

**City of Ann Arbor Environmental Commission**

*July 25, 2013*

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

**Call to Order:**

7:10pm

**Roll Call:**

Present – 9

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

Absent - 4

Susan Hutton, Patti Smith, David Stead, and Jamie Woolard

*Quorum Present*

**Staff Present:**

Jamie Kidwell

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by Commissioner Appleyard, Seconded by Commissioner Westphal

*Motion Approved*

**Public Commentary:**

*Tia Lebherz*

- Lebherz, the Michigan organizer for Food and Water Watch, which has just under 1,800 members, spoke in support of the proposed resolution on a statewide and national ban of hydraulic fracking. Lebherz shared informational reports with commission members. Food and Water Watch has supported passed over 350 pieces of legislation to date.

*Ben Saylor*

- Saylor, a resident of the old Westside, spoke in support of the proposed resolution on a statewide and national ban of hydraulic fracking.

*Cassandra Stavens*

- Stavens spoke in support of proposed resolution on a statewide and national ban of hydraulic fracking. Stavens stated she supports the resolution because hydraulic fracking is exempt from the Clean Water Act.

*Kirk Gleichman*

- Gleichman spoke in support of proposed resolution on a statewide and national ban of hydraulic fracking. He noted he and his wife have worked on this issue for the past three years. Gleichman and other citizens helped collect signatures in Ann Arbor and this effort received 3,600 signatures.

*Eric (no last name given)*

- Eric is a new resident of Ann Arbor and previously followed the issue in upstate New York. Eric provided a counterargument by stating that natural gas is a lot cleaner than other alternatives.

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### ***Discussion of Commission Work Plan***

Commissioners discussed a work plan that was developed over the past two or three months. Kidwell proposed adding timelines and priorities to the work plan before adoption and asked whether the commissioners wanted to add the capital improvements plan and the State of Our Environment Report to the work plan.

#### **Discussion:**

*Commissioners discussed prioritizing work plan items and adding timelines for work plan items.*

- Short-range and long-range projects are included in this work plan and setting timelines for all items may not be realistic
- What should priority level be based on (commission interest, greatest impact)
- Work plan includes projects, but not always the commission's broader goals
  - Green Streets policy action items supports reducing stormwater runoff
- Need to review the list consider priorities
- Some tasks can be completed by subcommittees and some involve more involvement, like the Green Streets policy and Climate Action Plan
- Instead of setting priorities, commissioners should decide timelines for each work plan projects and identify where staff support is needed
- If some of the work plan projects belong in Master Plan documents, should look at becoming involved in master plan process and seek staff advice on best order to proceed with action items
- List of items in work plan is correct, but additional time is needed to set priorities

*Commissioners walked through work plan projects to determine if action items could be completed within a one-year timeline and discussed removed projects.*

- “Develop business and residential education program to support Climate Action Plan” fits underneath the project “Implement Climate Action Plan”
- Commissioner Warpehoski noted the City regularly works with the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) to submit Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grants and this may support traffic synchronization work, and assessing the City's traffic light synchronization program could be completed in a year, but synchronization could not be completed in this time
- Commissioner Graham asked for more information about WATS
  - WATS and city staff work together to determine funding requests for lights
  - Ryan Buck from WATS, Eli Cooper, the City's Transportation Programs Manager, and Les Sipowski, City's project engineer, are the main staff
- Commissioner German noted revising City's Green Fleets Policy is his top priority and idling policy needs to be revised from previous resolution
- “Initiating a process to track local air quality data” is dependent on EPA or University of Michigan (UM) support

- “Map and assess impact of urban heat islands” cannot be accomplished in a year due to support needed from UM
- Councilmember Briere suggest producing a progress report for the Huron River Impoundment Plan within one year
- Kidwell noted the Commissioner Hutton has worked on developing a widget to support sustainable car and home purchases
- Commissioner Strassberg asked if there was a monitoring process for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and suggested changing the language to “tracking the CAP”
  - Kidwell noted monitoring the CAP and development of the Sustainability Action Plan are underway

