

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## March 19th, 2025 - MEETING MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Benac, Chair, Justin Sanders, Vice-Chair, David DeBack, Stephen Romanelli, Damaris Potter, Thomas Dewhirst, and John Eric Kreuzer

**ABSENT:** Tressa Greschak, Rachel Jondle, Reeta Chandler, and Mike Thompson (Leaving the board due to scheduling conflicts)

**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)**

The recording/Streaming of the meeting was confirmed, and community members joined via a link posted on the City's Facebook page.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA (03/19/2025)**

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 02/19/2025**

David Benac, Chair asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, meeting minutes. Thomas Dewhirst motioned to approve with 2<sup>nd</sup> by Stephen Romanelli, all approved unanimously.

### **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.

### **REPORTS**

*Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board*– Mr. Kreuzer – 3 member seats to fill, they are actively looking for members this expertise in Water Quality, Botanist Biologist and a non-professional.

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

*Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection* – Ms. Greschak and Mr. DeBack – Working on a brief outline for the concerns into the history of the deer population, will be asking for money in the coming year.

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

*Tree Committee* – Mr. Dewhirst and Ms. Greschak (Alternate) – No update

*Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council* – Mr. DeBack – Project with Kaiser Associates and the Chemist Matt Reeves. They published a paper that is about the catchment basin on Drake Rd by Asylum Lake to strip out chloride from wash or runoff from salting in the wintertime, looking into a portable machine that could help with that process. Woods Lake is more critical because it lacks the streams coming in or out. The Ecological group is working with a group, the Wild Ones which comes in and addresses invasive species and any other plant questions. Bill Snyder from Mason also presented on invasive species and Asylum Lake.

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

*Kalamazoo River Watershed Council* – Mr. Benac – Long discussion about historical issues that have prevented some people from using the rivers and want to maintain that commitment.

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

*Waste Working Group* – Mr. Romanelli and Mr. Sanders – Discussed the program with the cameras on the trucks and sending out customized mailers to people with photos of their erroneously placed products to educate people. 607 Feedback mailers sent out and 33 new recycling carts added with Spring cleaning starting April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. 159 tons of recyclables were collected, 1,059 lbs of household hazardous waste. WMU has established a student group for trash cleanup.

*Native Species & Urban Landscape* – Ms. Potter – No update

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

**Justin Gish – Sustainability: Destiny talked about the Buzz in the Zoo initiative, in place of No Mow May, that will be in support of the pollinators and with the kickoff of the yard sign contest on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025; listed in Events**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1. Discuss subcommittee goals and mission.**

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Presentation on green burial practices given by Peter Quakenbush from West Michigan Burial Forest & Forest**

## **EVENTS**

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

April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – Earth Day Rally, Meet at Noon at Heritage Hall, and march to circle W for rally and activities. 12-4 pm; Check @wmu\_climate on Instagram for updates

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

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.

