

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION 11-17-21 MEETING

MINUTES (APPROVED 01-19-22)

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Date: Wednesday, November 17, 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 6:04 pm.*

II. Roll Call

Present: *Commissioner Will Forgrave (Sixth Ward Councilmember), Commissioner Kelsey Heck Wood, Commissioner Bethany Hersha, Commissioner Jacob Inosencio, Commissioner Kelli Kazmier (Chairperson) and Commissioner Cole McEldowney*

Commissioner Kevin Lund arrived at 6:18 pm.

Absent: *None.*

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

Also Present: *None*

III. Adoption of the Agenda

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

IV. Approval of 10-20-21 meeting minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Forgrave and seconded by Commissioner McEldowney to approve the minutes was presented. Motion approved unanimously.

V. Citizen Comments (3-minute limit)

None

VI. Orientation for New Commissioners

Chairperson Kazmier explained that when she was appointed to the Environmental Commission there was an orientation regarding the rules of Open Meetings. She explained that every Commissioner at the time was given a City email account and that Commission emails are to be made via the City email accounts. She inquired if all Commissioners have a City email account.

All responded no.

Mr. White found that City email accounts exist for Commissioners Forgrave, Heck Wood, Lund and Kazmier. No accounts exist for Commissioners Hersha, Inosencio and McEldowney.

Chairperson Heck explained that all communication and deliberations amongst Commissioners is to be made in the public meeting and not in emails or other outside communications. She explained that a minority may meet outside the public meeting to work on items for consideration by the whole.

She advised the Commissioners that they are not to “Reply All” to emails containing agenda packets – comments are to be made at the public meeting where deliberation belongs.

Commissioner Forgrave suggested that Mr. White inquire about instructional opportunities as there are new Councilmembers who will be in need of the same.

Commissioner Heck Wood suggested that perhaps materials are available through the Michigan Municipal League (MML).

Mr. White agreed to inquire of City staff what may be available.

Commissioner Inosencio inquired if it is acceptable to talk with fellow commissioners should their paths cross. Chairperson Kazmier replied in the affirmative as long as there is not a quorum.

VII. Adoption of 2022 Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Commissioner McEldowney and seconded by Commissioner Inosencio to approve the 2022 Meeting Schedule as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

VIII. 2021 Action Items

a) Refuse and Recycling Committee Report and Discussion with City Manager

Commissioner Kazmier introduced the 06-16-21 memo to recently appointed Commissioners. She then reminded the Commissioners that a goal for the current meeting was to start the preparation of a more detailed letter of recommendations.

Commissioner Heck Wood reminded the Commissioners that the 06-16-21 memo is intentionally short and broad – that it was intended to be a one page overview and did not include all that had been discussed.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that it encapsulates what the Commission hopes will be accomplished and does not include all the research that had been done. She stated that data provided by the DPW and NEO indicate that illegal dumping and citations are frequent throughout the City. It appears that a pattern of regular dumping and DPW cleanups has emerged at certain locations.

Mr. White explained that the DPW and NEO had provided reports that show the actual number of incidents they have responded to and the associated costs for those incidents.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that the current policy of using citations and fines to regulate dumping and pile-ups is not completely effective and are not solutions for changing behaviors.

Commissioner Lund suggested that a curbside pickup program for every residence would help alleviate the problem.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired of the Commissioners what policy ideas the group has to better address the problem.

Commissioner Inocencio inquired about the discussion with the City Manager (CM) at the previous meeting – Commissioner Inocencio understood the CM’s proposal to be to licensing program for multiple haulers rather than a contract with a single hauler and mandatory participation.

Commissioner Kazmier related that her understanding of the licensing proposal is that it would allow haulers to forego the requirement that refuse be collected from the rear of a property in exchange for converting to a fleet with mechanized pick-up apparatuses for pickup within an exclusive zone. Licensee services would include recycling, yard waste pickup and large item haul away. Potentially, a licensing program may result in few trucks on the streets.

Commissioner Lund related that mechanical arms for pickup are already in use and are standard practice in many communities – a deal to switch to this type of equipment is not much of a deal as haulers are already doing this.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that it may not be useful to be concerned about the results of the last effort to move towards a single hauler system.

Commissioner McEldowney stated suggested that the Environmental Commission should push for what is needed without an eye to the previous experience and political considerations. Those can be made by the politicians.

