

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

September 17th, 2025 - MEETING MINUTES

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

ABSENT: David DeBack and Tressa Greschak

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 (09/17/25)

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 08/20/2025

David Benac, Chair asked the Committee Members if there were any changes to the August 20th, 2025, meeting minutes. motioned to approve by Rachel Jondle with 2nd by Thomas Dewhirst, 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 – Approval of City of Kalamazoo water line at Station 15 (Spring Valley Park) closed and installed new wells further from the body of water, and is now in compliance.

Air and Water Quality – Ms. Chandler – No update

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

City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission – Ms. Jondle – Interviewing new candidates for their board.

Tree Committee – Mr. Dewhirst and Ms. Greschak (Alternate) – On West Main Hill they are taking out 4 trees by the big rock related to K College close to where they are building the new dormitory. Will be replanting on a 4:1 ratio. There is a contractor going through the North Side doing preventative maintenance and that would include some tree removal but a lot of pruning so the next storm the damage will be less than prior. Working from Kalamazoo Avenue north following Douglas Ave up close to Patterson and then all the way to Riverview Drive.

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council – Mr. DeBack – They are having talks about redoing the beaver deceiver and a repair to a trail was made. Putting up signs to encourage less pedestrian traffic and more natural restoration.

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 – The new “View from the Curb” is being sent out to City residents. The next cycle should be coming out in mid-October.

Woods Lake hosted an invasive species removal event on Saturday, September 13th, and the next one is scheduled for October 11th. For more information, please visit the City of Kalamazoo website. 23 rain barrels were passed out and considered a successful turnout for the first year and will look into more events in 2026. The EPS foam recycling will be on October 25th from 8 to 10 am which includes electronics, document shredding, oral care products. Looking into multi-unit property to educate property management companies on recycling efforts. Food scraps recycling efforts are continuing with a list of drop off locations, the centralized location is 322 E Stockbridge across from the public services building, and can be utilized by any citizen.

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

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

Justin Gish – Sustainability: Destiny is working on a Bio Blitz in Jones Park on October 4th at 10 am. It works to raise awareness in neighborhoods and the community and to identify invasive species and how to treat them. Her term with the City ends on October 17th but the program will continue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Fill open Vice Chair position. Rachel Jondle volunteered to fill the Vice Chair Position, Thomas Dewhirst made a nomination with a second by Stephen Romanelli, all approved unanimously.
2. Final review of proposed bylaws. To be discussed at November meeting, October meeting has been canceled.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Presentation on The Michigan Home Energy Rebates Program (MiHER) by Mark Lee owner of Better World Builders. They are looking to create new jobs with this program, contact for more information.

EVENTS:

CHECK PHONE LINES: No phone calls

COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

