

City of Ann Arbor Environmental Commission

January 23, 2014

G.C. Larcom, Jr. Municipal Building, Basement Conference Room
301 E. Huron, Ann Arbor, MI

Call to Order:

7:08pm

Roll Call:

Present – 9

Wayne Appleyard, Sabra Briere, John German, Chris Graham, Susan Hutton, Rita Loch-Caruso
Patti Smith, Missy Stults, and Kirk Westphal (after voting on resolution)

Absent - 3

Mike Anglin, David Stead, and Valerie Strassberg

Quorum Present

Staff notified commissioners that Commissioner Woolard resigned and the commission now has an open position.

Staff Present:

Jamie Kidwell

Matthew Naud

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Commissioner Smith, Seconded by Commissioner Appleyard

Naud notified commissioners of two new business items for the agenda:

- Bike Lane Resolution
- Staffing Resource Resolution

Motion Approved with Proposed Amendments on Voice Vote

Approval of Minutes:

Work Session Minutes - December 5, 2014

- No approval needed

Public Commentary:

- A number of students from the Communications, Media and Public Policy Magnet students from Skyline High School were present

Community Climate Partnership Presentation - Monica Patel, Ecology Center

Monica Patel from the Ecology Center provided an overview of the Community Climate Partnership, which is a grant project funded through a grant from the local sustainability matching fund and local funds raised by the Ecology Center. The Community Climate Partnership is a new project that will support the City's Climate Action Plan.

- City passed Climate Action Plan (CAP) in December 2012 that identifies over 80 actions
- Community Climate Partnership (CCP) is an effort to implement the plan
 - Community-focused since most emissions in Ann Arbor come from the community
- Aim is to add value to projects underway and help start new projects towards reduction goals
- Structure:
 - Work group – high level planning
 - Priority teams – implement CAP actions
 - Community igniters – neighborhood-scale support for actions

Discussion:

- When will this effort get rolled out?
 - Had first meeting early this month with work group to prioritize actions, but are still recruiting members
- What is the general timeline?
 - Work group is meeting monthly, and is focused on setting priorities from the CAP. Will have regular public forums, including the March 12th Sustainable Ann Arbor Forum on Climate and Adaptation.
- Are there areas where Environmental Commissioners would fit in?
 - Many areas, email if interested.
- Who is represented to date?
 - Existing teams: Buildings – Renewable Energy, Buildings – Energy Efficiency, Transportation, Solid Waste, Funding, Community Engagement, Adaptation
 - Commissioner Appleyard is involved on work group

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Resolution to Support Additional Staff to further goals of Climate Action Plan and support the Community Climate Partnership

Commissioner Hutton introduced a resolution recommending to City Council that additional staff support is needed to support Climate Action Plan and Community Climate Partnership.

Discussion:

- Mention Community Climate Partnership sooner in resolution
- Include information on what is needed in terms of funding, staff members, or FTE hours
- Ask to direct the City Administrator to develop a budget
- One full-time equivalent person, which could be a city staff member or contracted staff
- Focus should be on items to accomplish, not on hiring
- List tasks and projects and determine timeframe for actions
- Determine priority action items from the Climate Action Plan and recommend incorporating priorities into budget planning

No action taken.

Resolution to Explore Alternatives to Bicycle Lanes of MDOT Routes

Commissioner German introduced an updated version of a resolution proposing alternatives to bicycle lanes on MDOT routes and noted the intent of the resolution is to consider public health concerns when building bicycle lanes.

Discussion:

Commissioners discussed the resolution and proposed changes.

- Timely issue with proposed Jackson Road reduction to three lanes underway
- Need to balance public health and safety issues with bicycling
- Bicycle boulevards on streets like Washington are one potential alternative
- German attended community meetings and participated in panel providing comment on the updates to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- Commissioner Stults to send suggested edits to staff

Motion by Commissioner German, Seconded by Commissioner Hutton

Approved with Proposed Changes on a Voice Vote

Report from Committees and Chair:

Commissioner Graham walked through list of projects in the Environmental Commission work plan.

