

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 18TH, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Sharon Dever; David Benac, Vice-Chair, Tressa Greshak, David DeBack, Rachel Jondle, Stephen Romenelli, Bobby Glasser, Damaris Potter and Justin Sanders

ABSENT: Robb Lickis and Thomas Dewhirst

STAFF: Carrie Soule (recording secretary)

OTHERS: Justin Gish

ROLL CALL:

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

ASSURANCE OF LIVE STREAMING (Facebook/YouTube)

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (12/18/2024)

Chair Dever asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of applicant interviews for the December 18th, 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 11/20/2024

Chair Dever asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the November 20th, 2024 meeting minutes. Chair Dever asked for the change to show that her position was a “term-ended position”.

A Committee Member made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes with changes, which was supported by the majority. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chair Sharon Dever is termed out and we are looking for a new Chair, with interest from Vice-Chair David Benac. Justin Sanders might be interested in Vice-Chair for the short-term depending on job opportunities after graduation in April. The board does a write-in vote that will be publicized in the January meeting.

COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

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

Emails – David Benac - Concerning the 2 pump stations and the budgets, asked Justin to pass on to City personnel better equipped to answer the questions.

Justin Gish – Sustainability:

Welcome, new member of the Healthy Climate Core in the Sustainability department, Destiny! Wrapping up Greenhouse gas reporting and will have in January.

ONGOING BUSINESS

1. Bird Friendly building design discussion/Gail

Gail explains that the proposal from last meeting (November) is focused mainly on new design and major renovations. Did research on the cost and safe glass is up 4% for residential and Commercial for KRESA is up 0.4%. Possibly work with contractors on new development for plats on residential homes. Tressa added that we change the 25% under vi. Major Renovations and Additions Involving Glass to 20% then 5% later. Want to make sure that 25% is upheld. This is moving towards becoming an ordinance for State Municipality buildings. More manufacturers will have this more readily available the more it is being used. **Chair Dever made a motion to approve the direct staff to investigate the feasibility of the bird-friendly building design ordinance and seconded by David Benac.** Justin Gish thinks we should send to City Commission as an ECC Committee, which has already been shared with Building Official and Planning department. **Chair Dever motioned to send to City Commission with the 25% change within 5-years as an amendment with David Benac as a second with all in favor.**

2. Status of member who missed more than three meetings in 2024

After 3 absences it was discussed that they either stay, be removed or made into a non-voting member on a case by case basis which we only have one instance of that to vote on right now. Bobby Glasser – missed because of work schedule in Environmental field and his term ends 01/01/27.

Stephen Romenelli motioned to make Bobby an Associate Member with Damaris Potter seconded with all in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. City of Kalamazoo Urban Deer Report/Justin Gish

Justin overseas a report that is generated to show the handling of the deer population with calls that come in to the City. Residents call 311 for deer looking sick or eating their landscaping to deceased deer on the side of the road or in public or private property. In turn this involved multiple departments such as 311, Public Services, contractors to pick up deceased deer, CPED. A budget request will be made in 2025 to be funded in 2026 to better understand how many deer and how to handle overpopulation of deer. 63 total calls to 311 about deer, 35 are dead deer in the right of way and more calls for dead deer on private property, 17 concerned about living deer, one sick deer and one eating landscaping and other that was general questions. For collisions with deer please see heat map..

2. Presentation from Don Poppe, Deer, Elk and Moose Management Specialist from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Questions: David DeBack: How negatively can deer impact natural native plant species from browsing and eating plants?

They can have a high impact in rural and urban type settings, where we have an abundance of deer or a problem with invasive plant species and can be worse in urban areas. They do not like to eat buckthorn, honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and some autumn olive, to name a few and you add in invasive species and deer the native plant have a very difficult time existing. They take from other animals and they in turn will go where they can find food.

David Benac: Deer getting hit by cars is a main concern and the only thing that sticks out is exclusion, cutting back resources is going to have more of an impact then trying to knock down the population with deer killing.

Tressa Greshak: If we put up fence to keep out the deer we are also keeping out other animals. Crossing 131 or I94 is a hot spot for deer vs car collisions.

David DeBack: Is there a long term comprehensive programs that are taking everything into account?

Will need to check with Ann Arbor and the steps that they have taken.

Damaris Potter: Does the DNR have any grants related to education or outreach or money for residents to build fences or anything preventative reduction measures, where can we find that information?

DNR does not have a lot of money for that but do have a new position that's a Human Wildlife Conflict position. Some money was given to the city for one of the Wellhead properties owned by the City for exclusion, there is not a lot of money in that budget but will pass on the contact information.

Justin Gish: You can go to the Urban deer page or City of Kalamazoo to find the ordinances for fences.

3. Applicant Interview – 2 openings, one more application interviewing in January. John – recently retired and would like to get involved. Lives in Arcadia neighborhood for 11 years. Education is vital and he is a member of the council that works with WMU and Asylum Lake. Application attached Rita – Lives on the North side and is actively concerned about the pollution in the air from the factories. Works for the Institute of Public Scholarship and is on the air quality team as a data analyst as well as a Community Outreach Specialist. Will move forward as a co-lead next year.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board— Mr. Glasser – No Update

Air and Water Quality – Mr. Glasser – Water Quality; PFOS in the Well Field note the EPA has established thresholds for the group of PFAS, PFOA, PFOS chemicals, specifically the PFOS in both drinking water and waste water is 12 parts per trillion and it's a very small portion and it's easily exceeded. When found in groundwater it doesn't mean it's making it through our drinking water supply. They are often sampled and tested.

Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection – Ms. Greshak – No Update

City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission – Ms. Jondle – No update, meeting 12/18/24

Tree Committee – Mr. DeWhirst – No Update

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council – Ms. Dever – No update

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – Looking for new Liaison to update the committee. Next meeting is Tuesday, January 7th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.

Kalamazoo River Watershed Council – Mr. Benac – Check out the Social Media and Task Force, 2-RSO's (Student Organizations) from WMU assisting with garbage pick-up.

Wellhead Protection Program Committee – Quarterly - Jean Talanda

Odor Task Force – Quarterly – Mr. Benac – No Update

Waste – November there were almost 160 tons of recyclables that were collected, 9,400 plus cubic yards of leaves.

Events: Next foam and electronic event, not shred able items is 12/28/24 and another one on 1/28/25 that will take foam, electronics and shred able materials.

Final good-bye to Chair Sharon Dever and wish her well!

CHECK PHONE LINES: No phone calls

COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.