

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
March 4, 2021

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on March 4, 2021 at DeKalb City Hall and virtually on Teams.

Chair Clare Kron called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Roll call was recorded by Management Analyst Scott Zak, and the following members of the CEC were present: Chair Clare Kron, Vice Chair Steve Honeywell, Rachel Farrell and Nick Newman. Those absent were: Adrian Lopez, Kyle Moore and Sharon Skala.

Also present were Ex-Officio Member Mike Holland, Ex-Officio Member Mat Emken, Mayor Jerry Smith and Management Analyst Scott Zak.

B. Approval of Agenda

Chair Kron requested a motion to approve the agenda.

MOTION

Ms. Farrell moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Honeywell.

VOTE

Motioned carried on a 4-0 vote. Aye: Farrell, Honeywell, Kron, Newman. Nay: None. The agenda was declared approved.

C. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting of January 21, 2021

Chair Kron requested approval of the minutes being drafted.

MOTION

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

VOTE

Motioned carried on a 4-0 vote. Aye: Honeywell, Kron, Newman, Farrell. Nay: None. The minutes were declared approved.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

With the department's ex-officio position vacant, no report was given.

2. DeKalb Park District

Ex-Officio Member Mat Emken reported that the park district is doing natural plantings and two more bio swells are planned at the Ellwood House Museum.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

Ex-Officio Member Mike Holland reported on the Watershed Improvement Plan for the Upper South Branch of the Kishwaukee River. Mr. Holland said the plan spearheaded by the DeKalb County Water and Soil Conservation District includes an assessment of the watershed and a list of possible improvement projects. The next step is the formal adoption of the plan. Mr. Holland said there is a greater likelihood of state funding for projects if more governmental entities adopt the plan.

Chair Kron reported the DeKalb County Board will be the first to consider adoption of the plan and then other entities will be asked to do the same. Chair Kron said City Engineer Zac Gill will recommend adoption by the City Council.

Mr. Holland said after adoption, a group will be formed to initiate an action plan for the improvement projects.

4. Northern Illinois University

With Ex-Officio Member Sarah Fox not present, no report was given.

5. City Staff Liaison

Management Analyst Scott Zak introduced himself to the Commission, and noted that the commission member biographies on the City's website need to be updated. It was agreed that bios will be e-mailed to Mr. Zak by March 12.

F. New Business

1. New CEC commissioner

Chair Kron delayed introducing new Commissioner Kyle Moore since he was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Kron announced Ann Shult has resigned as a commissioner, wished her well and asked commissioners to recommend a new member.

2. Year-end report

Chair Kron presented the Commission's accomplishments in 2020 and goals for 2021.

Mr. Newman asked if the Commission would be reintroducing the idea of allowing backyard chickens. Ms. Kron said the topic is out of the Commission's hands until after the April 6 advisory referendum.

Ms. Farrell asked if the Commission should address areas near the NIU campus that do not offer recycling. It was agreed that the 2021 goals will include promoting citywide recycling that includes apartment complexes.

Presentation of the following annual report will be made at the March 22 City Council meeting:

CEC Achievements and Activities 2020

- Introduced a bee-keeping ordinance allowing backyard hives
- Investigated light pollution and light trespass legislation
- Achieved Monarch City U.S.A. status to encourage native plantings to help sustain the monarch

butterfly population

- Proposed a leaf burning ban
- Establish a regular article in a local paper that features sustainability
- Investigated salt applications on city pavement with Andy Raih, Street Department

Superintendent

- Realized the installation of the first city-installed dual EV charging station (originally proposed by the CEC)
- Co-sponsored three public forums: 1) Options for solar energy use; 2) Organic Gardening and Sustainability; and 3) Wildlife in the City.