Green Fleets

- John DeCicco from University of Michigan will speak next month to speak on biofuels
- Goal is to create a model policy on biofuel use for other cities

Climate Action Plan

- Community Climate Partnership started

Carbon-Cutting Action Tool Widget

- Still looking for help to finish coding

Draft Night Sky Ordinance

- Research and draft underway

Incentives for Sustainable Buildings

- Energy Commission working ahead on a disclosure ordinance for commercial buildings to disclose energy usage
 - Expect to be on an annual basis using EPA Portfolio Manager
 - Many other cities have developed ordinances
- Should look at sustainability beyond energy
 - Renewed concerns about flooding hazards and Planning Commission is looking to recommend a task force to look at the expected increase in flood insurance and the impact on community

Community Resiliency Visioning Process

- Distributed proposed timeline around community grant report and created an online version of the application
- Proposed timeline has letter of intent due in mid-April, applications due in May, and decisions by May or early June

Reusable Water Bottle Use

- Meeting tonight to discuss next steps

Urban Heat Island

- Need additional direction

Huron River Impoundment and Management Plan

- Naud aiming to provide update on progress at next meeting
- Plan is to harvest three times in the summer in Geddes

Traffic Light Synchronization

- Looking into current systems and ways to determine recommendations to improve our current system
- Exploring option of meeting with Highway Department or hiring consultant to make cost-effective suggestions
- City does not have large staff of traffic engineers
 - Priority should not be just traffic flow, but should have focus on multi-modal transportations
 - Slowing traffic on downtown streets makes drivers more likely to visit downtown
- In researching other communities, have there been good examples of how to balance competing interests?
- Inefficiency of moving traffic on main roads is pushing traffic to secondary streets

Green Streets

- Going to City Council of February 18th
- Naud will distribute City Council resolution to commission

Idling

- Educational items are moving forward
- Would like to resubmit idling ordinance that targets heavy trucks

Air Quality

- Sets of air monitors in town, but do not measure particulates
- Check with EPA to see if units might be available to borrow

Pesticides

- Need leadership

Construction and Demolition Ordinance

- Conducting background research

Green Procurement

- Hired new staff at City

Sustainability Calendar

- Upcoming Sustainability Forums – second Wednesday in January, February, March, and April at 7pm at downtown Ann Arbor District Library
 - January 8 – Equity in Planning
 - February 12– Healthy Ecosystems
 - March 12 – Climate and Adaptation
 - April 9 – Local Food

Energy Commission Update by Commissioner Appleyard

- Working on community solar and disclosure

Planning Commission Update by Commissioner Westphal

- Sustainability Framework Action Plan
- Rezoning downtown and will review premiums later in the process

City Council Update by Commissioner Briere

- Working on budget items until April
- Council working sessions centered around priorities set by council at December retreat
- Priority Areas: quality of life, economic development, budget responsibility, affordable housing (homelessness and human services), improving infrastructure, safety services
 - Working sessions are outlined for the next several months
- Noise Ordinance currently does not address impact of construction noise for adjacent residents
 - Upcoming meeting to discuss

Park Advisory Commission Update by Commissioner Stults

- PAC did not meet

Report from Staff:

Staff Update by Matt Naud

- Sustainability Framework Action Plan development is underway by Kidwell
 - Working on updating targets and actions related to goals and circulating with staff
 - Expecting a draft to commission in next few months to different commissions
- Installed programmable thermostats at Housing Commission
- State Community Health Department completed a health impact assessment that shows lower-income neighborhoods are less canopied
- Presentation from Kerry Gray on Urban and Community Forest Management Plan in February and will share Health Impact Assessment report
 - Public meeting expected in April
- Building broader sustainability calendar with upcoming events
- Alliance to Save Energy is large national group looking to double energy productivity and are looking to host an event in March in Ann Arbor
- Home Energy Affordability Loan (HEAL) pilot run by DTE and Clean Energy Coalition with Zingerman's and the City of Ann Arbor where employees were offered free audits and financing options to increase energy efficiency
 - Over 40 staff conducted energy audits
- Climate Adaptation workshop held with staff in September with 40 staff and will look to share overview with commission
- Investigating opportunities to install solar with DTE

- Will meet with Pall Life Sciences to examine measures to determine the direction of the plume
 - Meeting will include expert consultant, Doug Sutton from EarthTech
 - CARD has been notified of meeting
- Commission Calendar
 - February
 - Biofuels - John DeCicco
 - Urban and Community Forest Management Plan – Kerry Gray
 - Health Impact Assessment
 - Bylaws for Review
 - March/April
 - Follow up on Forest Management Plan
 - Recommendation on plan for City Council

Items for Next Agenda:

- Presentation on Urban and Community Forest Management Plan by Kerry Gray
- Presentation on biofuels by John DeCicco
- Health Impact Assessment update

Next Scheduled Meeting:

February 27th, 2014
Council Chambers
7pm

Public Commentary:

None

Adjournment:

Adjourned
8:55pm