

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
June 1, 2023

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular meeting on June 1, 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:32 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, Nick Newman, Tom Riley and Council Liaison Barb Larson. Ex-Officio Member James Carlin joined the meeting later. Not present were Commissioners Kyle Moore 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 Mr. Riley.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Public Comments

Resident Jane Schoal introduced herself. She is a DeKalb County Master Gardner interested in alternatives to turf lawns and the Commission's work. Chair Honeywell welcomed Schoal and encouraged her to apply for an appointment to the Commission when a position becomes available.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. Meeting Minutes of April 6, 2023

MOTION

Ms. Farrell motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Riley.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb Park District

With Ex-Officio Member Emken absent, Chair Honeywell read the report. There will be a Dame's Rocket pull on Saturday, the new Natural Area Specialist will start at the Park District on June 19 and the garden beds are expected to be planted by tomorrow.

2. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

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

3. Northern Illinois University

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

4. City Staff Liaison

Mr. Zak shared key findings from the DeKalb Metra Extension Feasibility Study. These include the finding that approximately 10,800 people travel daily between DeKalb County and communities along the UP-West Line, including the City of Chicago. A high-level ridership estimate for the extension is 259 daily trips on weekdays and 189 daily trips on weekends. Annual operating costs for a medium level of service are estimated between \$8.2 and \$12.8 million. Capital costs are estimated between \$257 and \$385 million, for which grants would be sought. Those costs include renovating the historic train depot between Sixth and Seventh Street to serve as the DeKalb station. Another source of funding could be the creation of a local Mass Transit District. The next step would be a Planning and Environmental Linkages study of economic and environmental impacts. Mr. Zak also reported the City Council has approved a new five-year contract with LRS for refuse, recycling and yard waste collection services.

5. DeKalb County Health Department

Ex-Officio Member Carlin joined the meeting. He reported the new drop off site for recyclable materials is now available, and there will be an electronics recycling event on June 24. In reference to a question raised last month, Mr. Carlin shared the Health Department accepts containers of sharps for \$10 per container.

F. New Business

1. Park District flower beds

The Commission decided which members will weed three flower beds in DeKalb Park District parks.

2. Sustainability Plan discussion and update

The Commission discussed options for structuring the updated Sustainability Plan and agreed to use the framework provided as part of the Greenest Region Compact from the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Ms. Kron said the public input received during the update process can be incorporated into the framework and climate justice can be added to the framework's existing ten goals.

Ms. Farrell suggested including No Mow May in the plan. She said people would be interested in alternatives to traditional lawns. Mr. Newman said people need to know what to plant and have a plan for maintenance. He said simply not mowing the lawn leads to invasives.

Commissioners were assigned sections of the framework to complete by next month's meeting. The frameworks will then be used to create an updated plan document with photos.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle July—herbicides; August—Forever chemicals

Ms. Kron will write the July article on herbicides. It was suggested forever chemicals could be the subject for two articles.

2. Future presentations—monarchs, fusion, home efficiency

Ms. Kron said she talked with the owner of Gordons Hardware, who mentioned a lot of the tips for energy efficiency are now built into the products, but education is still needed for home insulation. Gordons could be used as a resource on the subject, and Chair Honeywell said he will contact 350Kishwaukee about partnering for a program this fall.

3. Metra to DeKalb

Nothing further was presented here.

4. Updates on other issues

Ms. Kron said she would like to include a land acknowledgement in the updated Sustainability Plan. After a brief discussion, the Commission declined the suggestion.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

No information was shared here.

2. Next regular meeting: July 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 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on June 1, 2023.