

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
August 4, 2022

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on August 4, 2022, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:09 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, Clare Kron, Kyle Moore, Nick Newman and Council Liaison Barb Larson. Not present were Commissioners Rachel Farrell and Julie Jesmer 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 Mr. Newman.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of July 7, 2022

MOTION

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

A minor correction was made to page 3 of the draft minutes.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

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

2. DeKalb Park District

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

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 shared information from City Manager Bill Nicklas regarding some possible Commission initiatives. Mr. Nicklas said while it is good to know there is public support for commuter rail, it would be appropriate for the Mayor and City Manager to pursue an extension of this service to DeKalb since they share the fiduciary duties to conduct sensitive and high-level economic development talks. Mr. Nicklas recommended against holding joint meetings of the City's commissions since each is given a specific role in the Municipal Code. Alderwoman Larson noted the Council can bring together ideas from the different commissions. Mr. Nicklas supports promoting Adopt-A-Highway on social media and exploring watershed grants. While the Commission does not yet have permission to apply for a grant or commit City resources, it can explore whether it would be an appropriate project for the Commission to carry out.

E. New Business

1. Monarch event/cancellation and moving forward

Chair Honeywell shared both the June and July Movie in the Park events, where the Commission planned to set up a monarch education table, were rained out. There is still a movie scheduled for August, and Alderwoman Larson noted any extra educational materials can be used next year.

2. Watershed plan and grants

Members have researched projects in the DeKalb County Watersheds Plan for the Commission to possibly pursue. Chair Honeywell said maintenance of the three detention ponds at DeKalb High School are listed as critically important in the plan. He is meeting with the high school principal next week and notes there is a high school environmental club which may be interested in helping. He also noted the combined maintenance cost for the ponds is only \$17,000 a year and said the project appears to be an across-the-board win. Dean Johnson at the DeKalb County Water and Soil Conservation District will be contacted about an appropriate grant for the project. Alderwoman Larson noted there might also be educational grants available.

3. CEC membership, possible leads

The Commission welcomed Sven Oscar, whose appointment to the CEC goes before the City Council on Monday. Mr. Oscar was born in DeKalb, was a florist for 32 years, raised his family here and previously served on the DeKalb County Board. He said he hears there are great things happening in DeKalb and he wants to be a part of it. Following Mr. Oscar's appointment, the Commission will have one remaining vacancy.

Responding to a question, Alderwoman Larson shared she had talked with the City Attorney and presentations by the Commission will need to be posted as special meetings.

F. Public Participation

No public comments were received.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle

a. September—Watershed

b. Future possible articles—recyclables, gardening

Chair Honeywell agreed to write the September article on the watersheds plan. Mr. Newman will prepare an article on proper grease disposal for October. Chair Honeywell noted home insulation would be a good winter topic since it can save people money.

2. Weeding at parks

Ms. Kron said she was curious what chemicals the DeKalb Park District may be using in their flower beds and if they would be willing to switch to planting perennials, pointing out annuals are not sustainable and their containers are difficult to recycle. Alderwoman Larson said the Park District could start with one bed of perennials and then split those to cover more beds. Chair Honeywell noted perennials might cover the park name signs that the flower beds surround. Mr. Oscar said annuals are more decorative but perhaps a half and half mix would work. Alderwoman Larson noted Geneva uses both annuals and perennials. The topic will be made a future agenda item to discuss with Mr. Emken.

3. Follow up on DeKalb Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Kron shared she submitted her suggestions for environmental sustainability at the second open house on the Comprehensive Plan update. Those will be shared with the full Commission by e-mail.

4. Sustainability plan meeting August 18

The Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department has been reserved for the special meeting at 4 p.m. Aug. 18.

5. Time change for meetings next year

Ms. Kron recalled the NIU students who collected public input for the Sustainability Plan suggested the Commission move back its meeting time to increase public access. Ms. Kron added a meeting time outside of normal working hours might help attract new Commission members. It was noted the City Manager did not want the starting time past six in consideration of the Staff Liaison's time. It was agreed that adding a second public comment section at the end of the meeting would provide an opportunity for those who could not make the start of the meeting.

MOTION

Chair Honeywell motioned to move the Commission's regular meeting time to 4:30 p.m. beginning with the January 2023 meeting and to have opportunities for public comment at the beginning and end of the meetings.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

6. Updates on other issues

Ms. Kron reminded the Commission they have a joint presentation with STEM Café coming up in September. She will bring back more information.

Ms. Kron attended the community solar presentation by 350 Kishwaukee and shared some key points. She said the state has made a commitment to renewable energy and is making it easy for residents to do the same.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

Ms. Kron said she would be sharing information with Mayor Cohen Barnes on joining the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

2. Next regular meeting: September 1, at 4:00 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

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

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on September 1, 2022.