

05-17-23 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

PREPARED 04-21-23

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Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

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 04-19-23 meeting.

V. New Business

VI. Old Business

a) Mayor's Request for Sustainability Plan

VII. 2023 Priority Issues (discussion)

a) Urban forestry

b) Land use / pollinators

c) Energy efficiency and inventory

VIII. Citizen Comments (3 minute limit)

IX. Commissioner Comments

X. Next Meeting – Wednesday, 06-21-23 at 6:00pm

XI. Adjournment

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION 04-19-23 MEETING

MINUTES (PREPARED 04-21-23)

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Date: Wednesday, April 19, 2023

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 6:03 pm.

II. Roll Call

Present: *Commissioner Jane Flores
Commissioner Jacob Inosencio
Commissioner Kelli Kazmier (Chair)
Commissioner Conner Wood*

Absent: *Commissioner Will Forgrave (Sixth Ward Councilmember)
Commissioner Kelsey Heck Wood
Commissioner Kevin Lund*

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

Also Present: *Andrew Johnson (appointed to Commission for a term to commence 06-01-23)*

III. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Wood and seconded by Commissioner Flores to approve the agenda as presented approved unanimously.

IV. Approval of 03-15-23 meeting minutes

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

V. New Business

a) Mayor's Request for Development of a Sustainability Plan

Commissioner Kazmier related that the Mayor has communicated to her a request that the Environmental Commission meet with Dr. Blakespoor from Jackson College and work to develop a Sustainability Plan. She related that the Mayor requested that an ad hoc committee be formed to accomplish plan development within 90 days.

Commissioner Kazmier related that Dr. Blakespoor has been invited to attend the May commission meeting to advise the commission in Sustainability Plan development.

Commissioner Kazmier related that the Mayor would like a Sustainability Plan that is separate from the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) for consideration and approval by the City Council. She stated that she will communicate with the Mayor to get clarification and direction regarding the Sustainability Plan request and the 90 day time frame to meet the request.

Commissioner Inosencio suggested that an understanding of the time frame for goals is needed – perhaps goals should be set for one year out, three years out and five years out.

Commissioner Inosencio, Commissioner Flores volunteered for the ad hoc committee. Mr. Johnson will join the ad hoc committee once his term commences.

Commissioner Inosencio volunteered, as a member of the ad hoc committee, to communicate with directly with the Mayor rather than through Commissioner Kazmier.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested using language from the EAP and organizing applicable sections of the EAP to conform to the format suggested by the Mayor.

It was determined that the ad hoc committee will generate a plan for review and consideration by the Environmental Commission as a whole.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired about the goals contained with the final deliverable. Commissioner Inosencio replied that he will inquire of the Mayor in a kickoff meeting. Commissioner Flores stated that she would like to attend the kickoff meeting.

VI. Old Business

None.

VII. 2023 Priority Issues

a) Urban Forestry

The 2019 Tree Canopy Cover Map was reviewed and the current tree related ordinances were discussed. Links to the related ordinances as follows:

- Chapter 26 (Vegetation), Article II, Regulation of Trees on Public Property
https://library.municode.com/mi/jackson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH26VE
- Chapter 26 (Vegetation), Article III, Regulation of Trees et al on Private Property
https://library.municode.com/mi/jackson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH28Z_O_ARTIVSIBUDEST_S28-105LAST
- Chapter 28 (Zoning), Article IV, Site Design Standards, Section 105, Landscaping Standards
https://library.municode.com/mi/jackson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH28Z_O_ARTIVSIBUDEST_S28-110ENPRST

Commission Wood inquired how the level of tree canopy coverage rates.

Commissioner Inosencio replied that 40 percent coverage is a standard for forested states like Michigan. He explained that lower income neighborhoods typically have less tree coverage than higher income neighborhoods.

Commissioner Inosencio suggested that current conditions are a baseline that can be used to set goals and measure against. He suggested that perhaps 40 to 60 percent would be a reasonable goal.

