

09-15-21 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

PREPARED 09-28-21

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Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Conference Room on 10th floor of City Hall, 161 W Michigan Avenue, Jackson, Michigan

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Adoption of the Agenda

IV. Approval of the minutes for the September 15, 2021 meeting

V. Citizen Comments (3-minute limit)

VI. 2021 Action Items

- a) Refuse and Recycling Committee Report & Discussion
Discussion with City Manager regarding single hauler pickup

VII. Zero Emissions Day – discussion

VIII. Electric Vehicle Ordinance - discussion

IX. 2021 Action Items

- b) LEED Committee Report & Discussion
- c) Non-Motorized Committee Report & Discussion

X. Commissioner Comments

XI. Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 10, 2021 at 6:00pm

XII. Adjournment

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES (PREPARED 09-20-21)

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Date: Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Conference Room on 10th floor of City Hall, 161 W Michigan Avenue, Jackson, Michigan

I. Call to Order *Chairperson Kazmier called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.*

II. Roll Call

Present: *Commissioner Kelsey Heck Wood, Commissioner Bethany Hersha, Commissioner Kelli Kazmier and Commissioner Kevin Lund*

Absent: *None.*

Staff: *Troy R White, City of Jackson Engineering*

Also Present: *Olivia Northrup, Chair of the City of Jackson Youth Council*

III. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Heck Wood and seconded by Commissioner Hersha to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

IV. Approval of 08-18-21 meeting minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Lund and seconded by Commissioner Heck Wood to approve the minutes as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

V. Citizen Comments (3-minute limit)

None

VI. 09-14-21 City Council Appointments to Environmental Commission

Mr. White informed the Commissioners that City Council had approved the following appointments at their 09-14-21 meeting:

a) Cole McEldowney of 4200 E South Street was appointed as an ex-officio member to a one-year term.

b) Councilmember Will Forgrave of the Sixth Ward was appointed to a term to run concurrently with that of his seat on City Council

VII. Introduction of Youth Council Chair Olivia Northrup and discussion of opportunities and cooperation.

Ms. Northrup introduced herself and related that the Youth Council is currently working on an initiative to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags as research shows they have a very short service life, are rarely recycled, are often littered and typically end up in landfills. .

Ms. Northrup related that the Youth Council had reviewed the ordinances that banned on single-use plastic bags in Chicago and Boston and other cities. However, the advisor to the Youth Council had informed them of State law that prohibits local agencies from adopting ordinances that ban plastic bags within their jurisdictions. The Youth Council is currently looking for ways other than an ordinance to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags

Commissioner Kazmier related that the Environmental Commission often looks at the actions of peer communities regarding issues of interest. Commissioner Kazmier stated that Chicago and Boston may not be considered “peer communities” due to their sizes and out-of-state locations. She suggested it may be better to review the actions and accomplishments of Michigan cities such as Battle Creek and Ann Arbor and others.

Commissioner Kazmier related that there are tools other than ordinances to modify behaviors such as education and outreach. Programs to encourage recycling have achieved limited success in Michigan and perhaps an initiative to reduce plastic use needs to start at the front end of the cycle.

There was discussion of the balance between the environmental damage caused by single-use plastic bags versus the increased carbon emissions that are generated by the manufacture of re-useable clothe bags. Reusable clothe bags must be used many times over to offset the carbon footprint of their manufacture.

Commissioner Hersha suggested that the ultimate objective is to change behaviors whether that be through an ordinance or otherwise.

Ms. Northrup suggested that plastic bags are a resource for disadvantaged people who do reuse them for a number of purposes.

Commissioner Heck Wood related that youth can push and change the culture around the use of plastic bags.

Mr. Northrup noted that some stores don't give plastic bags unless the customer asks for them. Other stores give them out without asking and often load more than is necessary. Perhaps there is room for an initiative to encourage stores to change their practices.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested finding a way to encourage customers to bring their own bag – perhaps experiment with a “bring your own bag” day.

Commissioner Wood related that Meijers has a bin for recycling used plastic bags.

There was discussion of a potential initiative to publicize and showcase local business that use sustainable materials for take-out food. Perhaps that would be a way to incentivize businesses to

switch to more sustainable material. If the ultimate goal is to reduce plastic bag use, perhaps carrots (incentives) will work better than sticks (regulations) – especially when ordinances to ban plastic bags are banned in Michigan. The Youth Council could work to highlight and bring positive attention to businesses that are behaving more sustainably - perhaps through the production of a video.

Commissioner Hersha suggested that events provide opportunities to experiment with sustainable materials and “bring your own” initiatives. Events are of limited duration so the investment is less and the results more immediately discernable.

Commissioner Herhsa also suggested a potential partnership with the Public Arts Commission to install a visual display of refuse that is needlessly generated.

Commissioner Kazmier invited Ms. Northrup to stay for the remainder of the Environmental Commission meeting and to attend future meetings of the Environmental Commission.