*Commissioners discussed adopting the work plan and next steps.*

- Potential to present work plan to City Council during the October working session
- Work plan, as written, speaks to commission goals and commissions work groups can report back with deliverables and timelines
- More accountability should be included in the work plan before approval and continue working on items
- Since work plan does not include timelines, suggest adopting work plan as written and commission leads on projects should discuss timelines and deliverables
- Work plan addresses the next year (2013 to 2014)
- Value of the work plan is tracking subcommittee work and communicating commission work to City Council and the public

*Commissioner German motioned to adopt the work plan, as written, as a list of projects and that the commission will continue to work on the timeline and priorities for the September meeting.*

Motion by Commissioner German, Seconded by Commissioner Stults

*Motion Approved*

### **New Business:**

#### ***Discussion of Resolution on Bike Lanes (non-voting item)***

*Commissioner German proposed a resolution to ban bicycle lanes on truck routes within the City and provided background on resolution.*

- Proximity to vehicle emissions while at an elevated heart rate has significant public health impacts
- Diesel emissions have an even greater impacts
- First approached this issue three years ago, but recent articles have provided more support
- Primary loose end is how to define a truck route, since many of the roads in Ann Arbor are designated as truck lanes

*Commissioners discussed the proposed resolutions to ban bicycle lanes on truck routes and Commissioner German responded to questions.*

- Councilmember Briere noted it may be structurally difficult to include separated bike lanes on some existing streets due to right-of-way availability

- Commissioner German noted this is a reason that this may lead to bike lanes on congested streets and a resolution may help future planning of bike lanes
- Kidwell suggested meeting with city staff to discuss potential alignment with the Non-Motorized Plan update before passing a resolution
- Commissioner Strassberg posited that physical safety should be mentioned in the resolution and citations should be included
- Page attachment with the resolution includes references, but should add citations to the resolution
- Commissioner German referenced a recent study in Ottawa, Canada where monitors were put on cyclists and found negative health impacts on the heart rates
- Councilmember Warpehoski noted that the Reimagine Washtenaw project calls for buffered bike lanes in the street and the need to balance the long-term health risks of vehicle emission inhalation versus the immediate risks of physical safety due to traffic
- City and Washtenaw County staff need to weigh in on this issue, but banning bicycle lanes may have a perverse impact on cyclist safety
- Commissioner Appleyard proposed determining where the truck routes are and recommend adjusting the truck routes as opposed to banning bicycle lanes
  - Public transit routes should also be taken into consideration
- Commissioner Loch-Caruso suggested proposing an alternative to banning bike lanes, such as establishing alternative bicycling routes to major destinations
  - City may not be investing in the right way, and need solutions
  - City currently has an Alternative Transportation (ALT) Committee and as a next step commission could forward resolution to this committee
  - Public health not as prominent in transportation committees
- Kidwell noted Commissioner Hutton has attended ALT Committee meetings in the past
- Commissioner Westphal stated that bicycle lanes require financial support and inquired if other cities have adopted similar resolutions.
  - Is there a danger of discouraging cycling overall?
  - Is there a correlation between distance from vehicles and particulate size?
- Councilmember Warpehoski asked what would measures from the reference studies look like on local sites and suggested a first step is getting local data
- Commissioner Strassberg suggested changing language to enhancing bicycling lanes on secondary streets
- Commissioner Graham stated that to become a bicycling city a funding mechanism is needed
- Councilmember Briere recently met with Walking and Biking Coalition, city staff, and Mayor to look at funds expended for non-motorized transportation and the sources of the funding
  - Discussion focused on how to secure funds for both building and maintaining non-motorized transportation
- Commissioner Loch-Caruso noted city publications inform residents to place trash and recycling containers in the bicycle lane

### ***Resolution on Hydraulic Fracturing***

*Councilmember Warpehoski presented a resolution on addressing hydraulic fracturing and provided background on the resolution.*

- Allied Health and Food and Water Watch helped prepare the resolution
- Resolution addresses policy both within and beyond the city limits