Commissioner Hersha inquired how a single hauler would increase access.

Commissioner Heck responded that it would provide recycling to those that currently can’t get it.

Commissioner Inocencio suggested that the City could leverage its size to ensure that the recycling that gets picked up actually gets recycled.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that a single hauler system would get service to those who currently don’t have service.

Commissioner Hersha inquired if it is possible to increase access without going to a single hauler system.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that perhaps the words “single hauler” has inadvertently become synonymous with “required pickup” when maybe it shouldn’t.

Commissioner Hersha inquired how a single hauler system would reduce dumping.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that it would reduce dumping by small haulers.

Commissioner Herhsa inquired about the cause of the dumping – what is the cause? Are evictions a factor? She then stated that the Commission has had much discussion about residential refuse but not so much about the largest refuse generators which are non-residential. Perhaps the Commission should consider the practices of the large generators first.

Commissioner Inosencio inquired if, for example, Consumers Energy, would be included in a single hauler system.

Commissioner Kazmier replied that conversations to date have centered on residential refuse.

Commissioner Lund suggested that multi-family residential properties may need to be included in a single hauler system. He stated that an RFP with specifics will be needed if bidders are to be fully informed when putting together their prices. He stated that all RFPs that he has reviewed breaks down single family residential, multi-family residential and non-residential customers.

Commissioner Lund stated that some cities do have a licensing mechanism for small haulers. He stated that all RFPs that he has reviewed had the City collecting fees from properties and then paying the hauler. The cities also have designated staff that respond to calls and concerns from residents and manages the hauler(s).

Commissioner Kazmier inquired of Commissioner Lund if the communities he's reviewed had universal access – do residents opt in or are they required by ordinance to be in?

Commissioner Lund responded that all require participation – participation is not optional. Also, the cities do the billing rather than the haulers as cities have more collection options.

Commissioner Lund stated that insurance requirements are a large part of the hauler contracts.

Commissioner Lund stated that the hauler selection process can incentivize a reduction in idling and emissions. Some recent RFPs by peer communities require a reduction in emissions and particulate release.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired of Commissioner Lund if that are any RFPs from peer communities that might serve as a starting template for the generation of an RFP for Jackson.

Commissioner Lund replied that the City of Flint recently issued an RFP that addresses many of the issues that the Commission has been discussing and that Flint is a community that has much in common with Jackson.

Commissioner Kazmier asked Commissioner Lund to share Flint's RFP as well as the spreadsheet he has generated regarding other RFPs he has reviewed. Commissioner Lund replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Kazmier suggested that a draft RFP that has been generated to meet the needs of Jackson might be easier for City Council to consider than a generalized push towards a single hauler system.

Commissioner Lund stated that an RFP must be very specific because large haulers use software to model their routes and attached costs. He stated that small haulers may not have such tools.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that an RFP that includes the Commission's priorities could be used as a starting point for discussions by City Council. She then inquired if eliminating the prohibition of refuse cans at the curb should be considered in the interest of reducing costs.

Commissioner Forgrave responded that costs are determined by haulers.

Commissioner Lund agreed with Commissioner Forgrave and added that a reduction in work at pickup should result in some reduction in cost.

Commissioner Lund suggested that pickup be bid with both options – pickup from the rear yard and at the curb.

Commissioner Forgrave stated that the single hauler contract was bid with options in 2013 and that created uncertainty by bidders which was then reflected in higher bid prices.

Commissioner Lund responded that contractors would have choices in what prices they assign to which options.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that the desired level of service needs to be established before being put to bid – that this is an opportunity to get what it both desired and needed. The Commission can balance cost and access considerations and then suggest putting a contract to bid that will best address this balance.

Commissioner McEldowney stated an appreciation for Commissioner Hersha’s input and suggested that an RFP include service for single-family residential, multi-family residential and non-residential to ensure that everyone is following the rules.

Commissioner Kazmier inquired about the need to consider a change in practice in how violators are dealt with. Perhaps this needs to be a future discussion.

Commissioner Inosencio inquired if everyone would pay the same in a single hauler system.

Commissioner Kazmier replied that, if billing is done by the City, probably yes.

Commissioner Lunded stated that some of the RFPs that he has reviewed does set up a structure to help those with lower incomes.

Commissioner McEldowney suggested that a priority has to be that everyone has access to service.