Ms. Northrup stated that she had another engagement and exited the meeting.

VIII. Urban Farming Ordinance

Mr. White reported that the proposed ordinance passed first reading at the 09-14-21 City Council meeting.

Commissioner Heck Wood proposed that the Environmental Commission make a statement of support for the ordinance. She reported that a number of revisions had been made to the proposed ordinance to make it less restrictive than previous versions. Previous versions contained regulations that would have made enforcement a challenge.

Commissioner Lund suggested that the revised version was still more restrictive than Chelsea’s version as it requires chickens to be kept in a covered structure. Commissioner Lund suggested that the current version is reasonable and supportable.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that a letter of support refer to how the proposed ordinance is congruent with the Environmental Action Plan (EAP).

It was noted by Commissioner Heck Wood and seconded by Commissioner Kazmier that supporting bee populations aligns with the goals of EAP.

Commissioner Kamier suggested two options: 1) write a very brief letter of support or 2) write a letter of support that addresses bees and the EAP. There was consensus for the second option. Commissioner Kazmier stated that Chapter 5 Section B of the EAP encourages sustainable options for privately owned lots.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hersha and seconded by Commissioner Heck Wood to authorize Commissioner Kazmier to compose a letter of support on behalf of the Commission and transmit said letter to City Council. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that she will prepare the support letter and then transmit it to Mr. White to forward to City Council. (Mr. White transmitted letter via email to Manager’s office on 09-16-21).

IX. 2021 Action Items.

a) Refuse and Recycling Committee Report

Mr. White reported that the issue of single hauler refuse and recycling had been briefly discussed with the City Manager. Mr. White reported that the recommendation letter had been received by the members of City Council and some councilmembers had discussed the matter with the City Manager and there is interest in pursuing it.

b) LEED Committee Report

Commissioner Lund reported that EGLE is currently focusing on training and education to change behaviors to reduce waste and encourage recycling.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired of Commissioner Lund if there is an opportunity for the Environmental Commission to partner with EGLE in this endeavor.

Commissioner Lund replied that an item of discussion at EGLE is connecting with people at the local level to provide recycling at apartment complexes.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that while waiting for action on the single-hauler proposal, the Environmental Commission generate specific items to recommend to be included in a single-hauler ordinance.

Commissioner Lund suggested that RFPs from peer communities for single-hauler services be reviewed.

Commissioner Heck Wood reported that the City of Battle Creek had recently switch haulers.

Commissioner Lund replied that the programs in Battle Creek and Royal Oak and others could be reviewed. He will research RFPs for peer communities and bring what he can to the next meeting.

Commissioner Kazmier, referring back to LEED, asked Commissioner Lund if he was interested in reaching out for a second time to Julie Lyons Bricker, the Grants Coordinator / Energy and Sustainability Manager for the City of Royal Oak, to meet with us and discuss the process and feasibility of Jackson pursuing and LEED designation. Commissioner Kazmier stated that either of the next two meetings could be committed to meeting with Ms. Lyons Bricker if she is agreeable. Commissioner Lund agreed to contact Ms. Lyons Bricker.

c) Non-Motorized Committee Report

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that this item remain on the agenda without action until the annual re-evaluation of priorities. There was consensus for this to be the course of action for this item.

X. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Hersha reported that she had received a reply from Lori Welch, the Sustainability Manager for the City of Lansing and that Ms. Welch is available for a virtual meeting with the Environmental Commission.

Commissioner Hersha also reported that the City would be holding a “Dump Day” on Saturday, September 18 from 9 am to 2 pm at the DPW yard on Water Street.

Commissioner Heck suggested that a meeting with Mr. Welch of Lansing not be scheduled until a meeting with Ms. Lyon Bricker of Royal Oak is scheduled. There was agreement by consensus.

XI. Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 6:00pm

XII. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Kazmier and seconded by Commissioner Heck Wood to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously. Meeting ended at 7:26 pm.

CITY OF JACKSON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

161 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE, JACKSON, MICHIGAN 49201

September 16, 2021

RE: Urban Farming Ordinance

Over one third of each bite of food that we eat is made possible through the action of pollinators like bees, butterflies, and moths. Despite their vital role in our well-being, global populations of pollinators are declining and local extinction events are occurring across the United States. Recent research has suggested cities may be able to stem the decline by encouraging the development of pollinator habitats within urban areas and by promoting green spaces dedicated to pollinator conservation. It is for these reasons that the Environmental Commission supports the passage of the urban farming ordinance, specifically section 4-10 Keeping of Honey Bees. This section would align with the Environmental Commission's goal of encouraging environmentally sustainable use of private lots within the City of Jackson (Environmental Action Plan, Ch. 5B). The well managed keeping of honey bees in our community would allow us to do our part in rebuilding pollinator communities for our farmers and ourselves, while also encouraging sustainable, local food production. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelli Kazmier".

Kelli Kazmier
Environmental Commission Chair