

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
Citizens' Environmental Commission
October 5, 2023

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular meeting on October 5, 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:31 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 and Clare Kron, Ex-Officio Member James Carlin and Council Liaison Barb Larson. Not present were Commissioner Shaun Langley and Ex-Officio Members 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. Public Comments

No public comments were received.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. Meeting Minutes of September 7, 2023

MOTION

Ms. Jesmer motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Honeywell.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

E. Commission Reports

1. DeKalb County Health Department

Ex-Officio Member Carlin reported high turnout at recent collection events at DeKalb Airport. 375 people participated in an e-waste collection, 385 in a household hazardous waste collection and 509 in a second e-waste collection. Mr. Carlin said the Health Department is now accepting sharps and sharps containers for disposal and distributing the containers for free. Also, the composting of carved pumpkins is being encouraged.

2. DeKalb Park District

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

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District

Ms. Kron said Mr. Holland plans to attend meetings regularly again now that Mr. Newman, who also works at the District, is no longer a Commission member.

4. Northern Illinois University

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

5. City Staff Liaison

Mr. Zak said he has spoken to the Building and Code Department about the concerns Ms. Farrell raised last month regarding birds dying and dogs becoming sick possibly from weed killer. He said while the City does not issue citations regarding weed killers, the issue could possibly be pursued through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Commissioners noted it would be difficult to track a dead bird back to a particular lawn.

F. New Business

1. Need for new members

Chair Honeywell shared he had been contacted by an NIU student who worked on projects for the Commission in the past. Mr. Honeywell said he would like to see students become involved and noted they could become Commission members if they are living on campus. Ms. Kron said she has contacted three people who are interested in joining.

2. Follow-up on recycling facility article

Ms. Kron said she will write an article on the tour she and Mr. Carlin took of the LRS recycling facility and submit it along with photos to the Daily Chronicle for consideration.

3. PRIDE awards

Ms. Kron said she will be nominating Greg Romaneck for a PRIDE Award to recognize his efforts to clean the Kishwaukee River. Mr. Zak will post an online form to accept nominations on the City's website and distribute a news release.

G. Old Business

1. Presentation with STEM Café

Ms. Kron said STEM Café's presentation on fusion energy will be at Fatty's on Nov. 15. She said the Commission will be credited in a news release for contributing the topic for the presentation but cannot be listed as a cosponsor since it is not a financial contributor.

2. Next articles for Daily Chronicle

November—recycling/Trash Squirrels recap

December—Home efficiency

The Commission discussed several ideas for the January article including proper winter sustainability practices such as proper salting, places to recycle items such as Styrofoam and light bulbs and zero waste. For March, an article on creating a sustainable garden was suggested.

3. Updates on other issues

Ms. Farrell said after the tree she ordered for fall planting through the 50/50 program was delivered, it was left unplanted, and she was concerned it would die. When it was planted, she felt it was done poorly, which was corrected by Public Works. She said she has contacted the contractor and is awaiting a return call from the owner. Mr. Zak said since Ms. Farrell has been in contact with Assistant Public Works Director Andy Raih, the right person at the City has been informed.

Ms. Kron asked Chair Honeywell if he had heard back from Steve Faivre regarding his efforts to pursue a plastic bag ban on the state level. Chair Honeywell said he will contact him again.

H. Announcements

1. New announcements

Ms. Kron said NIU's Sustainability Coordinator, Courtney Gallaher, recently gave a presentation which countered climate change anxiety by highlighting the positive strides that are being made. The Commission agreed this information should be shared at a future meeting.

2. Next regular meeting: October 5 at 4:30 p.m.

I. Adjournment

MOTION

Ms. Kron motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chair Honeywell.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on November 2, 2023.