

Environment & Sustainability Commission

May 1, 2024

City Hall, Edward & Martha Berry Conference Room

Attendance:

Members - Aimee Delach, Beth Clodfelter, Ed Newman, Elaine Goetz, Meghan Jennings, and Sean Pierce

Guests - Xander and Riley, students from Hocking College's Forest Management program

Absent - Megan Westervelt Shane Benton Molly Jo Stanley, Nichole Mazzone

Agenda

1. **Call to Order** - Aimee, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
2. **Disposition of Minutes** from April meeting
 - Elaine – did not come up with the idea about Leave the Leaves signs, also mentioned that her comments related to the utility mailer originated from city's required notice related to river discharge, so could include information about the leave the leaves
 - Beth motioned to approve the April 4, 2024
 - Elaine seconds the motion
 - All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes.
3. **Old Business**
 - MoveOUT Plans
 - Ed handed out QR codes for food collection volunteer sign-up; directs you to the GivePulse webpage
 - Aimee pulled up the GivePulse and mentioned that many volunteer options available
 - Ed stated that the most assistance is needed with food collection. He stated that the base of operations is at UCM and Good Shepherd Church on campus. Ed also reported that food collection has already begun and that they've been seeing a lot of results with Palmer Place. He stated that he has worked with 10+ landlords or around 70-100 properties.
 - Beth requested clarifying info about volunteering. She stated she signed up earlier this week and received a confirmation email which told her to meet at Makerspace, not UCM.
 - Ed stated that the base of operations has been moved to UCM and Good Shepherd Church on campus. He followed up by stating collected food will be distributed to multiple churches around town.
 - Sean stated he shared the volunteer link with student ambassadors, of which most likely signed up for Thursday and Friday due to graduation and move out.
 - Earth Day/Earth Month Recap
 - Aimee stated that she attended part of the Earth Day fair.
 - Elaine expressed interest in who won the sustainability awards, and stated that she attended the sustainability hub seminar.
 - Ed asked about attendance at Earth Day fair at Walter Hall.
 - Aimee stated that it was well attended; people filtered in and out. She said the day had good events and was well attended.
 - Continued Discussion of Biodiversity Related Initiatives (Leave the Leaves, Shade Trees, and Hocking River Corridor Study)

- Aimee reviewed how the Commission started discussing biodiversity related initiatives at last month's meeting including the leave the leaves, shade trees, and the Hocking River Corridor Study
- Beth discussed the Hocking River Corridor Study and City's partnership with the Army CORPS of Engineer. She stated that the project will focus on increasing biodiversity within the waterway.
- Ed commented on how current maintenance of river banks only deposits more sediment.
- Daniel reported that a previous Ohio University student, Jasmine, asked about Hocking Conservancy delaying their mowing season until later.
- Aimee relayed that Jasmine's research discussed mowing and how it relates to both animals and flooding. She stated that Jasmine's research revealed that flooding in the summer is minimal.
- Elaine asked about an agenda item from April; the new FEMA mapping.
 - Meghan commented that new FEMA data is done but the adoption of the new maps won't take place until the fall.
- Sean voiced interest in No Mow May for next year and expressed ideas about the Mayor suspending code requirements for the month of May.
- Elaine mentioned that the Mayor could announce that potential program next year at the Earth Day event.
- Daniel shared that East Lansing, MI has a good No Mow May program. He stated that they incorporate signage to reduce complaints from neighbors.
- Elaine stated that residential properties could apply for a pollinator garden permit with the City.
- Many commission members discussed seeing an increase in biodiversity and especially bird species in their personal yards this spring.
- Aimee voiced that she would like to collect sustainability resources for the City to host on website.
- Beth asked if commission members could help collect resources to host on the Environment & Sustainability Commission's webpage.
 - Beth volunteered to collect the QR code for composting and recycling sign up, information about Restore, New to You, and the recycling trail map.
 - Aimee volunteered to collect information on the City's pollinator lawn program, backyard habitats, the leave the leaves program, and bicycle resources.
 - Sean volunteered to collect information on food-related topics.
 - Daniel volunteered to collect information on energy efficiency and decarbonization.
 - Elaine asked if the City or the Commission requested the energy data from AEP. She stated that a City representative has to request the data and that she would share information with Meghan.
 - Meghan stated that websites are often bogged down with text. She stated that she has been working with the City's IT to get better templates for City webpages. She stated that she has been working with them to design a better solar resources webpage in order to qualify for the Platinum SolSmart certification.

- Aimee explained the SolSmart certification program. She stated that SolarApp+ advocates for instant permitting for residential solar installs.
- Daniel stated that PCFO is partnering with them to help.
- Aimee stated that she will create a document in DropBox for everyone to copy in resource URLs.
- Aimee stated that she received an email from Sam Crowl stating that a student with Dr. Dabelko is researching urban green space and conservation of natural resources and how they intersect with socioeconomic inequality and climate change. She stated that this student is looking for a local partner with whom to do a leadership practicum.
 - Sean stated that this type of project is a different version of a thesis. He stated that a practicum requires work with a local group.
 - Aimee stated that a practicum partnership requires more frequent interactions and work with students. She said the commission could ask the student to attend the June meeting to learn more about the practicum, her interests, and needs in a partnership.
 - Beth stated that it would be good to ask disabled communities about their accessibility limitations with green space in town and throughout the community.
 - Aimee stated that the student may want to partner with ORCA rather than Commission.

4. New Business

- Re-appointments & New Appointments
 - Aimee stated that Megan is interested in re-appointment.
 - Beth stated she can bring up Megan's reappointment to Council.
 - Aimee stated that there will be a vacancy with Elaine leaving. She then said that the commission has received general interest from one person, Olivia Gilliland. Aimee stated that Olivia works for The Post and is a student with the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism. Aimee stated that she's not sure if it's a conflict of interest, and clarified that the student has not yet sent a resume or a formal inquiry.
 - Beth asked whether the new member needs to be a city or county resident.
 - Aimee stated that the commission needs to confirm if limit of county residents is 2 or 3.
 - Elaine stated that Nichole may live in the Plains.
 - Aimee stated that the new member then will need to be a city resident.
- Guests
 - Xander asked about the Hocking River Biodiversity study's wants. He inquired if the CORPS was looking for just grasses or if they wanted to incorporate trees.
 - Aimee stated that based on CORPS management preferences and root impacts to the waterway, trees are most likely not an option.
 - Daniel asked if the Hocking River's banks are cemented or if they are just compacted. He commented on the general steep slope of the banks, making him think they could be cemented.
 - Riley stated that native grasses only have about 17% of ticks compared to non-native grasses.

5. Announcements

- Aimee announced that the next scheduled meeting is June 5, 2024.
 - Beth and Sean both announced that they will be out of town for the next meeting

6. Adjourn

- Elaine motioned to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.
 - Beth seconded the motion
- All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes.