

MINUTES

CITY OF DEKALB

Citizens' Environmental Commission

March 2, 2023

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on March 2 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:33 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, Clare Kron, Shaun Langley, Council Liaison Barb Larson and Ex-Officio Member James Carlin. Not present were Commissioners Sven Hanson, Kyle Moore and Nick Newman and Ex-Officio Members Matt Emken, Sarah Fox and Mike Holland.

Also present was Management Analyst Scott Zak.

B. Approval of Agenda

MOTION

Ms. Farrell motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Kron.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2023

MOTION

Ms. Jesmer motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Farrell.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. Public Comment

Resident Ron Cress said he was aware of the Commission's plan to try and establish wildflower gardens at grade schools and shared Midwest Ground Covers would be willing to donate the milkweed. Chair Honeywell said Jefferson Grade School is hoping to create a monarch garden and he would be willing to spend the day discussing wildflowers with the students. The Commission thanked Mr. Cress for arranging the donation.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

Ex-Officio Member Carlin reported the DeKalb County landfill is exploring installation of a renewable gas flow device to capture methane produced by the landfill for use. He said the Health Department's annual solid waste report should be prepared by next month and will include recycling trends.

2. DeKalb Park District

In Ex-Officio Member Emken's absence, Chair Honeywell read the report. Mr. Emken shared the new Park District budget includes a natural areas specialist, perennials around the new park signs and \$10,000 for new trees. Lights in the ballfields, Hopkins Park pool and Rec Center will be converted to LED.

Commissioners shared concerns about the trimming of parkway trees, which they feel are over trimmed. Alderwoman Larson noted a clearance needs to be trimmed for garbage trucks. Ms. Farrell said trimming has been done over the height of garbage trucks and the opposite side of the tree. Alderwoman Larson noted trees also need to be thinned out.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

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

4. Northern Illinois University

Ms. Kron said she has contacted Ms. Fox and confirmed she remains unable to attend meetings because of childcare pickup but is agreeable to answering questions from the Commissioners as they arise. Mr. Langley suggested NIU's Sustainability Coordinator Courtney Gallaher could recommend a new liaison. Chair Honeywell said that connection would be beneficial to the Commission.

5. City Staff Liaison

Mr. Zak shared new Adopt-A-Street signs have been produced for adopted roadways. Possible cleanup sites for the Trash Squirrels were discussed, and Alderwoman Larson suggested contacting Mortenson, which is building the Meta DeKalb Data Center, to partner on a cleanup since the firm has been actively involved in the community. Alderwoman Larson shared meetings continue on the possibility of a Metra extension to DeKalb.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronical

a. Monarchs for April

b. Future—"forever" chemicals

The Commission agreed to complete the Old Business agenda items and then return to item F-1. Chair Honeywell confirmed he will write the April article on monarchs.

2. Tree presentation recap

Chair Honeywell shared no members of the public turned out for the Feb. 23 presentation on backyard trees at the DeKalb Public Library, so it was cancelled. He said the presentation was promoted on various community calendars. He said the Commission will have to rethink how it does presentations. Alderwoman Larson suggested partnering with a business that sells trees if that topic is revisited.

3. Supplemental meeting regarding Sustainability Plan

No information was presented here.

4. Future presentations—monarchs, fusion, home efficiency

Chair Honeywell said more information on monarch presentations at Jefferson Elementary School would be coming next month.

5. Updates on other issues

Ms. Kron shared there are 200 packets of milkweed left from last summer's monarch education efforts. Chair Honeywell said these could be given to students to take home.

F. New Business

1. Sustainability Plan discussion and update

Ms. Kron shared information on the Greenest Region Compact (GRC) developed by the Municipal Mayors Caucus and proposed using the GRC's framework for creating a sustainability plan. The framework is divided into sections (including climate, economic development, energy efficiency) that can be customized. Ms. Kron said using the framework will get DeKalb's Sustainability Plan up to speed. Mr. Langley agreed to incorporate the work the Commission has already done on updating the Sustainability Plan into the GRC framework. Ms. Kron suggested the City also join the GRC. She said it is not binding but would show a measure of good faith. Given the simplicity of using the framework, Chair Honeywell said a special meeting on the Sustainability Plan is not needed.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

Alderwoman Larson said her family contacted DeKalb County Sheriff Andy Sullivan about trucks not covering their loads and subsequent enforcement has resulted in less trash blowing into the fields.

2. Next regular meeting: April 6 at 4:30 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

Ms. Kron motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Jesmer.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on April 6, 2023.