

Sustainability Commission Meeting August 7, 2017

Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm by Julie Morris

Roll Call: Judy Nelson, Julie Morris, and Rick Hawksley

ABSENT: Ann Gilmore and Nadine Gomez

Mr. Hawksley made a motion to excuse Mrs. Gilmore. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Mrs. Morris made a motion to excuse Ms. Gomez. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved with a 3-0 vote.

Staff: Harrison Wicks, Executive Assistant to the City Manager
Jim Bowling, City Engineer

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of July 10, 2017:

Mr. Hawksley made a motion to approve the summary reports from July 10th. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morris and was approved with a 3-0 vote.

No motion was made to approve the Summary Reports of July 24, 2017 since Mr. Hawksley was not in attendance at this meeting, leaving less than a majority to vote for approval.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

Commission approved 3-0 to move the hike and bike trails item to the beginning of the Old Business discussion to accommodate the guest speaker Mr. Jim Bowling.

Guest Speaker on Hike and Bike Trails in the City of Kent- Mr. Bowling presented a map of the hike and bike trails in the City. This map, as a part of the Bicycle Facilities Master Plan, was created from a feasibility study of 'The Portage' trail in 2003, which was previously the River Edge/Towpath Master Plan developed in 1993. The Akron Metro Area Transportation Study (AMATS) assisted in the portage trail plan in 2003 in conjunction with Kent State University, the Portage Parks District, and Kent Parks and Rec and in 2007 the plan was updated. Mr. Bowling also presented the Kent Bicentennial Plan that was developed in 2004. Mr. Bowling recommends each member receive a copy of the plan. An electronic version of the plan is also available on the City of Kent website. The Bicentennial Plan provides a guide of where the City is going with a section on transportation. According to Mr. Bowling, the goal of 'The Portage' trail and Bicycle Facilities Master Plan is to allow for everyone to move around Kent without needing a car. The bigger the destination the stronger the route needed to

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get people there. Regional trails are included in the plan that connect Kent to Summit County, Ravenna, and through KSU to Dix Stadium. On street bike lanes are used to connect regional trails together (Ex. Fairchild Avenue between State Route 43 and Adrian Avenue). Over time other trails were built by Kent Parks and Rec, housing developments, and neighboring townships to connect trails together. Proposed trail sections of the plan highlight what the City would like to see in the future. Strong connections of the regional trails is important. Mr. Bowling referred to one proposed plan as the “Lake Rockwell Trail” that would connect neighborhoods and schools in the western sections of Kent. The Summit County Metroparks is currently working on a long term connection between the Summit ‘Freedom’ trail and ‘The Portage’ trail. The first part is to be completed in 2022. Also, a connection between KSU and downtown that will pass by the new Police Station will be starting construction this month. Finally, signal and pavement marking plans were developed to reimagine the way bicyclists interact with intersections and to alert drivers to a new urban environment. These pavement marking plans help to create a separated space where needed to allow bicyclists the opportunity to cross large intersections more easily. Mr. Bowling was curious to know if there were any areas of concern from the Sustainability Commission. For instance, Mae Street next to KSU dead ends at the Schwartz Center but students, pedestrians, and bicyclists use that street frequently. Also, the path between Vine and Lincoln Streets, south of Summit Street, is used frequently to walk or bike. Mrs. Morris wanted to know if there are plans for trails on State Route 261. Mr. Bowling confirmed that yes there is work being done with an AMATS grant, a feasibility study looking into this very topic. Mrs. Morris was curious to know if there has been push back from neighborhoods on trails in their vicinity. Mr. Bowling confirmed that there is a general fear of strangers travelling through their areas, however, positive considerations such as higher property values for homes near a trail and the potential for a healthier lifestyle tend to outweigh the negativity. Mrs. Morris wanted to know if decisions related to development in Kent run through a sustainability matrix when developing. Mr. Bowling confirmed generally not, instead the City follows what the code says.

Bag Share Item- Deferred until the next meeting because Mrs. Gilmore was absent.

Rain Barrel Update- Mr. Wicks confirmed that 3 individuals have paid the registration fee for the workshop and has also received verbal confirmation from 12 residents. The rain barrels will be delivered to Fred Fuller Park the morning of Saturday, August 26th at 9am in time for the first session at 10am. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson confirmed that they will try to pass out flyers at numerous locations in Kent including the Kent Free Library, KSU, City buildings, Haymaker Farmers’ Market, and Last Exit Books.

Farmers Market Update- The commission is currently scheduled to attend the farmers’ market on Saturday, September 16th.

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Community Information Update- Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson met with Leah and Melanie of the KSU Sustainability Office and discussed the upcoming GeoTour set for October 1st from 1-4pm. The discussion focused on a potential stop in the tour hosted by the commission in downtown Kent. The stop would be an eco Cruise-In showcasing electric and hybrid vehicles. The deadline to apply for the Cruise-In to be a part of the GeoTour is August 28th. Mr. Wicks confirmed he will work on locating a suitable location downtown for the Cruise-In. Mrs. Morris confirmed she will also reach out the KSU Sustainability Office again for an update on whether or not the Cruise-In could be hosted on the KSU campus. Another topic of discussion was the KIVA film fest set for Thursday, October 26th. The Sustainability Commission has agreed to have a booth at the event and the potential for community organizations to participate is still under consideration.

Recycling Update- This item was tabled until next month's meeting.

Review Fracking Permits- No discussion as no new items have been addressed. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Nelson agreed that printing attachments for this item is no longer necessary unless anything changes.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointments to Ad-Hoc Committee for Climate Action Plan Update- The commission confirmed they will wait until the resolution is passed by the City Council to assign two members to the ad-hoc committee. The general consensus is that Julie Morris and Judy Nelson will be nominated to the ad-hoc committee. Official appointment is tentatively set for the September meeting. Mrs. Morris spoke about the resolution of support for the Paris Climate Agreement. Mrs. Morris was concerned the commission did not provide enough information to the City Council to be well informed on what the resolution will include. Mrs. Nelson agreed that should the City Council approve the resolution without fully understanding the commitment then later when the climate action plan is developed it will not be supported. Mrs. Nelson commented that the commission should let City Manager Dave Ruller know that the City Council is committing to a climate action plan and should devote staff to collect the necessary information. There was a consensus that a Sustainability Planner would be great to devote to the climate action plan however the commission understands if there is a lack of resources. Mrs. Morris confirmed she will ask the City Manager to consider this commitment. Finally, Mrs. Morris commented that having access to zoning, engineering, and other development services in the City would be helpful when developing the climate action plan so all individuals are on the same page and working in tandem.

NEXT MEETING

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ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Morris made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nelson and was approved by a 3-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51pm.