The Citizens’ Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on September 5, 2019, in the Executive Conference Room at the DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois, 60115.

Chair Dan Kenney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Roll call was recorded by Management Intern Adam Grubbs and the following members of the CEC were present: Dan Kenney (Chair), William Oleckno, Rachel Farrell, Stephen Honeywell, Ken Koch, Virginia Wilcox. Member Clare Kron joined the meeting at 4:11 P.M. Member Sharon Skala was absent.

No ex-officio members were in attendance.

Also present were Management Analyst Jason Blumenthal and Management Intern Adam Grubbs.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Member Koch moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Member Oleckno. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Kenney indicated public members were present, but none wished to speak.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Monthly Meeting of August 1, 2019

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting held August 1, 2019. Member Wilcox made the motion, seconded by Member Honeywell. Motion was carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.
2. Regular Monthly Meeting June 6, 2019

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting held June 6, 2019. Member Oleckno made the motion, seconded by Member Farrell. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

E. COMMISSION REPORTS

1. DeKalb County Health Department: Not Present

2. DeKalb Park District: Amy Doll

   Member Doll was not present but had provided report to City Staff. Nature Trail Phase 2 will be starting in the fall. Clean The Kish event will be on September 15, 2019

3. Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District: Mike Holland

   Member Holland was not present but had provided report to City Staff. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at the reclamation district are now in place and useable.

4. Northern Illinois University: Not Present

5. City Staff Liaison: Jason Blumenthal

   Comments will come in agenda items.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Beekeeping

   Mr. Tom Montavon introduced himself as a State of Illinois Bee Inspector. He provided members with information regarding municipality ordinance requirements addressing residential beekeeping. These requirements included no complaints received from residents and cannot be located in apartments. He continued with information as to hive placement, so residents are not affected, sensitivity to potential allergy concerns. Member Honeywell shared information as to other municipalities which have ordinances in place addressing beekeeping. Mr. Montavon shared that bee clubs exist and that potential keepers need to access education regarding beekeeping in order to establish a management plan. Chair Kenney asked if beekeeping workshops were available, Mr. Montavon advised that there is an effort to organize a class.
Further discussion followed relating to requirements for establishing beehives. Member Honeywell advised participants that he had a copy of the Bees and Apiary Act for Illinois.

General discussion regarding permit fee structure, considerations for different styles of location sites for beehives, security concerns for beehives, what incites people to become beekeepers, beehives density, and the functions performed by a Bee Inspector.

Member Honeywell inquired if an ordinance existed restricting beekeeping. Management Analyst Blumenthal advised that this was addressed under a livestock ordinance. Conversation relating to required knowledge, hive management, pest concerns, and ensuring keepers have required skills for the task occurred. Mr. Montavon shared educational resources to members. Management Analyst Blumenthal informed members that the City does not have the capacity to educate interested parties on beekeeping. He continued that the City does not have a lot of available time for this endeavor and that there were ordinances in place that would need to be followed. Conversation relating to registration efforts and inspection challenges followed.

Chair Kenney stated that the CEC could motion to create an ordinance addressing beekeeping. Members and Mr. Montavon debated multiple challenges and concerns relating to potential residential, security and legal issues. Public attendee Jo Schultz shared that a beekeeper cannot get in trouble if someone who is allergic is stung; if the beehive is maintained well, the beekeeper will not get in trouble.

It was determined that Member Honeywell will be the CEC’s point person on this ordinance.

Chair Oleckno addressed members advising the need to think about priorities. He inquired as to whether beehives were a priority in comparison to the sustainability plan, which has not been addressed by the CEC recently. He stated that members needed to think about what the CEC should act on first.

Member Honeywell inquired as to when a hive should be built, Mr. Montavon advised early Spring would be the timeframe.