Goals for 2021

- Update the DeKalb Sustainability Plan and adopt action plans per commissioner
- Recommend installation of a second EV-charging station for the city to obtain grant
- Support the Upper South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed Plan
- Recommend light pollution and light trespass legislation
- Submit a monthly article to the DeKalb Daily Chronicle featuring environmental sustainability
- Prepare a Monarch Butterfly Festival to promote planting natural habitat
- Help implement sustainable guidelines for all city projects that use public funds
- Propose mitigation of potential fireworks damage by researching best practices
- Promote ComEd's free energy assessment
- Introduce an ordinance to ban single-use plastic shopping bags for all purchases from DeKalb

establishments

- Promote city-wide recycling programs which would require compliance of apartment complex owners
- Initiate a conservation program for the home and lawn to publicly acknowledge homeowners who establish effective conservation measures on their property via Goal 11.4 of the Sustainability Plan
- Co-sponsor at least three public presentations, including: 1) Backyard native habitat; 2) 5G Technology; and 3) Electric vehicles and sustainability

3. First CEC presentation and co-sponsorship

Chair Kron reported that the first CEC presentation of 2021 will be a virtual presentation on encouraging natural habitat for backyard planting, and she suggested 350 Kishwaukee and the League of Women Voters as potential co-sponsors. It was agreed that the presentation could be done in early to mid-April. Chair Kron said the monthly Daily Chronicle article that will appear before the presentation will relate well to the topic.

4. Completion of the Upper South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed Improvement Plan

Chair Kron requested a motion recommending the City Council adopt the Upper South Branch Kishwaukee River Watershed Improvement Plan.

MOTION

Mr. Newman motioned to approve the recommendation, seconded by Ms. Farrell.

VOTE

The motion was carried on a 4-0 vote. Aye: Kron, Honeywell, Newman, Farrell. Nay: None. It was declared that the recommendation was approved.

5. EV charging station letter of support

Chair Kron reported that City Community Services Director Joanne Rouse had requested a letter of support for a ComEd grant for a second downtown electrical vehicle charging station and requested approval of the letter of support.

MOTION

Mr. Honeywell motioned to approve the letter of support, seconded by Ms. Farrell.

VOTE

The motion was carried on a 4-0 vote. Aye: Newman, Farrell, Honeywell, Kron. Nay: None. It was declared that the letter of support was approved.

G. Old Business

1. Monarch City USA signs

Chair Kron reported that after discussion with City Manager Bill Nicklas, it was recommended that only two Monarch City USA signs be purchased since they are costly and targets of theft. One will be displayed, while the other will be a backup.

2. Leaf-burning ordinance letter

Chair Kron reported that the Commission's recommendation to ban the burning of yard waste will be considered by the City Council at their March 8 meeting.

3. Bee-keeping ordinance request

Chair Kron reported that the City's attorney is reviewing a bee-keeping ordinance.

4. Light intrusion

Chair Kron asked if commissioners would be interested in compiling information on light intrusion including best practices, whether the issue is better handled at the state or local level and how a plan could be adjusted to DeKalb's needs. Mr. Newman agreed to create a plan.

6. Daily Chronicle articles

No further discussion took place on the articles.

7. Public presentations

Chair Kron said she would make another attempt to have a professional from NIU help with a presentation on 5G technology.

7. Other updates on previously discussed items

Chair Kron requested permission to write a thank-you letter to City Executive Assistant Ruth Scott for her assistance to the Commission during the transition to a new city liaison.

MOTION

Ms. Farrell motioned to approve the thank-you letter, seconded by Mr. Honeywell.

VOTE

Motion carried on a 4-0 vote: Aye: Newman, Farrell, Honeywell, Kron. Nay: None. It was declared that the thank-you letter was approved.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

Mr. Honeywell said he would like to be notified when the bee-keeping ordinance goes before the City Council.

2. Next meeting: April 1, 4:00 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

Mr. Honeywell motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Newman.

VOTE

The motion was carried on a 4-0 vote. Aye: Honeywell, Newman, Kron, Farrell. Nay: None.
Chair Kron declared the meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by Citizens' Environmental Commission on 4/1/21.