

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

June 18th, 2025 - MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Benac, Chair, David DeBack, Stephen Romanelli, John Eric Kreuzer, Tressa Greschak, Rachel Jondle, Thomas Dewhirst and Reeta Chandler

ABSENT: None

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 (06/18/25)

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 05/28/2025

David Benac, Chair asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the May 28th, 2025, meeting minutes. motioned to approve by Tressa Greschak with 2nd by Stephen Romanelli, all approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

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 – Working on 2 site reviews. Kalamazoo Country Club and White Lake development. They have some proposed changes with tree removals within NFP guidelines and at Whites Lake they are trying to avoid installing utilities around the slope areas. Plans for a Water Filtration Facility which can be found at the City’s website under site plans under review.

Air and Water Quality – Ms. Chandler –EGLE was closed for the review of the Michigan Study, where comments were made on the Air Quality. 269airquality is up and running and their team made their own comments as they reviewed the report. Checked out monitors for data and noted that we need more monitors and placement based on population size. No water quality update.

Wildlife and Natural Resource Protection – Ms. Greschak and Mr. DeBack – Checking pest control companies for groundhogs, check into basic deterrents. Receiving a few emails, one is for Turkeys and Deer, looking for recommendations. Looking for a speaker with general biodiversity impact information to do a small presentation. With projects we are losing places for the habitat and then they go to neighborhoods. There needs to be more education for the residents about the habitat. DNR does not allow catch and release and sterilization will have to get permission but is also difficult because it is a surgery and it’s traumatic for deer.

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

Tree Committee – Mr. Dewhirst and Ms. Greschak (Alternate) – In the aftermath of the storm, 300 – 311 calls of trees in right-of-way and sidewalks, not counting first responders or utility workers, they had 1,000 site visits. 147 10-yard dumpsters of tree waste were hauled away and they are not done. The hardest hit neighborhoods were Milwood, Westnedge Hill and Vine east side, they will be back at some point to plant more trees. The east side neighborhood that is part of the two-year grant has plans to do about 275 plantings up East Main all through out the neighborhood with a few selective tree removals for the dead ones falling. Will be replanting on Howard Street since all the ones that were planted died, found out an employee was power washing them and it cut holes in the leaves and root system.

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council – Mr. DeBack – Water levels are low but normal, checking on funding for long term.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – Open – No update

Kalamazoo River Watershed Council – Mr. Benac – No update

Odor Task Force – Mr. Benac – No update

Waste Working Group – Mr. Romanelli and Mr. Sanders – Last month they collected 1600 tires, pilots on composting and working with the vendor to help with recycling. Interns doing waste data at events like phone recycling event (electronics and dental), next one is July 26th at Mayor’s Riverfront Park from 10-1, for more information please go to <https://www.kalamazoo.org/Residents/Recycling-Waste/EPS-Foam-Recycling>. ECC can help drive the Buzz in the City momentum and have Destiny reach out to collaborate some more of what other cities have in terms of programs or information online.

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

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

Justin Gish – Sustainability: Destiny Stetina is working with the Sustainability dept, Federal funding for the Americorp position was eliminated and has been restored State of Michigan through CEDAM. Also, a new student from K College, Biology student, working with Justin on Invasive species and conservation biology projects in the City, her name is Anar.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion of the desired number of seats on the committee.
2. Discussion of draft bylaws.

NEW BUSINESS:

Justin Sanders resigned so we will be looking for a new Vice-Chair, Chair Benac asked the board if we could hold an election next month, Tressa Greschak motioned to approve and Stephen Romanelli 2nd.

EVENTS:

Justin Gish and his intern or student have a booth at the Lunchtime Live at Bronson Park every Friday until August 29th, 2025 to answer questions.

CHECK PHONE LINES: No phone calls

COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

