

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
February 3, 2022

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on February 3, 2021 in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:01 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, Julie Jesmer, Kyle Moore, Nick Newman, Council Liaison Barb Larson and Ex-Officio Member Matt Emken. Not present were Ex-Officio Members Dakota Burke, Mike Holland and Sarah Fox.

Also present was Management Analyst Scott Zak and Northern Illinois University students from Mark Schuller's and Courtney Gallaher's classes

B. Approval of Agenda

MOTION

Ms. Jesmer moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Kron.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Public Comment

NIU student Erin Kronin said the role of the students from Mr. Schuller's class in the Sustainability Plan update will be to inform the public about the process. In a response to a question from Ms. Kronin, Mr. Zak said he would check if the February presentation on the Sustainability Plan could be streamed on Facebook Live.

NIU student Emily Hernandez said the role Ms. Gallaher's students will be science-based as they help the Commission with the update.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of December 2, 2021

MOTION

Mr. Newman motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Honeywell.

Mr. Newman made a correction to the minutes, noting IWEA stands for Illinois Water Environment Association.

VOTE

The corrected minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

Chair Honeywell read a report from Ms. Burke. The Health Department will be hosting a household hazardous waste collection at DeKalb Airport in June and is piloting a recycling program for multi-unit buildings. Ms. Kron said this was encouraging since the Commission has tried for years to have recycling at these buildings, but costs were always an obstacle.

2. DeKalb Park District

Mr. Emken reported grant-funded projects at the Ellwood House would begin in March or April. They include work to address flooding and installation of dark-sky compliant lighting. The Park District is coordinating with NIU for a clean-up day at Hopkins Park on Earth Day, April 27. Ms. Jesmer said the Trash Squirrels would be interested in participating.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

Chair Honeywell read a report from Mr. Holland. The District's second power generator using methane gas went online Jan. 25. Not only is the District's energy consumption now net-zero, but it is producing more power than it uses. Mr. Newman said most of the waste used by the generator is from waste hauler drop-offs.

4. Northern Illinois University

Chair Honeywell read a report from Ms. Fox. She said law students may be interested in helping with sustainability planning and that her Environmental Law students have read the City's Sustainability Plan. She referred the Commission to sustainablecitycode.com for model local ordinances and other sustainability resources and to a recent EPA grant webinar at epa.gov/grants/how-apply-grants.

5. City Staff Liaison

Mr. Zak shared that Adrian Lopez declined reappointment to the Commission, leaving the Commission with two vacancies.

F. New Business

1. Transfer of chair position

It was shared that Mr. Honeywell's appointment to chair of the Commission has been approved by Mayor Cohen Barnes and the City Council.

2. Election of new vice chair

Chair Honeywell explained the vice chair serves in that position for two years and will take over as chair in 2023.

MOTION

Ms. Kron motioned to elect Mr. Newman as vice chair, seconded by Mr. Moore.

VOTE

Mr. Newman was elected vice chair by unanimous voice vote.

3. Welcoming our new member, new member still needed

The reference to a new member was mistakenly added to the agenda. There is no new member. Regarding the two vacancies, Chair Honeywell will contact a Trash Squirrels member recommended by Ms. Jesmer, and Ms. Larson will look for contact information for Foti Pappas.

G. Old Business

- 1. Collaboration with NIU for revisions of Sustainability Plan**
 - a. Mark Schuller, Professor of Anthropology and Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies**
 - b. Courtney Gallaher's student involvement**

Since the NIU students were introduced during public comment, no additional information was presented here.

2. February presentation on Sustainability Plan

Chair Honeywell reported the Yusunas Meeting Room at the DeKalb Public Library has been reserved from 7-8:30 p.m. on Feb. 24 for the presentation, and it will be publicized by the library and the Daily Chronicle. Mr. Zak said he would check with the City Attorney on whether the presentation must be posted as a public meeting.

3. March presentation on solar with 350 Kishwaukee

Ms. Kron said there was uncertainty about whether the presentation would be cancelled and whether the Commission was a co-sponsor or invitee. Because of these questions, the presentation has been suspended.

4. Next article for Daily Chronicle

It was agreed that Mr. Newman will write the March article using the data that has been compiled on light pollution and intrusion. Mr. Moore will then do an article using information supplied to the Commission on plants that handle salt well. Ms. Jesmer will cover trash for the May article.

5. CEC member recruitment

Having been discussed earlier, no new information was presented here.

6. Grant possibilities

Mr. Newman said he would look at the EPA grant webinar suggested by Ms. Fox and check with the Illinois Water Environment Association about funding collaboration in the second half of the year. Mr. Emken noted that anything in the approved Kishwaukee watershed plan is eligible for EPA funding.

7. Coffee with the CEC—press release

Mr. Honeywell reported he will get a press release ready by next week to send to the Chronicle.

8. Building guidelines and guidelines for solar farms

Ms. Kron asked if the City Council was interested in solar farm guidelines. Ms. Larson said creating City guidelines could encourage developers to choose other communities, and questioned if the Commission would want to possibly prevent an owner from being able to make more on their land. She added requiring natives under panels could lead to thistle and sunflowers on neighboring properties.

9. Budget considerations

Mr. Newman reported that GoFundMe appeared to be the only option for crowdfunding, but you need to be a nonprofit group or individual.

Ms. Kron ask what came of the budget considerations submitted to the City by the Commission. Ms. Larson said there are no commission budgets provided by the City.

10. Updates on other issues

Ms. Kron asked if the PRIDE Award certificates had been mailed. Mr. Zak said he was unaware the certificates were sent by the City but he would do so.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

No announcements were made here.

2. Next meeting: March 3, 2022 at 4:00 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 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on March 3, 2022.