

Environmental Commission
 Thursday, March 27, 2008 7:00 PM
 Council Chambers

Environmental Commissioners		Present
Mike Anglin	City Council	
Steve Bean (Chair)		✓
Rita Loch Caruso		✓
Malama Chock		
Anya Dale		✓
Ron Emaus	Planning Advisory Commission	
John German		✓
Chris Graham (Vice-Chair)		✓
Gwen Nystuen	Parks Advisory Commission	✓
David Stead		✓
Margie Teall	City Council	✓
David Wright	Energy Commission	✓
TBD		
TBD		
Staff		
Matthew Naud	Environmental Coordinator	✓

- A) Call to Order
- B) Roll Call of Members – Quorum
 - 1) Commissioner Bean welcomed new commissioner Anya Dale. Commissioner Dale works for Washtenaw County on a variety of environmental planning issues.
- C) Amendments and Approval of the Agenda – Agenda amended to add I1
- D) Special Presentations/Announcements - none
- E) Public Commentary - none
- F) Reading and Approval of Minutes – notes from February Work session distributed
- G) Unfinished Business as Listed on the Agenda - none
- H) Commission Proposed Business - none
- I) Staff Proposed Business
 - 1) Discussion of Environmental Impacts of Backyard Chickens – Matthew Naud shared a summary of environmental concerns evaluated by Molly Wade, Water Quality manager in Systems Planning (see attached). Commissioner Nystuen moved a resolution from the floor. After discussion the resolution was adopted unanimously (see attached)
- J) Report of the Administrator and Council - none
- K) Items from the Environment Staff

- 1) The City recently hired Kerry Gray as the Urban Forestry and Natural Resource Planner in Systems Planning. She met with the Natural Features committee last Friday.
 - 2) Update on State of Our Environment Report web site – the site is now live.
 - 3) An executive summary is being developed for Earth Day.
 - 4) CARD – Coalition for Action on Remediation of Dioxane will hold a public meeting on April 28 at the WISD at 7PM.
- L) Items from the Park Advisory, Energy, and Planning Commission Representatives - none
- M) Reports of the Chair and Committees
- 1) Chair – Commissioner Bean discussed the two open seats on the commission. Commissioner Chock’s term expires and there is an additional unfilled seat. Several applicants have provided information that has been submitted to Commissioner Teall. Applicant information is available to commissioners.
 - 2) Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan Committee – Commissioner Stead discussed the recent HRIMP meeting and the focus on the Argo area for the April meeting. There is a plan to meet with PAC members to discuss findings to date. HRIMP meeting will be more frequent to generate specific management recommendations. Public engagement will likely occur in the fall.
 - 3) Natural Features Committee – Commissioner Graham discussed new language developed for Chapter 62.
 - 4) Solid Waste Committee – Commissioner Stead discussed the commercial recycling plan and request for expressions of interest on firms that would run commercial waste collection.
 - 5) State of Our Environment Report Committee – Commissioner Bean discussed the recent SOE committee meeting and their review of the Clean Air and Efficient Mobility goals and indicators. Revisions were made to several indicators and these changes will be reflected on the website. The committee also discussed the potential for a presentation to the community on the State of Our Environment report the week of earthday.
 - 6) Transportation Committee – Commissioner Dale will chair the transportation committee. Commissioners German and Wright will remain on the committee.
 - 7) Water Committee – no report
 - a) Commissioner Nystuen raised the concern that pervious pavement is not being demonstrated in city repaving efforts. Commissioners discussed a couple of examples in the community and different opinions about its applicability. Commissioners Loch-Caruso, Nystuen, and Dale will discuss the opportunities to bring together city, county, and other expertise to look for applications in city projects.
- N) Public Commentary - none
- O) Meeting evaluation/Adjournment

A RESOLUTION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF BACKYARD CHICKENS

Whereas, The information presented to the Environmental Commission indicates that chickens would have negligible impacts on the environment;

Resolved, that the Environmental Commission does not object to allowing chickens in Ann Arbor based on environmental grounds.

Submitted by Commissioner Nystuen – March 28, 2008

Approved unanimously – March 28,2008

Environmental Commissioners	Yes	No	Absent	Environmental Commissioners	Yes	No	Absent
Mike Anglin			✓	John German	✓		
Steve Bean	✓			Chris Graham	✓		
Rita Loch Caruso	✓			Gwen Nystuen	✓		
Malama Chock			✓	David Stead	✓		
Anya Dale	✓			Margie Teall	✓		
Ron Emaus			✓	David Wright	✓		
TBD							

Watershed Implications of allowing backyard chickens

The City's storm sewer system carries untreated runoff from both impervious and pervious surfaces to local creeks and the Huron River. This runoff often contains high levels of phosphorous and E. coli, an organism used as a water quality indicator.

The City of Ann Arbor has been mandated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, through a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to reduce phosphorous contributions to the Huron River by 50%.¹ Phosphorous is a plant nutrient that stimulates the growth of algae in water bodies. Phosphorus is found in stormwater runoff and a common urban source is from lawn care practices and fertilizers.

The City of Ann Arbor has been mandated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to reduce E. coli levels in the Huron River at Geddes Pond, Allen's and Mallets Creek to a level that is many times lower than the current levels found after precipitation events. DNA testing of this E. coli in 2003 revealed the source of most of the E. coli in the city's storm sewers comes from urban wildlife, namely feral cats.²

The low levels of E. coli traced to canines could indicate that dog owners living in the City or using City parks are picking up pet waste. This is likely a result of a multi-year public education effort on the effects of dog waste to our local waterbodies.

It is estimated that the manure produced by 6 chickens is the equivalent to that of one large dog. If backyard chickens are not caged and manure properly managed, runoff could result in higher E. coli and phosphorous levels in area streams and the Huron River. Even if chickens are required to be caged, cages must be kept clean and manure disposed of properly. A public educational effort similar to the dog waste disposal education would be necessary to education chicken owners on proper management of chicken manure.

Composting chicken manure:

Chicken manure is 75% solid and very high in nitrogen. As such, it must be composted with other material before applied as a fertilizer. It also contains 1-2% phosphorous and 1% potassium. By requiring proper management of chicken manure, to ensure compliance with the TMDLs and with the city's lawn fertilizer ordinance, further studies of compost containing chicken manure would need to be completed.

¹ MDEQ 303(d) list, 1996; Middle Huron Cooperative Agreement, 2004

² MDEQ 303(d) list, 2001; Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner, 2003