

City of Ann Arbor Environmental Commission

October 24, 2013

G.C. Larcom, Jr. Municipal Building, Council Chambers
301 E. Huron, Ann Arbor, MI

Call to Order:

7:09pm

Roll Call:

Present – 9

Wayne Appleyard, Sabra Briere, John German, Rita Loch-Caruso, David Stead, Valerie Strassberg, Missy Stults, Chuck Warpehoski, and Kirk Westphal

Absent - 4

Chris Graham, Susan Hutton, Patti Smith, and Jamie Woolard

*Commissioner Stead served as chair in the absence of the chair and vice chair.
Quorum Present*

Staff Present:

Jamie Kidwell
Matthew Naud

Approval of Agenda:

Proposed Changes:

- Add introduction of International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Fellows
- Move idling presentation to first agenda item underneath unfinished business

Motion by Commissioner Westphal, Seconded by Commissioner Stults

Approved with Proposed Changes

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Councilmember Warpehoski, Seconded by Commissioner Westphal

Approved

Public Commentary:

None

Introduction of ICMA Fellows:

- Naud introduced ICMA Fellows on an exchange program and Wicha Chanklom from Thailand and Yubao Xue from China introduced themselves

Unfinished Business:

Idling Education Presentation – Barbara Lucas

Barbara Lucas provided an overview of idling education efforts underway in the city and county. Lucas helped launch a new website on idling – www.motor-smart.org – and is currently contracted with Washtenaw County to complete environmental media projects.

- Archives of radio and CTN shows are posted at: www.ewashtenaw.org/greenroom

- Washtenaw County, City of Ann Arbor, Clean Energy Coalition, Ecology Center, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and other organizations formed a task force to work on idling education
 - Task force formed a subcommittee lead by the City and County to focus on education materials
- Website – www.motor-smart.org – provides tips to reduce gas consumption and information on impacts of idling
 - Screened video from website that covers the myths associated with engine idling http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/environmental_health/recycling_home_toxics/green_media/motor-smart/engine-idling-videos#myths
- Video has been screened at local schools and with local school groups
- Focus has been on kids and parents working together to reduce idling
- Commissioner Hutton did pilot presentations to groups of adults
- www.motor-smart.org has materials on idling education available for download including:
 - Handouts, presentations, and newsletter information
 - Interviews with local advocates, doctors, experts, and community members is available on CTN
 - “Turn Your Key be Idle Free” logo and materials
 - Online tutorial
 - Option to request presentations or volunteer to present
 - Curriculum materials from EPA and Vermont toolkit
- Subcommittee is now dissolved, but next phase is to use these materials

Questions:

- *What do we target idling of trucks?*
 - Opportunity to post signs and provide handouts to drivers
 - Invite bus drivers to sit in lobbies instead of sitting in buses
 - Call companies when idling is observed, point out sign, and share brochure
- *What are the next steps moving forward?*
 - Bringing forth to the commission and hoping people use these resources
 - Looking to build participation in this effort
- Naud noted signs will be available for purchase for small charge (less than \$50)
 - Making signs for key locations
 - Emerson school putting them up
- *Is there an opportunity for education in driving schools?*
 - Need to make the right connections to reach these groups
- Suggest contacting Ann Arbor Hands on Museum for constant issue of idling

Green Streets Policy Presentation and Resolution – Jennifer Lawson

Lawson, Water Quality Manager for the City of Ann Arbor, provided an overview and history of the Green Streets Policy.

- Ann Arbor has 2.9 square miles of public right of way that is impervious
 - 10.5 percent of total city area
 - More than a quarter of impervious surface in the city
- Standard street design does not allow for stormwater infiltration
- Important factors for infiltration – soil, slope, and floodplain
- Policy encourages infiltration and takes site location into consideration
- Policy is aimed at construction and reconstruction of public roads and does not apply to resurfacing or private roads
- Policy focuses mostly on capturing the first inch of rainfall, or first flush

- See policy for details:
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1498469&GUID=A4F1B263-57C1-4E0A-B0C8-0E129FC68D38>
- Miller Avenue has newly installed rain gardens and these garden infiltrate the runoff from the streets and Fourth Avenue was built to collect and infiltrate every inch of rain

