

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## February 19, 2025 - MEETING MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Benac, Vice-Chair, Tressa Greshak, David DeBack, Rachel Jondle, Stephen Romanelli, Damaris Potter, Thomas Dewhirst, John Eric Kreuzer, Reeta Chandler, Mike Thomson and Justin Sanders

**ABSENT:** Mike Thomson and Rachel Jondle

**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 (02/19/2025)**

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 01/15/2025**

David Benac, Chair asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 meeting minutes. Tressa Greschak, Vice-Chair motioned to approve with 2<sup>nd</sup> by Thomas Dewhirst, all approved.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

### **COMMENTS BY OTHERS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS/COMMUNICATIONS:**

David Benac asked if there were any comments on the phones. There were no callers.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – Need a brief description of each subcommittee for new members to decide which one they might be interested in.**

*Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board* – Mr. Kreuzer – No update

*Air and Water Quality* – Ms. Chandler – No update

*Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection* – Ms. Greshak and Mr. DeBack – No update

*City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission* – Ms. Jondle – No update

*Tree Committee* – Mr. DeWhirst and Ms. Greshak (Alternate) – No update, need more members

*Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council* – Mr. DeBack – Establishing priorities for the coming year regarding Ferns and invasive eradication and replacement with native trees. Working on a paper that will talk about chloride recapture from the salt trucks and their impact on getting into the stormwater and wastewater focused on Asylum Lake. The council supplied the State of Michigan with approximately \$550,000 and the Kalamazoo Foundation provided another \$250,000 for sediment control and chloride remediation that is a Research Grant through the University.

*Parks & Recreation Advisory Board* – Open – No update

*Kalamazoo River Watershed Council* – Mr. Benac – Recapping projects and partnered with Kidnet and El Concilio to get people out on the river with the kids and will do again next year.

*Odor Task Force* – Mr. Benac – Not Met

*Waste Working Group* – Mr. Romanelli and Mr. Sanders – EPS had their foam recycling event at Mayor's Riverfront Park in February, also were shredding documents, collected oral care, and cardboard, and Shupan was there collecting Electronics. Filled an 8-yard dumpster with cardboard, electronics was 3896 lbs recycled, EPS foam was 12,260 lbs (saved a couple dozen egg cartons for farmers). Go to Recycle Coach App and it will help you identify what is on the list to be recycled. The Oral care list consists of toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, the toothbrush heads, and floss holders.

*Native Species & Urban Landscape* – Ms. Potter – Met with Destiny the Sustainability Liaison to help with a mission for this sub-committee and to reorganize the Title of No Mow May so now it's the Buzz in the Zoo.

Looking into City Ordinances for the Native Species like the size, height that you can plant in your yard.

*Wellhead Protection Program Committee* – Quarterly - Jean Talanda – No update

**Justin Gish – Sustainability:**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1. Discuss subcommittee goals and mission.**  
Send 2 sentences explaining what the board is about for the new members to David Benac
- 2. Green Burial discussion.**  
Looking for someone to do a presentation
- 3. Update on funding for groundhog fencing through Kalamazoo Roots.**  
Money is spent, will ask the Wildlife Protection Committee
- 4. Update on the recommendation to adopt a bird-friendly ordinance in Kalamazoo**  
City Commission appreciated but have not approved, will work with Developers for Education

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Introduction of Mike Stout, president and founder of Michigan Waterways Stewards.**  
For More information: <https://www.miwaterwaysstewards.org/kalamazoo-parks-beautification.html>

## **EVENTS**

March 18, 2025 – Food Innovation Center is having its honorable Harvest Lecture series with the Theme: Clean Water

April 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Riverfront and Forest Clean-up at Mayor's River Front Park and Verburg Park, to sign up please go to this website! <https://www.miwaterwaysstewards.org/kalamazoo-parks-beautification.html>

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Earth Day/Arbor Day events more information at [Kalamazooearthday.com](http://Kalamazooearthday.com)

April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – KIA will have a kickoff event for Buzz in the Zoo with a design contest with the students for our signs for the season, each category for Elementary, Middle, High and College Students.

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Next Recycling drop off at Mayor's Riverfront Park

**CHECK PHONE LINES:** No phone calls

## **COMMENTS:**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

