.

They are not planning on voting on this until September. This will be a topic of discussion next month and then we can decide if we want to make another suggestion. Chair Dever will forward the letter to the Committee for their review.

- Air Quality Updates

- Mr. Glasser stated he is working with a group and had a conversation with Just Air to get more unfiltered information about what they are monitoring and how that will be available. Just Air stated the only thing they will monitor is the particulate and NO₂. The particulate is publicly available. The NO₂ will be publicly available as soon as the NASA program is up. The Just Air monitors are not going to give us anything we do not already have. They are working on making the public data available but currently do not have an exact plan on how they will do it.
- Dr. Walter asked if there were any air quality updates. Mr. Glasser stated the lawsuit is still going forward. The Judge tossed out the nuisance issue but allowed the other two issues to go forward. The H₂S monitors are still live and Graphic Packaging is in violation every night.
- Canadian Wildfires – Chair Devers is following it on the EPA AIRNow app. Mr. Glasser stated you may want to check out Purple Air app as well. There are about a dozen sensors at people's homes around town that seem to be more reliable. There are times when the EPA monitors and the Purple Air monitors are not aligned.

NEW BUSINESS

- New Ideas? Land management regulations, insect populations, etc.

- Chair Dever stated she shared an email with the Committee from someone in the community who shared their concern about not seeing so many insects and they were curious if anyone else has that same concern. She stated she would like to talk about what we can do at the City to encourage things that would help with not having an insect apocalypse. This would include native plants.

It was noted that people need to stop using pesticides in the City. Possibly using public service announcements would be helpful as well as educating people. Discussion ensued.

Discussion ensued regarding noise pollution and air pollution regarding leaf blowers and gas powered garden tools and the health concerns with these types of tools.

These topics will be added as Yard Management under Ongoing Business for future meetings.

- Dr. Walter asked if there were any updates on the Wastewater Treatment Plant where 1.5 million gallons of partially treated wastewater was discharged. Chair Dever stated the only thing she saw was that it had been lifted.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

- ***Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board*** – Mr. Glasser – nothing to report.
- ***Air and Water Quality*** – Mr. Glasser – we spoke on air quality earlier in the meeting. Nothing else to report. Water Quality – he received a 2022 water quality report. In regard to lead, the action level is 15 parts per billion (ppb). The ranges for the samples that were collected were 0-130 and 0-83. He asked Jean Talanda how he interprets the action level of 15 ppb. She stated the State requires the language to be as they choose. It is mandated language and hard to interpret. She referred him to the City's Lab Director.
- ***Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection*** – Dr. Walter - She anticipates the Peregrine Falcons chicks to depart in the next week or two.
Urban Bird Treaty – Dr. Walter met with the local core partners today – they were turned down by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Fish and Wildlife Service felt they had a strong application and encouraged them to address some of the points that they made. They decided at today's meeting that they would continue to move forward with this. The partners are committed to work together and it was a productive meeting.
- ***City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission*** – Ms. Jondle – not here today.
- ***Tree Committee*** – Dr. Walter – they are in the process of updating the Tree Ordinance and Tree Manual. The Tree inventory is being worked on. Dr. Walter was not familiar with the tree inventory process. Currently there is no information on the grant that was applied for.
- ***Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council*** – Ms. Dever - we went over water quality again and moving forward in the water quality project.
- ***Parks & Recreation Advisory Board*** – Mr. Liekis – no environmental issues to report. It is summer time and there are a lot of events planned and there is a lot of human traffic going through the parks. There are a couple of clean ups scheduled.
- ***Kalamazoo River Watershed Council*** – Mr. Benac – at the last meeting on Monday they did not mention the 1.5 million gallons of wastewater that was discharged, which was a concern. Regarding the mega site in Marshall, it is a concern that the watershed council is patting themselves on the back as being seen as an ally by Ford and Marshall for helping make this happen over the objections of the people who live there. The take-away is we need to keep an eye on what they are doing.
- ***Wellhead Protection Program Committee – Quarterly*** - Jean Talanda – quarterly
- ***Odor Task Force – Quarterly*** – Mr. Benac – quarterly
- ***Community Sustainability Plan*** (roughly quarterly – reporting in September)

CHECK PHONE LINES AND STREAMING FOR COMMENTS:

No phone calls.

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

DRAFT