

MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
Citizens' Environmental Commission  
August 3, 2021

The Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on August 3, 2021 in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department.

Vice Chair Steve Honeywell called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**A. Roll Call**

Roll call was recorded by Management Analyst Scott Zak, and the following members of the CEC were present: Vice Chair Steve Honeywell, Rachel Farrell, Adrian Lopez and Nick Newman. Not present were: Chair Clare Kron, Kyle Moore and Sharon Skala.

Also present were Ex-officio member Mike Holland and Management Analyst Scott Zak.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

MOTION

Mr. Newman moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Farrell.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**C. Public Comment**

Resident Ron Cress encouraged the Commission to read "Nature's Best Hope" by Doug Tallamy. In it, Tallamy encourages the creation of corridors of native plants on private land that he calls "Homegrown National Parks." Mr. Cress said if neighbors would unite to do this, it could have a significant impact on insects, birds, butterflies, bees, etc. To that end, Mr. Cress will be offering his neighbors three free milkweed plants in hopes of creating a native-plant corridor. He would like to meet with city officials, including his alderman, someone from the Commission and his homeowners' association president to discuss the initiative. Cress also read Tallamy's ten steps for helping nature and distributed fliers on the best flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs for the DeKalb zip code.

**D. Approval of Minutes**

**1. Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2021**

MOTION

Mr. Lopez motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Farrell.

VOTE

The minutes with a few minor changes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

## **E. Commission Reports**

### **1. DeKalb County Health Department**

With Emily Sitkie's appointment not yet approved, no report was given.

### **2. DeKalb Park District**

Ex-Officio Member Matt Emken not present, no report was given.

### **3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District**

Ex-Officio Member Holland reported the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. It will go towards a second generator to produce energy from biogas, aiding the District's net-zero electricity consumption initiative. The goal is to have the second generator running by the end of the year.

### **4. Northern Illinois University**

With Ex-Officio Member Sarah Fox absent, no report was given.

### **5. City Staff Liaison**

Management Analyst Zak shared that the City has been awarded a nearly \$9,500 grant from ComEd to install its second electric vehicle charging station. The City will provide a 50 percent match. To aid Kishwaukee350 in its completion of a greenhouse gas study, Mr. Zak shared data that the City paid ComEd \$348,000 in 2019 and \$245,000 in 2020.

## **F. New Business**

### **1. Report on meeting with 350Kishwaukee**

#### **a. Joint presentations**

Mr. Honeywell shared information from Chair Kron that 350Kishwaukee is willing to co-sponsor any event that related to climate change.

#### **b. Electric vehicle presentation with 350Kishwaukee canceled**

Mr. Honeywell shared that 350Kishwaukee is canceling in-person events for the near future, and since the EV presentation cannot be virtual, it has been canceled.

### **2. Reports on Mayors' Summit conference**

No commissioners were able to attend the conference.

## **G. Old Business**

### **1. Report on presentation to Kiwanis Club**

Mr. Honeywell shared that Chair Kron reported on the activities of the CEC to the Kiwanis Club on July 21 to a group of about 30 members. There was special interest in the Commission's efforts to preserve monarch butterflies. Chair Kron will present again later in the year with the

focus on eliminating single-use plastic bags for purchases. Mr. Honeywell said ending the use of the bags will be an uphill battle the Commission should start now even if it takes ten years to accomplish.

## **2. Community beekeeping: Dan Kenney**

Mr. Honeywell reported that Mr. Kenney will give an update next month.

## **3. September presentation date for Beekeeping: Tuesday, September 21**

Mr. Honeywell said the presentation will have to be pushed back to Sept. 22 because of his wedding anniversary. Chair Kron had asked about holding the presentation virtually. Mr. Zak shared the City is currently not holding meetings on Teams and that the DeKalb Public Library is still allowing in-person meetings. Chair Kron is planning to reserve a room at the library for the October or November presentation on the Sustainability Plan.

## **4. Letter to the City Council regarding construction input**

Mr. Honeywell said that while the Commission cannot demand builders follow sustainable building practices, recommendations can be made. He has also talked with the president of the DeKalb School Board about the idea of tax credits for sustainable building. Regarding the list of recommended sustainable building practices that the Commission plans to create, Mr. Holland noted there are already recommendations in City code and questioned how the letter would be different than what is already in place. Mr. Honeywell said the idea is to present the recommendations to builders.

## **5. Adopt-A-Park**

Commissioners reported that garden weeding is going well.

## **6. Next article for Daily Chronicle**

Mr. Honeywell reported August's article did not appear on the normal day because there was no room in the paper but said the editor plans to run it later. Mr. Honeywell will be writing the next article, which will be on the Trash Squirrels. Mr. Zak reminded it was suggested that Mr. Moore write about community gardens for the October article, and Mr. Honeywell volunteered to write the November article on whether homeowners should rake up their leaves.

## **7. Recommendation for new CEC member**

No recommendation was made. Mr. Honeywell said he would explore the idea of posting the vacancy on the Trash Squirrel Facebook page.

## **8. Grant opportunities**

In his research, Mr. Newman has found that most grants require the applicant to be a 501c3 nonprofit organization; although, he found four grants for local governments. Mr. Honeywell said grant funding would provide the opportunity to take action and not just make suggestions.

## **9. Other updates on previously discussed topics**

Mr. Honeywell said he will ask the Chronicle again about the possibility of doing a series of articles on light intrusion. It was agreed that the series could begin as soon as mid-October.

## **H. Announcements**

### **1. New announcements**

No announcements were made.

### **2. Next meeting: September 2, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.**

## **I. Adjournment**

MOTION

Mr. Lopez motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Honeywell.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was declared adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scott Zak, Management Analyst

Approved by the Citizens' Environmental Commission on September 2, 2021.