Chair Oleckno reiterated members to think about direction CEC is going; if beekeeping is a hobby, then it is not a priority. Member Honeywell submitted that this item could be planned for in 2020. Member Koch commented on result of deprioritizing item, CE will be going backwards. He further commented that the CEC was being responsive to community interest. Chair Oleckno again suggested CEC go back, review goals, and determine what priority should be.

Member Kron suggested that Member Honeywell move forward with the beekeeping task while other members focus on other projects. She suggested the consideration of having
another special meeting wherein staff would be involved in creating an ordinance. Chair Kenney shared that the City Manager has advised of an issue with moving and adding dates to the City’s meeting schedule. Management Analyst Blumenthal confirmed this statement by sharing that City Council technically sets all dates, requiring a 48-hour notification. Chair Kenney asked Member Kron if her suggestion was in response of the sustainability plan. Member Kron clarified that Member Honeywell would only work on beekeeping and all other members look at the other priorities. Member Honeywell will have more things together by the end of October. Chair Kenney advised that he was fine with this approach, but Member Honeywell needs to discuss plan with Management Analyst Blumenthal, who in turn will need to address consideration with the City Manager. Management Analyst Blumenthal advised that he saw no problem with this course of action. Chair Kenney stated that the CEC needed City support to help pass this ordinance.

Ms. Shultz, public attendee, shared her focus on conservation efforts and applauded the City of DeKalb for support in establishing pollinator gardens in the City. She shared her efforts relating to raising butterflies and bees in promoting conservation efforts within the community, hosting an event at the Library where she invited a beekeeper, with feedback from children attendees who advised that what they had liked best was the beekeeper.

Conversation amongst attendees addressing how beekeeping could better the City of DeKalb, assist residents in becoming more in tune to the environment, and help sustain and grow the local bee population occurred.

Management Analyst Blumenthal suggested CEC members motion that Member Honeywell would bring information for creation of an ordinance to the CEC’s November meeting. He also advised that if the status report for November was not finished, staff would need a 48-hour notice for scheduling a workshop meeting.

Mr. Montavon advised members to try a pilot program approach.

Chair Kenney asked for a motion. Member Koch moved to approve the motion, seconded by Member Kron. Motion was carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

G. OLD BUSINESS

1. Sustainability Plan Updates

Chair Kenney advised attendees a review of the goals of the Plan would proceed as far as possible at current meeting, with remaining items being addressed at the next meeting and reflected on that meeting’s agenda. The commission began going through each of the sustainability plan updates. Discussion commenced on each goal and ended at goal 4.3. The
suggested changes are reflected in the sustainability plan excel spreadsheet that will be sent out to the entire commission.

Member Kron shared concern that with time the CEC would need to have special meeting. Management Analyst Blumenthal inquired as to how that would be done. Chair Oleckno asked if the Commission report could be suspended. Management Analyst Blumenthal shared that the CEC could do whatever they determined. Member Kron added her concern about getting task completed in 2 hours, that perhaps more time would be needed. Conversation as to concerns with accomplishment of a special meeting, addressing items not discussed, and different approaches to accomplishing review followed. Chair Kenney inquired Member Koch as to his ability to have info regarding SEDAC at the next meeting, and also asked Management Analyst Blumenthal to inform ex-officio members to suspend reports.

2. Vehicle Charging Stations Update

Management Analyst Blumenthal undertook a quick presentation covering EV charging stations, sharing that the City Manager, Management Analyst and Management Intern were currently researching the pricing aspects of the units. Chair Kenney thanked him for the follow-up information on charging stations.

3. Updates on other items discussed previously

Chair Kenney shared that the Protano property project was ongoing and discussed the incorporation of beekeeping in this task. He also inquired as to the status of the abandoned gas station located on First and Hillcrest. Management Analyst Blumenthal advised that the City was trying to sell the property.

H. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Member Kron advised that staff from NIU are seeking a speaker to discuss environmental law, Member Kron will be attending.

Next Meeting: October 3, 2019, 4:00 p.m.

I. ADJOURMENT

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Koch moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Kron. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

Chair Kenney declared the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.