

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
September 1, 2022

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on September 1, 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, Nick Newman, Ex-officio Member Mat Emken and Council Liaison Barb Larson. Not present was Commissioner Sven Oscar and Ex-Officio Members Sarah Fox and Mike Holland.

Also present was Management Analyst Scott Zak.

B. Approval of Agenda

MOTION

Mr. Newman motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Kron.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of August 4, 2022

MOTION

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

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

It was shared that Dakota Burke no longer works at the DeKalb County Public Health Department, and therefore will no longer serve as an Ex-Officio Member. With no Ex-Officio Member appointed, no report was given.

2. DeKalb Park District

Regarding the Commission's discussion last month on possibly planting more perennials in the Park District flower beds, Mr. Emken reported this will be happening as the Park District replaces the existing stone signs at each park. As the new signs are installed, the existing flower beds around the signs will be removed and the new beds will be more conducive to perennials; although, some annuals will still be planted. Commissioner members note more perennials will mean less waste, fertilizer and soil erosion.

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

In Ex-Officio Member Holland's absence, Mr. Newman invited the Commission to an open house the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District is holding on Sept. 9.

4. Northern Illinois University

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

5. City Staff Liaison

Mr. Zak said he will be unable to attend the Commission's October meeting because of the NIU Homecoming event that will be happening downtown at the same time. Ms. Kron volunteered to take and prepare the minutes.

Following the cancellation of a special meeting to work on the Sustainability Plan last month, Mr. Zak recommended that going forward, the Sustainability Plan update be done during regular meetings.

F. New Business

1. Upcoming STEM event

Ms. Kron said the STEM Café presentation, for which the Commission is a partner, on Sept. 21 will explain how DeKalb will be affected by climate change. She said it needs to be impressed on the public that they will be impacted by climate change and the presentation, which will be done online, will bring that point home. Ms. Kron will send a news release to the paper, and Chair Honeywell will submit the presentation to community calendars.

2. Adopt-a-highway information

Ms. Jesmer shared she has been in contact with 3M about joining the City's Adopt-A-Street program. She said the process to join has been made simpler. The street adoption is now approved by the City Manager instead of having to go before the City Council. Ms. Jesmer said she could write an article promoting the program.

G. Old Business

1. Next articles for Daily Chronicle

- a. October—grease disposal**
- b. Future possible articles—recyclables, insulation**

The Commission agreed to change the October article to the Adopt-A-Street program. Mr. Newman noted there is a lot of grease produced around the holidays, so the grease disposal article will be done in November. Ms. Kron recently spoke with an LRS representative and could do an update on recycling. Chair Honeywell said an article can be done on recycling holiday items.

2. Weeding at parks

While some Commissioners are seeing a lot of weeds in their adopted Park District beds, Ms. Kron said she is concerned pesticide might be being used since she has seen no weeds. Mr. Emken said the flower beds are not sprayed, noting it would kill the flowers.

3. Sustainability plan changes—climate change/climate justice

Chair Honeywell said he will distribute the results of the Sustainability Plan survey done by NIU students to the rest of the Commission. He noted a vast majority of respondents were 18 to 23 years old. The biggest concern was the lack of recycling at apartment buildings while there was strong support for native plants. Ms. Kron suggested Courtney Gallaghers' students could work on the climate change and justice sections and will see if they are still available. Chair Honeywell will clear the October agenda for work on the plan. Mr. Newman will research Sustainability Plans completed by other cities and distribute them to the Commission.

4. Possible additional September meeting for sustainability plan

Nothing further was shared here.

5. Updates on other issues

Ms. Kron noted light pollution had been researched by the Commission in the past and asked if anything more could be done. Alderwoman Larson said the issue could be suggested to the City Council, but she could not promise Council action. She said the first step to resolving a lighting issue should be reaching out to your neighbor.

The monarch education booth at the Movie in the Park events was assessed. Chair Honeywell noted the June and July movies were rained out and there were so few people at the August movie that the booth was not setup. Ms. Kron suggested the Commission do its own monarch event next year. Alderwoman Larson said teachers may be willing to distribute the monarch materials, and Ms. Jesmer said the teachers could also be used for other initiatives.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

Ms. Kron shared information from her discussion with the LRS representative, who would be happy to give a presentation. LRS is recycling all plastics. A Chinese company is coming to the Midwest to recycle plastics, and LRS is building a new facility with artificial intelligence that will be able to identify plastics so they can be removed and recycled.

Ms. Kron noted the City's updated Comprehensive Plan has been approved by the City Council. The document states the Comprehensive Plan recognizes other City plans, including the Sustainability Plan; although, Ms. Kron said she was disappointed the plan did not include more on sustainability.

Mr. Newman shared the reason he missed several meetings recently was because of a family health issue. Since it may be several years before the issue stabilizes, Mr. Newman said he cannot in good conscience continue as Vice Chair. He said he cannot commit to the workload that will come with becoming Chair after two years. Chair Honeywell said a new Vice Chair will be appointed at the next meeting.

2. Next regular meeting: Oct. 6, at 4:00 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

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

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on October 6, 2022.