

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## May 21st, 2025 - MEETING MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Benac, Chair, Justin Sanders, Vice-Chair, David DeBack, Stephen Romanelli, John Eric Kreuzer, Tressa Greschak, Rachel Jondle and Reeta Chandler

**ABSENT:** Thomas Dewhirst, Damaris Potter

**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 (05/21/25)**

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 03/19/2025**

David Benac, Chair asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the March 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:**

Iris Potter, Chair and co-founder of Kalamazoo Animal Advocates and they sent an email with a report that conducted on the deer population.

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

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

Justin Gish – City applied for a Solar Parking lot at Crosstown and should know more about that soon. Buzz in the Zoo is going strong and the compost program only continues to grow.

### **REPORTS**

*Natural Features Protection (NFP) Review Board* – Mr. Kreuzer – Working on the Reed Court floodplain storm water improvement.

*Air and Water Quality* – Ms. Chandler – Requesting a variance to help reduce the flooding from Portage Creek discharge, a mechanical capturing device like a tornado. It collects a lot of the sediments mainly the phosphorus as it comes off the first wash from the street, which is predominantly most of the pollutants. Putting on a boardwalk to turn into more of a public green space, looking into getting schematics. When an air quality order report is submitted it provides your information to the appropriate City and State regulators and in this case to Graphic Packaging.

*Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection* – Ms. Greschak and Mr. DeBack – They set up a meeting this upcoming week.

*City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission* – Ms. Jondle – Special requests for rezoning; one on Roscoe and Millard and Burdick and Vine. They went from live work 1 to downtown 3 designation, which means it can now be allowed to be five stories, including green space, different amenities and affordable housing.

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

*Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council* – Mr. DeBack – The burn permit has been issued, and several burns are being conducted that may require assistance to eradicate certain species and invasive species. The salt remediation project is on hold from last year because they ran out of snow for their last test so it will be pushed to next year.

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

*Kalamazoo River Watershed Council* – Mr. Benac – Projects coming up, there was a successful clean-up at Mayor's Riverfront park along the river, approximately 150 volunteers.

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

*Waste Working Group* – Mr. Romanelli and Mr. Sanders – The Compost bins are under a pilot program through the end of this year, you can check the website for locations: Vine, Edison, Milwood and working with Oakwood. Starting to work with the State on the Next Cycle Program, website is [nextcyclemichigan.com](http://nextcyclemichigan.com), this is in early stages so encouraged to check out the website. Locations of the composting site is 322 Stockbridge Ave which is a drop-off.

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

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

**Justin Gish – Sustainability: Destiny is no longer working with the Sustainability dept, Federal funding for the Americorp position was eliminated.**

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1. Discuss subcommittee goals and mission.**

**NEW BUSINESS: City Attorney, Charles Bear answered questions and explained the bylaws that pertain to the ECC Board. More to come**

#### **EVENTS**

**CHECK PHONE LINES:** No phone calls

#### **COMMENTS:**

Reeta Chandler commented about the 269 Air Quality program that is now launched on their website at [www.269airquality.weebly.com](http://www.269airquality.weebly.com). Anyone can submit an application to become a monitor to track the air quality index within your neighborhood.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