Commissioner Inosencio stated that a universal system will raise costs for people who currently are not paying for service.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that there would likely be savings in the informal system that currently exists to pick up dumped and piled refuse using Street Funds and permit fees that may be able to offset the increased costs for those who currently do not have service.

Commissioner Lund replied that the money that is funding current practice is designated to other budget categories that have specific revenue sources – that Street Funds and permit fees cannot be formally directed towards refuse collection.

Commissioner Lund then suggested that an RFP could be written to base fees on receptacle size to address the lesser needs and means of some and the increased needs and means of others.

Commissioner Forgrave suggested that an RFP could be written to incentivize subcontracting with current small haulers.

Commissioner Heck Wood suggested that further discussion should be pursued after the requested RFP information has been provided by Commissioner Lund.

Commissioner Kazmier agreed. She stated that, unless there is objection, discussion on this item will be closed for this meeting and that Commissioner Lund will provide example RFPs and then the Commission will generate an RFP for Jackson. Commissioner Kazmier requested that Mr. White provide copies of the current refuse ordinance as well as the 2013 single hauler ordinance that was approved and then rescinded.

As there was no objection, discussion was closed.

b) LEED Committee Report and Discussion

Commissioner Kazmier presented a draft memo to the City Manager to encourage or suggest environmental considerations in contracting. She suggested that perhaps such an effort should be advanced on a parallel track with the single hauler ordinance so that environmental scoring can be part of a single hauler selection process.

Commissioner Hersha stated she is in agreement and would like to fast-track this effort with or without her suggested edits.

Commissioner Hersha then provided suggested edits.

Commissioner McEldowney made a motion to approve the memo with Commissioner Hersha's proposed modifications. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lund. The motion was approved unanimously.

c) Non-Motorized Committee Report

This action item was tabled at the September 2021 meeting.

IX. Electric Vehicle Ordinance

Commissioner Kazmier stated that the Mayor's proposed ordinance has been sent to the Environmental Commission for consideration and input. She stated that a letter of support similar to what was provided for the Urban Farming Ordinance could be generated if that is the Commission's preference.

Commissioner Heck Wood asked for clarification about the proposed ordinance and why it was sent to the Environmental Commission.

Commissioner Forgrave explained that approval of this ordinance before his term expires is a goal of the Mayor. He explained that this ordinance would not impact existing parking lots but would apply to new construction.

Commissioner Inosencio stated that he does not support electric cars but rather prefers mass transportation as the more environmentally friendly option. He stated that he will not support a letter of support for this ordinance.

Commissioner Lund disagreed. He stated that electric cars are a step forward and are part of the transition to getting polluters off the roads. Commissioner Lund stated his support for electric cars.

Commissioner Forgrave clarified that is ordinance would put requirements on developers – not the City. The proposed ordinance would not result in direct costs to the City.

Commissioner Hersha agreed that electric vehicles are going to be necessary in the near future – that people are going to continue to buy cars and they might as well buy electric cars.

Commissioner Kazmier stated that electric vehicles is the direction we are going and there may be federal incentives to encourage this transition. Having such an ordinance in place may give the City a competitive edge in pursuing these incentives.

Commissioner Kazmier asked the Commissioners if a motion was to be made. No motion was made.

For lack of a motion, Chairperson Kazmier closed discussion.

X. 2021 Highlight Memo

Chairperson Kazmier related that the Commission has an Environmental Action Plan (EAP). The idea of this item is to highlight City accomplishments over the past year that correspond with the EAP. She asked that Commissioners consider accomplishments and bring them to the discussion.

Commissioner Lund suggested that a bullet point list would be all that is needed to show a connection between the EAP and actions taken.

Commissioner Forgrave stated that City Council passed a resolution to request that the County dredge the lagoons within Sparks Foundation Park.

Commissioner Inosencio stated that a quarter-acre garden has been established at the King Center.

*Commissioner Forgrave stated that Andrew Sargent from the Parks Department and **Aaron Dimick from the Manager's Office** has established the People for the Parks volunteer group to do cleanup and maintenance within the park system.*

Commissioner Kazmier asked Mr. White to provide a summary of lead water service replacements completed in the past year.

XI. Commissioner Comments

None

XII. Next Meeting – Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 6:00pm

XIII. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Heck Wood and seconded by Commissioner Lund to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously. Meeting ended at 7:48 pm.