

Sustainability Commission Meeting February 1, 2021

Meeting called to order at 5:33 pm by staff member Patti Long

Roll Call: Andrew Scholl, Renee Ruchotzke, Rick Hawksley, Maryjayne Stone

ABSENT: Wilder Hritz

Staff: Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Patti Long, Assistant to the City Manager

Approval of the agenda:

Mr. Hawksley moved to approve, Ms. Ruchotzke seconded, approved with a 4-0 vote.

Election of officers

Ms. Ruchotzke asked what positions are open and Ms. Long stated the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are available. Ms. Susel added that a staff member acts a secretary and since there is no budget there is no need for a treasurer. Mr. Hawksley nominated Ms. Ruchotzke for Chairperson, seconded by Andrew, approved with a 4-0 vote. No discussion. Ms. Ruchotzke nominated Ms. Stone for Vice-Chairperson, seconded by Mr. Hawksley. No discussion, approved with a 4-0 vote.

Review of Meeting Summary Minutes from November 2, 2020:

No quorum, therefore the notes will be filed and not voted upon.

OLD BUSINESS

Ad Hoc Committee Update - In order to bring new members up to date, Ms. Susel stated that Council authorized the City to develop a Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The Ad Hoc committee has been working on that. Typically these studies are done through a consultant but we were trying to complete it with a volunteer group. Andrews Boateng has been working on it for the City since it falls in line with his dissertation work. We are trying to create a plan to target the areas in the city where we can mitigate or reduce greenhouse gas. Data is being entered into ClearPath. ICLEI has models that are recommended for use. Davey Resource Group is allowing him to use their program modeling as a donation to support his dissertation work (part time) while he is working there full time. Expecting an update this week with the goal of having this inventory completed so that we can develop an action plan by April or May. PARTA data (and other components of the transportation sector) is included in the inventory. Dr. Scholl and Ms. Ruchotzke are liaisons but Ms. Ruchotzke mentioned she is not feeling as effective in that role as she would like to be. Ms. Susel reassured her that what is happening now is not something she needs to be a part of but that her assistance will be needed when the time comes to all work together on the action plan. The Commission, KEC and the City will all need to come together. Ms. Ruchotzke's concern is that it will be primarily about the greenhouse gas when there are other aspects of the report that could benefit from other types of data rather than just the greenhouse gas data. Ms. Susel explained that the greenhouse gas is only the first step. There is an action plan template that we can follow from this program. We are only in the first phase of this. There is a large "box" of things to sort through to

organize the plan moving forward. Ms. Ruchotzke suggested perhaps a Gantt Chart can help us organize the timeline. Next ad hoc meeting is late February so an update and plan moving forward. When the ad hoc committee has the work ready to begin the action plan, it will be reviewed by multiple groups, Sustainability Commission, KSU Sustainability, Kent Environmental Council, etc before is it presented to Council.

Ms. Ruchotzke requested an agenda item be added to reflect plan the strategy moving forward. Mr. Boateng will have target dates established for step by the end of the February. She then asked about the Sustainability Commission attending the ad hoc meeting but no more than two can attend/participate. Instead of the Commission members attending that meeting, Mr. Boateng can come and provide a big picture update, to include goals from the beginning, during a Sustainability meeting and other ad hoc members would be permitted to attend as well. Ms. Ruchotzke asked Ms. Stone and Mr. Hawksley if they were at a place of understanding on this vast issue. Mr. Hawksley stated he is interested in hearing the update from Mr. Boateng. Dr. Scholl stated that Mr. Boateng can provide all aspects of the project and not simply the gas data, as he was working closely with Harrison from the beginning. Ms. Susel will ask Mr. Boateng to write a general “Action Plan 101” and provide information about where we are in the process. Ms. Stone is also interested in this update.

Farmers’ Market

Since we are not able to attend as a group now, Ms. Ruchotzke made a motion table Farmer’s Market updates this until we are able to participate again. Dr. Scholl seconded the motion. Approved by 4-0 vote, no contentions.

