MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITIZENS’ ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
October 3, 2019

The Citizens’ Environmental Commission (CEC) held a regular business meeting on October 3, 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, Sharon Skala. Ex-Officio member present was: Mike Holland. Ken Koch joined the meeting at 4:05 P.M.; Amy Doll joined the meeting at 4:10 P.M.; and Clare Kron joined the meeting at 4:12 P.M.

Chair Kenney announced that Ms. Wilcox will be working more hours at work due to a staff issue.

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.

MOTION
Mr. Oleckno moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Honeywell.

VOTE
Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Kenney asked for public comment. No public comment was given.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular monthly meeting September 5, 2019
Minor changes were requested to the monthly minutes and all approved.

MOTION
Mr. Oleckno moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. Honeywell.

VOTE
Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

E. SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING TO UPDATE CITY OF DEKALB SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Chair Kenney read through the sustainability plan goals, specifically Goals 4.3 - 18.3, which covered the remaining goals requiring review.

The members discussed how many of these goals are currently still ongoing and should be changed from short-term to medium- or long-term goals. Much of the wording was also corrected or updated through this process. Some of the goals brought on considerable discussion. Following are the highlights of those discussions:

Goal 4.5: Invest in alternative and renewable energies and create policies to curb energy consumption in all areas of City operations. Discussion was held regarding converting municipal buildings to utilize solar power. Mr. Koch advised that it would not be cost effective for municipal buildings to go to solar power.

Goal 5.1: The CEC will encourage beneficial electrification (i.e. heat pumps, induction stoves) to replace fossil fuel consumption. Mr. Koch advised this goal should be to encourage residents to use electric over gas. Management Analyst Blumenthal indicated resources for promoting this goal are limited but some social media options might be available.

Goal 5.4: Encourage and implement the necessary infrastructure that leads to and makes use of cleaner vehicle fuels, e.g. charging stations, compressed natural gas (CNG), biodiesel, ethanol. Mr. Koch suggested the Commission should be clearer by specifying cleaner vehicle fuels and start with charging stations. Mr. Oleckno then addressed how the Sustainability Plan should be presented in a newspaper to show the Committee’s progress. Mr. Honeywell said he would oversee this.

Goal 7.3: The CEC will collaborate with relevant groups to provide educational materials, resources, and learning opportunities about alternative and renewable energy for residents and businesses. Mr. Oleckno and Chair Kenney talked about their efforts regarding this goal. Ms. Skala noted her concern for renewable energy, specifically that of wind energy. She noted how wind turbines are harmful to the songbird population. Mr. Koch and Mr. Honeywell stated that
although it may be a concern, there is still much to learn about the utilization of wind power and how other states operate their wind farms in a more efficient way.

Goal 8.6: Explore the development of a regional food hub, commercial kitchen, and processing facility in DeKalb. This initiative would partner with existing resources and initiatives (food banks, food pantries, community meal sites, educational institutions, etc.); Mr. Honeywell asked to be a part of this. He shared that his brother in Indianapolis works with an organization called Second Helpings which works with local restaurants and food banks. Mr. Honeywell wants to check with his brother and learn how they operate their organization and he will see what he can learn for the Commission. Mr. Honeywell spoke to the Hy-Vee gas station about their extra food. He was advised a lot of food was discarded. Hy-Vee employees advised that they do not donate food as a result of a past experience wherein someone became ill from donated food. Due to legal considerations, they no longer donate items. Mr. Honeywell advised he would discuss this with his brother to learn how Second Helpings addresses this concern.

Goal 9.1: Coordinate with established local websites to host "green related" content. Provide such a link from the CEC webpage on the City website. Ms. Kron asked if this goal was still current. Management Analyst Blumenthal stated the City is refreshing the website and would not be able to add any additional content now. Chair Kenney noted he would speak with the City Manager on this item. Ms. Skala mentioned she had a lot of links that could be used for the website. Mr. Koch said that this goal will not work unless the information is more static, he also said they should look into partnering with City Barbs to have their own Committee webpage. Mr. Holland noted that DeKalb County Online may be better. Chair Kenney told Ms. Farrell he would give her Mike Embry’s contact info; she could then send the information from the Commission to his attention. Mr. Honeywell asked to be added to this as well.

Goal #10.1: The CEC will provide information to private property owners on habitat preservation and restoration. Mr. Koch suggested removing the City Planning Department from this in an attempt to limit City staff support requirements. Ms. Skala noted if it is ongoing that they should include preservation of birds and other wildlife. Mr. Koch mentioned that insects should be included since there has been a large loss in certain species/types of the insect population. Chair Kenney agreed to this point. Along with this Mr. Honeywell mentioned the addition of bees, and Ms. Skala mentioned the addition of monarch butterflies. Mr. Honeywell also noted this information should be on the website, and he would like to be included with this goal. Ms. Skala also was added to this goal for encouraging insect habitats.

Goal 11.4: The CEC will initiate a conservation program for the home and lawn to publicly acknowledge homeowners who establish effective conservation measures on their property. Management Analyst Blumenthal noted the Citizen’s Community Enhancement Commission currently has a Yard of Distinction award for DeKalb residents. He inquired if this was a similar initiative. Chair Kenney confirmed and stated that it has to do with a P.R.I.D.E. award. Chair Kenney also noted this initiative should be added to the website.
Goal 12.6: Promote the use of permeable paving in commercial parking and pedestrian areas, as well as encourage its use in residential driveways. Ms. Kron asked Chair Kenney when they would meet with the City Engineer to discuss permeable sidewalks. Chair Kenney asked who the Public Works Director was. Management Analyst Blumenthal advised Bryan Faivre is the Utility Director and would be the correct person for a meeting. Chair Kenney stated they can invite the City Engineer and Bryan Faivre. Mr. Koch noted they should have a game plan before they invite City employees. Ms. Kron agreed, stating she wanted to be organized when discussing these topics with City employees.

Break began at 6:00 P.M. and ended at 6:09 P.M. Attendees then determined to address items more efficiently so as to complete review of the rest of the goals in a timely manner.

Goal 18.3: Restore water channels and floodplains on government-owned property, such as the NIU North 40 and DeKalb Park District facilities adjacent to the river. Collaborate with the DeKalb Soil and Water Conservation District to provide education and incentives to private property owners to do the same in order to control storm water runoff. Mr. Koch noted that some parts of the Kishwaukee River could be restored but not all. In addition to this, the Committee should work on transitioning some of the land near the river into flood plains.

F. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Meeting: November 7, 2019, 4:00 P.M.

G. ADJOURMENT

Chair Kenney asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION
Ms. Farrell moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Honeywell.

VOTE
Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of those present.

Chair Kenney declared the meeting adjourned at 6:54 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Adam Grubbs, Management Intern
Minutes approved by the Citizens’ Environmental Commission on ____________________