

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
January 2, 2025

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular meeting on January 2, 2025, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Julie Jesmer called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Roll call was recorded by City Staff Liaison Scott Zak, and the following members of the CEC were present: Chair Julie Jesmer, Commissioners Killian Becker, Thomas Skuzinski, Linda Srygler and Robert Srygler. Commissioner Shaun Langley arrived shortly after roll call. Not present were Ex-Officio Members Matt Emken and Nick Newman and Council Liaison Barb Larson.

B. Approval of Agenda

MOTION

Mr. Skuzinski motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Srygler.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Public Comments

No public comments were received.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2024

MOTION

Mr. Srygler motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mx. Becker.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

With no ex-officio member appointed, no report was given.

2. DeKalb Park District

With Ex-Officio Member Emken absent, no report was given.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District (KWRD)

With Mr. Newman absent, no report was given.

4. Northern Illinois University

With no ex-officio member appointed, no report was given.

5. City Staff Liaison

a. Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Environmental Committee

Mr. Zak shared information from the Nov. 19 committee meeting on recycling. The Caucus has been awarded a grant to help get people excited about recycling again, and the City may be able to incorporate initiatives that stem from this grant. The initiatives will concentrate on contributors to recycling that a city can control, specifically addressing public confusion, skepticism and apathy. One point of skepticism is that most materials are shipped to China and never recycled. However, most material is going to Mexico and Canada, where it is being processed properly. Will County presented on in-person games on recycling education that their staff does at tabling events. They recommend attending events in which you are not preaching to the choir. These games are an option for the Commission to use at events.

b. EV Readiness Program

Mr. Zak has begun completing work for the City to earn the designation of EV Ready through this Caucus program, including an assessment of EV chargers and vehicles in the City. It found there are 22 EV charging stations and 219 EVs have been registered with the Secretary of State.

F. New Business

1. Nomination form for DeKalb STARR Awards

The Commission reviewed the nomination form prepared by Mr. Langley. For the question asking with which sustainability focus areas the nomination aligns, the Commission agreed that the possible answers should be narrowed to match those categories found on the scoring matrix. Overall, the Commission was pleased with the form and then set the schedule for selecting the winners. Mr. Zak will create an online nomination form and a news release on nominations will be released in January. The Commission will evaluate nominations and select recipients at its March 6 meeting. Along with selecting from the nominations, it was agreed the Commission can name a winner in categories in which the nomination process did not produce an acceptable recipient. The winners will be notified in March and recognized in April, possibly at Earth Fest.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle

Feb: Fast fashion (Jesmer), March: Planting for monarchs

The Commission reviewed the schedule. Ms. Srygler will write the monarchs article. Mr. Skuzinski will preview Earth Fest for the April article.

2. Upcoming events

Mr. Skuzinski said he will look into the possibility of the Commission having a table at Earth Fest and noted NIU will be hosting a sustainability fest in September. STEM Fest also occurs in the fall.

3. Updates on other issues

No information shared here.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

Mr. Zak shared an email from resident Patty Ruback with concerns involving chlorination in waterways from road salt and the impact on aquatic animals in watersheds. She is part of a monitoring group with the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center and records chloride readings locally. She reported a baseline reading for the Kishwaukee River at N. 1st St. on Nov. 20 of 92 ppm. That increased to 441 ppm on Dec. 20. Ms. Ruback believes a big problem may be road salt applied by the residential and commercial sectors. Mr. Zak shared the email with Public Works Director Andy Raih, who confirmed there was a snow/ice event before the Dec. 20 reading. Mr. Raih said the Department does all it can to limit salt use, such as mixing it with beet juice, since it is never known how much will be needed in a season. The Commission agreed salt is applied heavily by contractors on commercial lots. Public education is one possible solution, and the Commission agreed to revise the schedule for articles to make February's topic salt alternatives.

2. Next regular meeting: February 6, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

Mr. Skuzinski motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Srygler.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on February 6, 2025.