

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
July 7, 2022

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on July 7, 2022, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:05 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, Kyle Moore, and Council Liaison Barb Larson. Not present were Commissioner Nick Newman and Ex-Officio Members Dakota Burke, Matt Emken, Sarah Fox and Mike Holland.

Also present was Management Analyst Scott Zak.

B. Approval of Agenda

MOTION

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

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of June 2, 2022

MOTION

Ms. Jesmer motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Moore.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

D. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

With Ex-Officio Member Burke absent, Chair Honeywell read the report. Just 71 cars came through the Health Department's hazardous waste collection on June 4; however, 386 cars came through for a collection on June 25 when 243 aerosol items were collected. Another collection is planned for Sept. 24.

2. DeKalb Park District

With Ex-Officio Member Emken absent, Chair Honeywell read the report. Mowing is being done to help control invasive species in the Park District's native plant areas. A new rain garden has been installed at the Ellwood House and is working as designed.

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 said he had information to share later in the agenda.

Ms. Jesmer introduced Keegan Reynolds, owner of Clean City Waste and Recycling. Mr. Reynolds was interested in joining the Commission but could not since he is not a resident; however, he may be able to help in other ways.

E. New Business

1. Monarch event/cancellation and moving forward

Chair Honeywell shared the DeKalb Park District's Movie in the Park for June, at which the Commission was planning to set up its monarch butterfly table, was cancelled. The next movie is scheduled for July 8, and Ms. Kron said another movie may be added to the schedule.

2. DeKalb Comprehensive plan

Ms. Kron said she had read through the draft of the City's Comprehensive Plan update and found it disturbing the document did not mention environmental sustainability. She continued that she found it disturbing the Commission was not asked to give its input on the plan, noting the Commission could have done research. Ms. Kron cited several statistics on the threat of climate change and said DeKalb needs to consider its impact on the future. She plans to submit a written statement at the second open house on the Comprehensive Plan update on June 14.

Mr. Zak objected to the idea that the Commission is not being consulted on sustainability issues, noting the Commission is in the process of updating the City's Sustainability Plan.

Ms. Kron said she would like to see a bi-annual meeting of the City's commissions. Chair Honeywell said he will contact the Commission Chairs to see if there are areas for collaboration.

3. CEC membership

Chair Honeywell stressed the importance of finding additional Commissioners in case Mr. Newman can no longer continue to serve. He said at least one recommendation is needed but two or three would be better

F. Public Participation

Mr. Reynolds asked if the Commission receives funding from the City for legal advice to submit grants. While the Commission does not have a budget, Ms. Kron explained other ways the Commission can accomplish their mission, such as the monarch butterfly education tables at the Movies in the Park. Mr. Zak added the Commission may be able to get inhouse legal support from the City Attorney while pursuing grants such as those available for projects in the DeKalb County Watersheds Plan. He said the next step is to ask the City Manager if the Commission can explore whether it would be feasible for the Commission to apply for the watershed grants. It needs to be determined if the Commission has the technical expertise for the grant writing. Mr. Zak will ask the City Manager, and Chair Honeywell directed the Commission to begin researching the grants and watershed projects.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle

It was determined Ms. Farrell will write the August article on bees, the September article will be an educational piece on the watershed plan and October's topic will be discussed next month. Ms. Kron suggested sustainable gardening could be a good topic for February or March.

2. Weeding at parks

Chair Honeywell will resend the weeding schedule to Mr. Moore.

3. Watershed/grants

Continuing the discussion that began under public participation, it was suggested that students in Professors Gallaher and Schuller's classes may be interested in seeking the grants. Chair Honeywell said he would contact the School District to make sure they are aware of the watershed plan.

4. Tree planting

Addressing a question from last month, Mr. Zak shared that Assistant Public Works Director Andy Raih would like exploring the implementation of a tree planting program included as a goal in the Sustainability Plan update. It would be a 50/50 cost share where the City and residents equally share the cost of planting a tree in the parkway. The program would follow the City's tree planting guidelines.

5. Community calendars

Chair Honeywell shared he has obtained an account and password for the Daily Chronicle's Community Calendar so Commission events can be promoted there.

6. Making changes to the Sustainability Plan

Chair Honeywell said the Commission needs to start going through and revising the Sustainability Plan, noting this can be done during a regular or special meeting. Ms. Kron asked

how Professor Gallaher's students would be used. Chair Honeywell suggested the climate change and climate justice sections could be assigned to the students. Mr. Zak will check on the availability of a meeting room for a special meeting on Aug. 18.

7. Updates on other issues

Ms. Kron shared she will attend the 350Kishwaukee presentation on community solar and distribute information to the rest of the Commission.

Ms. Jesmer shared 3M is interested in adopting a highway for trash pick-up in DeKalb and asked if the City promotes the program. Mr. Zak said Public Works is contacting those who adopted in the past to see if they're still interested in participating and suggested the Commission may be able to help with promotion. Mr. Zak will check if that will be possible.

Ms. Farrell has researched the possibility of DeKalb becoming a bee city. She said it is more intensive than first thought. It would require the creation of a committee supported by the CEC to work on bee initiatives, and there is a \$350 cost. The Commission agreed to instead focus on the issue in the Sustainability Plan.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

No announcements were shared.

2. Next meeting: August 4, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

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

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on August 4, 2022.