

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITIZENS' ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
August 1, 2019**

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on August 1, 2019, in the Executive Conference Room at the DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois, 60115.

Dan Kenney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was recorded by Assistant City Manager Raymond Munch and the following members of the CEC were present: Dan Kenney, Clare Kron, Sharon Skala, Ken Koch, Bill Oleckno, Virginia Wilcox, and Steve Honeywell.

Ex-officio members in attendance: Christine Lagattolla, Amy Doll, and Mike Holland.

Also present were Mayor Jerry Smith, City Manager Bill Nicklas, and Assistant City Manager Raymond Munch.

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to approve the agenda. (Who motioned and seconded?)

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Kenney asked for public comment.

Jo Schultz spoke to the issue of residential beekeeping in DeKalb. Schultz has been researching municipal ordinances in other jurisdictions on this topic and believes the City should look into the possibility of drafting regulations that would permit beekeeping.

Sandra Davis of 350 Kishwaukee thanked the CEC for championing the recent electric vehicle event at Huntley Park.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting held on June 6, 2019. Member Oleckno made the motion, seconded by Member Skala.

Member Kron raised several issues pertaining to wording of the draft minutes. Because the author of the minutes, Jason Blumenthal, was not present, the consensus of the members was to email Jason the required edits and defer approval of the minutes to the next regular meeting.

## **E. COMMISSION REPORTS**

1. DeKalb County Health Department: Not Present
2. DeKalb Park District: Amy Doll

Doll reported that the next phase of planning for the restoration of the Nature Trail is underway. The District is also considering converting some turf grass areas to pollinator gardens. The updated Welch Park Master Plan was approved. The plan calls for the addition of a splash pad and additional sports courts/fields. The Splash Pad will be designed flow to rain gardens as recycling of water is not permitted in this use. This project aligns with the Annie Glidden North Revitalization Plan. The District is looking to apply for grant funds to assist with projects in Welch Park. Member Koch inquired about the laws regarding recycled water use in splash pads. Doll stated one of the main requirements is the provision of bathroom facilities.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District: Michael Holland

Holland updated members on construction progress at KWRD. Work is nearing completion and Holland is hoping for restoration work to begin soon. Holland added that KWRD is also considering adding more pollinator gardens to the property instead of turfgrass. Kenney asked about the NIU food scrap recycling program. Holland has KWRD's environmental studies intern investigating further. Member Oleckno asked about the timeline for completion on construction. Holland said they should be treating water by the end of the year.

4. Northern Illinois University: Christine Lagattolla

Lagattolla advised that on 9/15/19, NIU will host its annual Clean the Kish event. She also discussed the efforts of the Nature Coalition to draft a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights and their hope that it will be adopted community-wide. NIU is also working on further aluminum recycling efforts. Member Oleckno asked about NIU's sustainability plan. Lagattolla believes efforts have been abandoned at this point but may resume in the future.

5. City of DeKalb: Bill Nicklas

Nicklas brought back to the table the idea of electric vehicle charging stations in the downtown area. Previous work had been done by City staff but has not advanced due to turnover. Nicklas recently met with a resident who provided him with information on the future of electric vehicles. The City is interested in charging stations. KWRD has Chargepoint stations, as does the Sycamore Sports Center. The City will investigate further. Nicklas may look to place them near the new City Hall location, depending on the availability of a power source. Member Kron stated that staff turnover has slowed this project. Member Koch has information on cheaper options that he will offer.

## **F. NEW BUSINESS**

### 1. Hybrid Police Vehicles

Police Commander Steve Lekkas was scheduled to attend and update members on their request for the City to explore the use of hybrid patrol vehicles. Lekkas was unable to attend, so Raymond Munch discussed the idea. Interim Chief Petragallo has discussed this issue with Nicklas and Munch. There is a consensus among City staff that it may be worth exploring the new Ford Police Interceptor Hybrid; however, we would prefer not to do so in the first model year. There are several considerations that went into this decision, including the unknown reliability and actual fuel savings. The City also does not have fleet mechanics trained to work on hybrid vehicles. The City would prefer to use other municipality's data as a test case instead of making our own purchase this early. Member Koch asked if the City will suspend fleet purchases entirely until the desired information can be obtained. Munch advised that the City will proceed with the purchase of standard vehicles for now. Koch expressed disappointment that the City will not consider buying hybrids now. Chair Kenney suggested that Kish College may offer automotive training.

