

MINUTES

CITY OF DEKALB

Citizens' Environmental Commission

January 5, 2023

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on January 5, 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Roll call was recorded by Management Analyst Scott Zak, and the following members of the CEC were present: Chair Steve Honeywell, Rachel Farrell, Sven Hansen (arrived at 4:38 p.m.), Julie Jesmer, Clare Kron, Kyle Moore, Nick Newman, Council Liaison Barb Larson and Ex-Officio Member Matt Emken. Not present were Ex-Officio Members Sarah Fox and Mike Holland.

Also present was Management Analyst Scott Zak.

B. Approval of Agenda

MOTION

Ms. Kron motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Newman.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of November 3, 2022

MOTION

Mr. Newman motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Jesmer.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. Public Comment

Courtney Gallaher, Northern Illinois University's Sustainability Coordinator, provided an update on the University's sustainability efforts. Ms. Gallaher shared NIU has signed a commitment to be carbon free by 2050 and a task force has been created to write climate action and sustainability plans. She said the plans will include opportunities for partnerships with the City in areas such as transportation. The goal is to have the draft plans completed by Earth Day followed by public comment and approval by fall.

Ms. Gallaher said the University will be transitioning to renewable energy with construction of a solar farm on the west campus and a solar array over a parking lot. It is expected this will offset all of the University's energy use with surplus for a possible community solar program.

Ms. Kron asked how the City could collaborate with the University. Alderwoman Larson noted there are monthly collaboration meetings between Mayor Cohen Barnes, City Manager Bill Nicklas, NIU President Lisa Freeman and University administrators to share goals. She also shared the agenda for the upcoming City Council meeting includes a vote on hiring a consulting firm to create a comprehensive public transportation study on the extension of Metra service to DeKalb.

Ms. Kron asked what the Commission could do to support the sustainability planning. Ms. Gallaher said there will be future conversations on where the University's and City's sustainability plans align. Chair Honeywell said the Commission will be happy to collaborate and attend NIU's task force meetings.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

With no Ex-Officio Member from the Health Department appointed, no report was given.

2. DeKalb Park District

Ex-Officio Member Emken shared only two volunteers came out for an invasive plant removal at the Ellwood House but a lot of honeysuckle was removed. He reported a Natural Area Specialist has been requested in the proposed Park District budget and Christmas tree recycling is being offered in Hopkins Park.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

Commissioner Newman shared the District's two biogas energy generators are now capable of producing more energy than the District uses.

4. Northern Illinois University

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

5. City Staff Liaison

Mr. Zak shared the results of three Facebook posts by the Commission in November on grease disposal and recycling. The people reached by the posts ranged from 1,038 to 12,023.

F. New Business

1. PRIDE Awards

The Commission received one nomination from the public for the 2022 PRIDE Awards. Christine L. nominated the Driven Heart. Mr. Zak read the nomination, which cited the business's installation of more than 40 bluebird habitats last Spring, rehab of 23 habitats, work with local organizations on trash collection and providing bicycles to DeKalb residents.

MOTION

Ms. Farrell motioned to award a 2022 PRIDE Award to the Driven Heart, seconded by Chair Honeywell.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The business owners, Marcus Montgomery and Devin Costa Rica, will be invited to the next Commission meeting to receive their award certificate.

2. CEC presentation for February/March (home efficiency)

The Commission agreed Ms. Kron should repeat her presentation on native trees in February, instead of a presentation on home efficiency. The presentation was set for Feb. 23 at the library. Contacting garden clubs, the DeKalb County Farm Bureau and the U of I Cooperative were suggested as options for promotion.

The Commission supported doing a joint presentation with STEM Café on Fusion as an energy source.

Chair Honeywell and Mr. Newman will contact Jefferson and Littlejohn elementary schools to see if there are teachers interested in presenting monarch education, instead of holding a festival.

3. Watershed grant

Mr. Emken shared the EPA has made funding available for cities with approved watershed plans. Mr. Newman will investigate the grant. While maintaining the lagoons at the high school had been discussed in the past as a possible watershed project, it was agreed that since the Commission is a City entity, a project under the City's jurisdiction should be pursued instead.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle

- a. Insulation/window replacement**
- b. Seed starting**

The Commission decided Ms. Farrell will write the February article on seed starting and Mr. Newman will write the March article on home insulation.

2. Sustainability plan changes

Chair Honeywell suggested a special meeting may be needed for the Sustainability Plan update. Before the meeting is scheduled, each Commission member will update their session so it is ready to be discussed.

3. Ideas for post February 2023 CEC presentations

Nothing further was discussed here.

4. Updates on other issues

Alderwoman Larson suggested the Commission explore planting a monarch waystation. Mr. Zak will talk with Assistant Public Works Director Andy Raih about the possibility of a waystation in one of the downtown planters.

Mr. Hansen asked if the City has a tree program. Mr. Zak shared \$7,500 has been budgeted this year for a parkway tree program where the City and resident equally share the cost of a new tree.

Ms. Kron said she would like to do an article on forever chemicals, and the Commission agreed summer would be a good time.

H. Public Comment

No further public comment was shared here.

I. Announcements

1. New announcements

No announcements were shared.

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

I. Adjournment

MOTION

Ms. Kron motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Moore.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on February 2, 2023.