Community Outreach Update-

- a. Kent Environmental Council (KEC)- Annual meeting March 2nd via a World Café format. Ms. Ruchotzke will be attending so be aware of no discussions among members if more than two attend, separating into different breakout sessions. No grants last year so this year there will be five grants available.
- b. KSU Office of Sustainability - Ms. Susel has been working with Melanie Knowles about inter-generational housing. The Allerton property, west of the Rec Center, used to be for family student housing. Currently requesting ideas to redevelop the site for mixed used housing, possibly with academic use and generational housing. Virtual focus groups created for insight and input for what ought to go into the request for information. One of those areas involves sustainability so we may be asked to complete a survey. Focus groups will be capped but the surveys and comments will be taken into consideration as well.
The Office of Sustainability has announced an electronics recycling event during March on the 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th. An announcement will be added to the City Facebook, Twitter accounts as well as on the digital sign. Patti will forward the information to the group.
- c. F&CS – Ms. Susel suggested this might not be an ongoing item but did offer an update on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Proposals were issued and the projects are targeted at housing or delivery or services to those in moderate to low-income. One of the possibilities is to give money to Miller House and another is to give Kentway funding for making sidewalk to the main building ADA accessible. Ms. Ruchotzke offered information about plans for a food forest at

the new Haven of Rest facility (on S.R. 59) so there is crossover between Edible Kent and F&CS. This grant application was submitted through KEC. The Master Gardners from the Garden Club of Kent are involved as well. Ms. Susel confirmed there is a lot on need for food assistance right now.

Tree City Bulletin Article – Patti will submit the information for the KSU E-cycle drive for the spring issue since the deadline is soon but mentioned we will need an article for the fall issue. The group was reminded that there are only two issues now. Ms. Susel added that we can post articles on the website anytime. Mr. Hawksley mentioned that last time he was on the Commission there were discussions about not printing the bulletin at all so he’s pleased to see progress in the reduction of printing and waste. Ms. Susel added that with increased expense surrounding the bulletin and the budget concerns brought on by covid-19 it seemed like a good time to make the change. Dave took it to council and they agreed to reduce the number of issues by half.

PENDING BUSINESS

Waste Stream Reform - This item is tabled until post covid-19. It is harder to combat high use of take-out containers during the pandemic. As a side, Ms. Ruchotzke mentioned that the County plans to stop the recycling program due to budgetary constraints. Ms. Susel offered that our solid waste provider also offers recycling if the county stops the service. Patti confirmed that Melanie Baker, the City Service Director, has been planning for this and is aware.

Bicycle Friendly Community - This item is tabled until post covid-19. There is a still a desire by residents to continue to promote the program. Will revisit.

NEW BUSINESS

Schedule Mr. Boateng for the update and planning presentation of the Climate Action Plan. Ms. Ruchotzke asked about live streaming this so we will record the meeting that includes the presentation. Tentatively in March.

GOOD of the ORDER

Ms. Ruchotzke asked for a “process check” for members.

- Ms. Stone is excited to hear the presentation in the next meeting, expecting to gain better understanding through that.
- Mr. Hawksley is interested in getting all people working on Kent’s sustainability issues to work together rather than fragmented parts. Perhaps a mind-mapping exercise to determine who is doing what and how the Commission can help.
- Dr. Scholl offered no comment.
- Patti asked about meeting in one month on the pre-covid schedule verses the revised bi-monthly schedule. Ms. Susel will know better after meeting with Mr. Boateng this Thursday and asked if a later week in the month would work for the group. The group agreed that any Monday at 5:30 would work. Ms. Susel to email the group Friday to share the timing. Patti will schedule the meeting.

Ms. Susel mentioned it was a good idea to move the Farmer’s Market update into Pending

Business and added that she is taking the renewal of the market's lease to Council in March and will be requesting the additional space on the street involving the area on Franklin near Erie to allow for social distancing again. Ms. Ruchotzke felt that the meeting went well and was happy to lead it, allowing Ms. Long to take notes.

NEXT MEETING

TBD

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Stone made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hawksley, with no discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 pm.