

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 5:02 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Jeanne Hess
Don Cooney
Qianna Decker
Stephanie Hoffman
Chris Praedel
Alonzo Wilson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

Also present were Chief Operating Officer (COO) Laura Lam, City Attorney Aaron Leal, and Deputy City Clerk Shelby Moss.

Communications

COO Lam introduced the City's new Human Resources Director James Henderson.

Public Comments

When an opportunity was given for general public comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Tobi Hanna-Davies, City resident and member of Hope for Creation, thanked the City for creating a Styrofoam recycling program for community members. Ms. Davies thanked Solid Waste Coordinator Chris Broadbent and Sustainability Planner Justin Gish for their efforts to expand the City's recycling events to include paper shredding and electronics.

2025-01-01

Sustainability
Presentation: 2023-24
Year in Review

Sustainability Planner Justin Gish and Solid Waste Coordinator Chris Broadbent delivered a presentation entitled *2023-24 Year in Review*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to questions from Commissioners, the presenters provided the following information:

- the City did not provide weekly recycling pick up because the City only had one truck doing about 90% of the bi-weekly pick up.
- unfortunately, the reusable takeout container program did not work due to the logistics of the program.
- the City was working to install bike racks at Kik Pool and Bronson Park.
- education was important to help everyone understand greenhouse gas emissions.
- 380 people signed up for the "No Mow May" program in 2024, which provided 33 acres of space preserved for pollinators. The program would return in 2025 in some capacity, but with more of a focus around native plants. Community Planning and Economic Development Intern Destiny Stetina would be working on the program.
- the City purchased 48 million kilowatt hours of green energy from Consumers Energy.

- the City was exploring the possibility of putting solar panels on vacant pieces of property, but it was a complicated process due to the needs of solar developers and the various sizes of the lots available in the City.
- the City received a grant from The Recycle Partnership and the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy to send an educational postcard to residents in order to reduce contamination rates in the recycling program.
- the number one contaminant in the recycling program was bagged recycling items. A new program is being developed to address contamination issues. A camera will be installed on the recycling truck, and this would allow the City to address households who had recycling contamination with a direct post card reminder about proper recycling procedures.
- envelopes with the plastic windows can be recycled.
- K-cups can be recycled if the top film and coffee grounds are removed from the plastic cup. The City is providing boxes to City offices for K-cup recycling through a company who will complete the recycling process on behalf of the consumer.
- all materials collected during leaf and brush pick up are composted in the City. The City is in the process of seeking quotes to provide pilot food scrap composting sites in the neighborhoods.
- the City has purchased two electric vehicles, and they are housed at the Public Services Department on Harrison Street. The City is working to install charging stations for City owned electric vehicles.
- a plan has been started to increase the number of electric charging stations available to the public.
- with the updates to the fencing ordinance, Phase 1 of the Urban Deer Plan has been completed; Phase 2 has started with a study the deer population and where they are living.
- in order to eliminate the use of plastic bags state law would have to change, but consumers can change their behaviors and use reusable cloth bags.
- staff will stay engaged with Michigan ReCommunities and national organizations that are committed to sustainability. Staff will continue to work with Kalamazoo County Climate Sustainability Coordinator Taylor Van Winkle.
- the City will continue to support community trash clean up programs.

Commissioner Praedel requested the City investigate the feasibility of weekly recycling pick up and/or providing an extra recycling pick up after the holidays.

Vice Mayor Hess expressed support for partnerships with the City's educational institutions to provide expertise for the City's sustainability programs.

2025-01-01

Sustainability

Presentation: 2023-2024

Year in Review (cont'd)

2025-01-01

Sustainability

Presentation: 2023-2024

Year in Review (cont'd)

Mayor Anderson requested the Commission be kept informed of any tax incentives or opportunities to recuperate investment costs. Mayor Anderson reported he had worked with Mr. Gish to explore solar farms on large parcels of land in the City including the Allied Paper Site, but it was not an easy answer due to the liabilities of anything disturbing the “cap” placed on the site or the ground underneath. Mayor Anderson remarked on his experience with recycling monitoring and notification programs.

Commissioner
Comments

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Shelby Moss
Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: March 3, 2025

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