- Challenge of transitioning from a fossil fuel based economy and failure to regulate hydraulic fracking artificially reduces the cost of carbon and prevents movement towards a renewable economy
- Loss of groundwater in the hydraulic fracking leads increased water pollution
- Under Michigan home rule law, Michigan cities can regulate mineral rights, and city code already provides some protections
- Existing regulation does not regulate disposal of water used for fracking
- Local regulations regulate placement of wells within city limits, but the gas reservoir falls within city limits and potentially reaches groundwater in our city limits
  - Issue of limiting impacts of fracking from outside the city limits

*Commissioners discussed the proposed resolution on hydraulic fracking.*

- Resolution does not cover water disposal
- Commissioner Appleyard proposed an additional whereas to address renewables
  - “Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor has passed a Climate Action Plan as well as a Solar Plan that both advocate moving to 100 percent renewable sources of energy as quickly as possible and a dollar invested on fracking is a dollar not invested in renewable energy generation, and”
- Commissioner German stated half of electricity generated in country is from coal and coal has twice the carbon emissions of natural gas, and has mercury and sulfur emissions that have significant health impacts
  - Fracking has had a significant impact on coal use reduction
- Commissioner German stated he would support regulation of fracking and disclosure of fluid compositions
- Commissioner Stults spoke in favor of the resolution and suggested waiting to vote on the resolution until the Graham Sustainability Institute releases a report on fracking next month
- Commissioner Appleyard stated that recent studies show that in short timeline of twenty to thirty years when methane from fracking is present, fracking is worse than coal
  - Study by Mark Jacobson looked at feasibility of converting sources of energy concluded that renewable sourcing is possible and did not include gas in this analysis
  - Need to move directly to renewables in a short time period
- Commissioner German noted he works at International Council on Clean Transportation and fuel experts on this area and have stated that best available data suggests that methane emissions from fracking will not overtake carbon
- Commissioner Strassberg spoke in opposition fracking and is in support of this resolution but agreed that results on methane are inconclusive
- Commissioner Strassberg noted the need for more data on the topic and proposed changes to the resolution including:
  - Change second whereas clause: Gallons per discharged per well during fracking needs a timeframe
  - Change fourth and fifth whereas clause: Include number of watersheds contaminated where drinking water has not been recovered
- Councilmember Briere suggested shortening the resolution and provide supporting documents
- Commissioner Loch-Caruso stated that protection of potable drinking water is strongest argument, and noted that a good economic analysis of fracking has not been done

- Commissioner Westphal suggested another resolution about disclosure of contaminants in water and suggested looking into lessons learned from Gellman site and collaborating with other jurisdictions
- Pittsfield Township already considering collaboration on fracking and Councilmember Warpehoski will reach out to township
- Resolution will come back to commission in September

### **Discussion of Potential Involvement on Capital Improvements Committee**

- Commission would like to be involved
- Staff and Graham will work to figure out how to incorporate commission into this process
- Commissioner Briere may sit on this committee

### **Report from Committees and Chair:**

Postponed until next meeting

### **Report from Staff:**

*Staff Update by Kidwell*

- Washtenaw County and City of Ann Arbor participating in International City/County Managers Association (ICMA) social equity case study
- Working with GLAA-C staff at University of Michigan on a series of climate adaptation videos
- MI Solar Works launched by WARM Training Center that aims to install 6,000 solar roofs by 2014
- City of Ann Arbor, Zingermans, University of Michigan will start a Home Energy Affordability Loans (HEAL) pilot program in the next year, which offers energy efficiency loans to employees
- Evaluation of Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown Zoning in underway
  - Focus group with Energy and Environmental Commissioners attended a focus group before this meeting
  - Opportunities for members of the public to provide input
    - Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 8-9:30am at Kerrytown
    - Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30pm at City Hall
    - Online

### **Items for Next Agenda:**

Timelines and Deliverables for Work Plan  
Amendments to proposed resolutions

### **Public Commentary:**

*Brent Bartson*

- Bartson, a resident of Lodi Township, spoke in support of the proposed resolution on a statewide and national ban of hydraulic fracking.

### **Next Scheduled Meeting:**

August 22, 2013  
City Hall, Basement Conference Room  
Adjourned 8:58pm