### 2. Bike Friendly Designation

Amy Doll reported that Live Healthy DeKalb County is continuing to work with Jason Blumenthal to renew the City's bike-friendly designation. More work is required by the City, such as infrastructure improvements related to bike transportation. The DSATS active transportation plan identified some issues related to this effort and those continue to be evaluated. This continued discussion has kept alive conversations between the City and Park District to extend the Nature Trail at Bethany road. Munch noted that the City Engineer does consider incorporating bike-friendly attributes into projects. For example, North 1st Street will be stripped with a dedicated bike lane once repaving is complete.

## **G. OLD BUSINESS**

### 1. Sustainability Plan Updates

Member Kron provided an additional goal that she has requested to be added to the plan as 11-A. Member Oleckno agreed that the goal is a good addition to the plan, but questions some of the wording. For example, a reference to "electromagnetic devices" may not be understood by most. He suggested clarifying with the term wireless communications devices or something similar. He also stated that the language regarding lighting is a bit technical. Discussion ensued amongst the members about the idea of CEC "monitoring" and consensus was reached that this language may need to be softened.

### 2. Vehicle Charging Stations Update

Manager Nicklas discussed this earlier in the meeting. Member Kron questioned whether the CEC should continue investigating grant opportunities or hold off to see what Nicklas comes up with. Discussion ensued. Members seemed to be in agreement that the City Manager will

take the lead on this for now, but they should not completely abandon the idea of pursuing grant opportunities. Member Honeywell stated he would like to see an ordinance that would allow the City to ticket/tow non-electric vehicles that park in dedicated EV spaces. Munch said he will reach out to the City Attorney on the legality of such an ordinance.

### 3. Updates on Other Items Discussed Previously

Additional discussion took place on the topic of beekeeping. Chair Kenney suggested this might tie into the sustainability plan. Member Koch agreed and although it is not already addressed specifically, the plan's goal of preserving the natural environment may tie into this discussion. Member Kron weighed in and stated that the CEC should continue to support efforts that counter the reduction in pollinators regardless of their stance on beekeeping. Member Honeywell raised the issue of residents with bee sting allergies and how they may be impacted. Kron responded that proper regulations may mitigate the impact. Honeywell agreed but urged the members to be prepared with a response to that concern. Citizen Jo Schultz offered her opinion, noting that she is not an expert. She advised the range of bees is limited and bees are typically not randomly aggressive. Citizen Sandra Davis spoke on her experiences with a child who suffered from stinging insect allergies and suggested the CEC seek the opinion of an allergist. Member Oleckno suggested the members conduct more due diligence on the topic.

Member Kron raised concern over "light trespassing" in residential areas. She is concerned that this issue will take on more importance as more people install LED security lights and vehicle headlights become brighter. This also ties into the concern of LED light impacts on health. Kron has researched state and federal laws on the issue and found nothing substantive. Kron would like to see local regulation on this issue. Mike Holland stated the City's UDO regulates lighting in commercial applications as KWRD was required to submit photometric plans to the City as part of its current project. Member Honeywell agreed to take on additional research efforts.

Chair Kenney was contacted by another citizen complaining about LED streetlights. Kenney educated the citizen about CEC's prior educational efforts on this topic, which the citizen was unaware of. Kenney also received a complaint from a citizen who is still unhappy that the City won't allow backyard chickens and learned of at least one resident housing backyard chickens.

Member Kron updated the members on a discussion she had with Katie Neary of Lakeshore Recycling Systems about the inclusion of compostable dinnerware in the food scraps program. According to Neary, there is a fire hazard concern, thus they are not accepted.

Last, Member Kron renewed her desire to communicate to residents the fact that ComEd will adjust streetlights that shine into homes. The consensus was reached that a press release should be issued, along with information on Channel 14.

## **H. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, September 5, 2019, 4:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Koch, seconded by Skala. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

Chair Kenney declared the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Raymond Munch, Assistant City Manager