Questions:

- *How has the first inch standard changed?*
 - Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission requires capturing and treating of first inch and Ann Arbor's policy is targeted specifically on infiltration
 - Washtenaw County reviewed this policy
 - Policy does take sites into considerations
- *In a neighborhood with clay-based soil, how does the City approach this type of policy in terms of public streets?*
 - Amend the soil, such as installing rain gardens or bioswales
 - Infiltration standard will look at this on a case-by-case basis
 - If areas have groundwater contamination, waivers will be granted
- *If the City Council approves this policy, is there a way to include project-specific implications on the city website? How does the policy apply to specific sites?*
 - Could post on websites, but also could include in a City Council memorandum on construction projects
 - A lot of public engagements opportunities throughout the process
- *How does this compare to policies from other cities?*
 - Few municipalities do green infrastructure on the level that Ann Arbor does and few have implemented green infrastructure into public projects
 - Pacific Northwest and Philadelphia highlight key projects, but Ann Arbor does not promote projects at this same level
- *Additional comments:*
 - Proposed policy will help with City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDS) permit
 - Report from Easy Street porous pavement pilot showed improved water quality and reduced pollutants in runoff
 - Weather models predict increased frequency of severe storms for the area
 - Saturday afternoon Miller neighborhood will tour the new rain gardens and how to maintain them – 3:30pm meet at 1415 Miller Avenue

Motion by Commissioner Strassberg, Seconded by Councilmember Briere

Commissioners discussed the Green Streets Policy resolution.

- *How involved has Ann Arbor been in sharing policies with other communities?*
 - Staff present at SEMCOG Washtenaw County visioning session
 - Included in Crain's business and in SEMCOG guidebook
 - Share lessons learned with other communities
- *Is there an issue with debris ending up in rain gardens?*
 - Maintenance concerns
 - Will need to remove the debris and are planning to work with both staff and residents to help with this issue
 - Policy has been vetted with Natural Area Preservation and Parks
- *How will these projects impact maintenance?*
 - Already two full time individuals go out every day to clean out manholes

Motion approved

Hydraulic Fracturing Resolution

Motion by Councilmember Warpehoski, Seconded by Councilmember Briere

Councilperson Warpehoski introduced that resolution and commissioners discussed implications of resolution and amendments. An earlier draft was provided early in summer and feedback was taken into account and reflected in the proposed resolution.

- Sierra Club policy is to call for a moratorium until stronger regulations are put in place
- *What is the connection to Climate Action Plan goals?*
 - Dollar invested in fracking may be a dollar not invested in green energy
 - Concern around carbon-based energy systems
- *Can the City regulate injection wells since this is federally regulated? Does the City have regulatory authority?*
 - Any ordinance will come through the City Attorney's office before City Council
- *Additional comments:*
 - Focus on both subsurface and surface depositing of waste

Motion approved with amendments

Reports from Committees and Chair:

Solid Waste Committee Update by Commissioner Stead

- Solid Waste Plan was adopted by City Council

Staff Update by Naud and Kidwell

- Applied for Climate Resilient Communities grant
- Participating in World Wildlife Federation's Earth Hour City Challenge
- Home Energy Affordability Loan (HEAL) program underway with City
- Held meeting with 40 staff members with Great Lakes Adaptation Assessment for Cities to discuss impacts of climate change
- Kidwell and Naud working on creating State of Our Sustainability Report
- Recent meeting on Pall/Gelman site with Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- City staff Visited 50kwh windmill site in Indiana
- Washtenaw County, University of Michigan, and City visited Michigan State University biodigester and looking at implications for city management of organics
- What is the public involvement in the Pall/Gelman site?
 - Monthly meeting of Coalition for Action on Remediation of Dioxane (CARD)
 - Members of public welcome to join
 - Posted on county website

Public Commentary:

None

Items for Next Agenda:

- Biofuels – John Decicco from University of Michigan

Next Scheduled Meeting:

December 5, 2013

Motion by Commissioner Westphal, Seconded by Commissioner Stults

Adjourned - 8:37pm