Commissioner Inosencio suggested that an inventory that catalogs tree types and ages would be useful. He suggested that this would be a good project for a grad student. He volunteered to reach out to local universities. There was a consensus of support.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that Dr. Blakespoor may be a resource and may have connections with other academics.

Commissioner Kazmier then inquired about next steps.

Commissioner Inosencio suggested that an inquiry be made of the City Manager as to if resources will be allocated for an arborist.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired if the Commission wants to evaluate the tree related aspects of existing ordinances.

Commissioner Inosencio suggested that a review of existing ordinances could be part of the land use portion of the Sustainability Plan.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired if the suggestion is to work on the Sustainability Plan first and then Urban Forestry after.

Commissioner Inosencio replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Kazmier then summarized the discussion – the plan is to move forward on the Sustainability Plan first and then use that plan to push for action on bringing a forester onboard, set realistic forestry goals and pursue Tree City designation.

Commissioner Inosencio then informed the Commission that the Mayor will be attending an Arbor Day tree planting ceremony.

Commissioner Inosencio made a motion that the Environmental Commission host the Arbor Day celebration and authorize Commissioner Inosencio to organize the celebration on behalf of the commission. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Flores and approved unanimously.

b) Land Use and Pollinators

Commissioner Kazmier related that John Haynes from the Dahlem Center suggested to her that the Commission and the Dahlem Center collaborate to pursue Bee City USA designation and to promote No Mow May activities. Commissioner Kazmier invited Mr. Haynes to attend the May commission meeting.

Commissioner Wood related his intention to bring to the next commission meeting five land use and zoning ideas to address future challenges.

Commissioner Kazmier recalled that the use of existing vacant lots to create pollinator opportunities was discussed at the last meeting the City Manager. She then inquired as to next steps.

Commissioner Inosencio related that Grow Jackson is capable of planting but money is needed to purchase seed. A primary need is to determine what lots can be used for planting.

Commissioner Kazmier will inquire of the City Manager about lots for planting and if funds are available.

It was suggested that a grant could be administered by People for the Parks and Trails.

Commissioner Kazmier volunteered to investigate grant opportunities.

Commissioner Inosencio stated that the City can provide and deliver mulch.

Commissioner Kazmier related that the Dahlem Center is expanding its bee program and may be a good partner.

Commissioner Inosencio related that beds of native species wildflowers are not maintenance intensive.

Commissioner Flores inquired about the specifics of the amount of land that will be needed and requested for planting pollinator gardens and the potential to plant trees for stock for later planting throughout the City.

Commissioner Inosencio suggested that there is potential to install pocket parks. He then inquired about the vision for the pollinator gardens – will they be organized and manicured or fields of plants?

Commissioner Kazmier recalled from past conversations that they will be less organized and manicured so as to require less maintenance.

Commissioner Wood stated that signing will be needed to let neighbors know that the pollinator gardens were installed intentionally and are not just fallow fields that have gone wild.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that the immediate goal needs be to be get a field of wildflowers planted. The program can start small and simple and grow into a larger and more organized program. She also suggested that Bee City USA can help with the signing. She will pursue a discussion with the City Manager.

c) Energy Efficiency

Commissioner Inosencio reported that the County Board of Commissioners voted to approve a programs that will be implemented over two years and it appears that the City may be moving forward as well.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired if there is any action needed for this Priority Issue.

Commissioner Inosencio responded that it is his preference that the focus at this time be on land use and urban forestry while the Veregy audit is in process.

Commissioner Kazmier reported that she will put together a summary of the steps and benefits of an LEED application. Perhaps the issue can be revisited at the June commission meeting.

VIII. Citizen Comments

Peter Bormuth of 142 W Pearl Street spoke regarding 1) the Veregy proposal to the County, 2) the solid waste component of the Mayor's proposed Sustainability Plan and 3) his suggestion that the planting of mushroom bed be considered.

IX. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Inosencio discussed Earth Day and associated activities at the King Center and other events on the Grow Jackson website.

X. Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 6:00pm

XI. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Wood and seconded by Commissioner Inosencio to adjourn approved unanimously. Meeting ended at 7:02 pm.

