

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

May 15th, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Sharon Dever; Vice Chair, David Benac, Rachel Jondle, Thomas DeWhirst, Tressa Greshak, Damaris Potter and David DeBack

ABSENT: Stephen Romenelli, Justin Gish, Robb Liekis, Bobby Glasser and Damaris Potter

STAFF: Carrie Soule (recording secretary)

OTHERS: Jean Talanda, *Wellhead Protection Program Committee*, Paul Hickman, *Founder and CEO of Urban Ashes*

ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

ASSURANCE OF LIVE STREAMING (Facebook/You Tube)

Recording/Streaming of the meeting was confirmed, with community members joining via a link posted on the City's Facebook page.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (05/15/2024)

Chair Dever asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the May 15th, 2024 meeting.

Committee Member made a motion to approve the Agenda and was supported. With a voice vote the motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for 04/17/2024

Chair Dever asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the April 17th, 2024 meeting minutes. There were no changes to the meeting minutes.

Committee Member made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes and was supported. With a voice vote the motion was approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Individual/Announcements: Tressa - Community-based resource is the Grant that was discussed in the last meeting.

News/Educational Items:

COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Dever asked if there were any comments on the phones. There were no callers.

Chair Dever opened discussion for comments by others.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS (AS NEEDED)

ONGOING BUSINESS

Hydrogen Hub (Natural Gas)

Kalamazoo River – Litter

Waste Update

Community Sustainability Plan – Justin Gish is absent, update in July

Events: Children’s Nature Playscape held a volunteer workday over at their site on May 17th, planting different types of trees and vegetables and just cleaning the site.

The City is asking people to download the “Love to Ride” application to track where people are biking to determine where it makes sense for infrastructure.

NEW BUSINESS

Paul Hickman, **Founder and CEO of Urban Ashes** – A group got together 10 2003-2005 to put together a network of mills for the trees that were damaged in Canton then. Found that the Emerald dashboard doesn't damage the wood and if processed correctly through a USDA-approved Kiln you can utilize the wood and transport it anywhere across state lines, there are several urban wood marketplaces around Southeast Michigan. In 2009 there was a manufacturer of picture frames and furniture all out of urban salvage wood that grew to sell to about 250 locations in 43 States over the next 10 years then decided to help citizens who had been incarcerated or youth who had contact with the justice system. In 2019 we decided to focus on how we could make a bigger impact, 46 million metric tons are wasted every year in America because we didn't have the infrastructure or even the knowledge of the volume. They now are moving towards a business framework for municipalities and local businesses that emphasize on modeling a circular economy around Urban wood. Urban Wood definition is any wood that came from any tree that came down for any reason other than its wood value, storm damage, blight stricken, Emerald dashboard and even Orchard trees that age out that are no longer producing that are taken out to replant new trees. For more information: Here's the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmrVZRvt-fl> or visit the website at www.urbanashes.com

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

- **Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board**– Mr. Glasser – Absent
- **Air and Water Quality** – Mr. Glasser - Absent
- **Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection** – Ms. Greshak – no updates
- **City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission** – Ms. Jondle – no updates, timeline for draft October 2026
- **Tree Committee** – Mr. DeWhirst – hoping to get members to attend a meeting and talk more about Urban Ashes.
- **Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council** – Ms. Dever – no updates
- **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board** – Mr. Liekis – no updates
- **Kalamazoo River Watershed Council** – Mr. Benac – no updates
- **Wellhead Protection Program Committee – Quarterly** - Jean Talanda – no updates
- **Odor Task Force – Quarterly** – Mr. Benac – no updates
- **Community Sustainability Plan** (roughly quarterly) – Mr. Gish (July)

CHECK PHONE LINES AND STREAMING FOR COMMENTS:

No comments.

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.