

MINUTES

CITY OF DEKALB

Citizens' Environmental Commission

April 6, 2023

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a special meeting on April 6, 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 6:34 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, Clare Kron, Shaun Langley and Nick Newman. Not present were Commissioners Julie Jesmer and Kyle Moore, Ex-Officio Members James Carlin, Matt Emken, Sarah Fox and Mike Holland, and Council Liaison Barb Larson.

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. Public Comments**

No public comments were received.

**D. Approval of Minutes**

**1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2023**

MOTION

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

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**E. Commission Reports**

**1. DeKalb County Health Department**

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

**2. DeKalb Park District**

In Ex-Officio Member Emken's absence, Chair Honeywell read the report. Mr. Emken shared the Park District hopes to have its new Natural Areas Specialist on board by June. ComEd has approved incentives for LED lighting conversions at the athletic fields, pool and Sports and Recreation Center at no cost to the District. An Earth Day cleanup of Hopkins Park will be held April 22.

### **3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District**

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

### **4. Northern Illinois University**

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

### **5. City Staff Liaison**

Mr. Zak explained the Commission's meeting was rescheduled as a special meeting since the agenda was not received in time to meet the 48-hour posting requirement for the regular time of 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Zak shared Sven Hansen has resigned from the Commission, stating he no longer could devote the time needed for the work.

The Commission gave its input on a survey from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Morton Arboretum and the Chicago Trees Initiative asking communities how they would use grants for urban and community forestry. The Commission was interested in tree planting and hiring an arborist or training staff to properly care for newly planted trees. Commissioner Kron agreed to write a response explaining the need for such a grant.

The design for a mosaic mural to be created on City Hall was shared. Commissioners appreciated the inclusion of native plants and pollinators.

## **F. New Business**

### **1. Potential tour of LRS recycling plant**

Ms. Kron shared a tour of the facility would have to be postponed until the City awards its next refuse contract. She noted the facility is not open on Saturdays until spring or summer anyhow.

### **2. Connecting with local vendors for upcoming presentations**

Chair Honeywell said no research has been done yet on partnering with local businesses to help boost attendance for Commission presentations. Ms. Kron said NIU STEM Café has agreed to partner for a program on fusion in September or October. Commissioners asked if donations could be sought to support programs. Mr. Zak shared information recently received from the Finance Director. The City does not accept small donations because of the staff time that would be needed to track the donations and make sure they are used for the intended purpose. This would be better done through a nonprofit so long as the nonprofit took ownership of the project. A large donation, if offered for a project, may be possible through a written agreement; however, it is not the role of government to solicit donations. Grant funding is possible.

### **3. Earth Act to stop climate pollution**

Chair Honeywell shared he has been asked to be part of a group that will speak with an assistant to U.S. Rep. Lauren Underwood about support for a bill to eliminate carbon pollution by 2030.

#### **5. NIU Climate Justice teach-in**

The Commission agreed to move to item G-5. Chair Honeywell said a student group invited the Commission to a climate change event on April 18 to discuss 15-minute cities where residents can walk anywhere needed in 15 minutes.

#### **4. Sustainability Plan discussion and update**

Mr. Langley said he reviewed work that was already done on the update as well as other municipalities' plans. He asked to what extent the Sustainability Plan would be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. While it is referenced in the Comprehensive Plan, Mr. Zak noted the Sustainability Plan is a standalone document, and Mr. Newman added the Comprehensive Plan focuses on land use. Mr. Langley said he would like the updated plan to be more than words on paper. Chair Honeywell noted the Commission is advisory and the Plan identifies issues that they would like to see addressed if possible. He added there are items in the plan, such as the Monarch City USA designation and presentations, that the Commission can complete itself. Mr. Langley said the Plan should rank the impact of each item, the effort needed, context and justification. He also shared he has been contacted by a group advocating for public transit improvements that has already been in discussions with the City's Transit Manager Mike Neuenkirchen. The Commission agreed Mr. Langley should meet with this group to include their ideas in the Plan.

### **G. Old Business**

#### **1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle**

**a. May—community solar**

**b. June—E-Waste collection; July—Forever chemicals**

Mr. Langley will write the community solar article, while Chair Honeywell will contact Mr. Carlin about possibly writing on the e-waste collection.

#### **2. Upcoming monarch event**

No new information was provided here.

#### **3. Supplemental meeting for Sustainability Plan**

It was agreed the Plan update would be discussed next month.

#### **4. Future presentations—monarchs, fusion, home efficiency**

Presentations were discussed earlier in the meeting under item F-2.

#### **5. Updates on other issues**

No information was shared here.

## **H. Announcements**

### **1. New announcements**

Ms. Kron said Ron Cress had suggested other pollinator plants in addition to milkweed to attract monarchs at the possible pollinator gardens at local grade schools. Mr. Newman shared the ideal mix for attracting monarchs.

Mr. Newman said three groups have contacted him interested in creating pollinator installations similar to those created at the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District.

### **2. Next regular meeting: May 4 at 4:30 p.m.**

## **I. Adjournment**

MOTION

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

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on May 4, 2023.