

Athens City Environment and Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Athens City Building
Wednesday January 8, 2020 6:00 PM

1. Call to order—Chair Aimee Delach called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Members present included Delach, Sarah Conley Ballew, Ed Newman, Sam Crowl, Paul Logue, Caitlin Garrity, Elaine Goetz, Austin Babrow, Stefan Gleissberg, Abbey Rodjam, and Cliff Hamilton. Quorum was established.

Luke Sulfridge was a guest.

2. Disposition of Minutes—the minutes from December 4, 2019 were reviewed by the commission. Gleissberg moved to approve the minutes as submitted to the commission. , Newman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion was approved.

3. Next Meeting Date – Feb 5, 2020, 6:00PM

4. Old Business

A. Student data collection—Logue reported that they are working on this. Delach and Gleissberg are working on biodiversity. Newman, Garrity, and Rodjom are interested in working on this as well. Crowl reported that a student is interested in a capstone project and could include the biodiversity section. Biodiversity will be done by Earth Day.

B. Green Apple Day of Service—Goetz reported that this is coming up on Monday, Jan 13. 10AM-2PM at Athens Middle School. Abbey may be interested in volunteering.

C. 50th Anniversary of Earth Day—Aimee discussed the bike club sponsor a bicycling film festival at the Athena Theater during Earth Week. Council member Chris Fahl has considered a tree planting and a block party. Elaine recommended we avoid scheduling on 4/21 and lunch on 4/22 due to OU events. OU is planning a lot of events. Sam said Athens Beautification Day may become “Days”. Paul discussed moving Bike to Work Day to during school year. Sarah discussed solar legislation that was already drafted being adopted by council. Austin discussed encouraging SEO counties to prepare a resolution to state legislature to promote renewable energy. Sam and Sarah suggested the mayor’s partnership for progress as a platform for moving this idea forward. Discussion on publicity and press. The commission would like to have the commission, city administration, and city council each take on an initiative as part of Earth Day 50.

D. Reusable Bag Giveaway—Sam met with Mayor, Janalee Stock and Nancy Pierce on this. Farmers Market is working to reduce usage.

5. New Business

- A. Luke Sulfridge, SOPEC—commission introduced themselves. Luke has been with SOPEC since July 2019. He did solar consulting and advocacy prior to joining SOPEC. Handouts were distributed. He is working on a program to reduce costs for governments and organizations. SOPEC is AEP Energy's largest customer. June 2020 will allow solar net metered households to join SOPEC with net metering pricing. Negotiating pricing for June is underway. Luke expects competitive pricing. Working on a study regarding bio-digestion at waste water treatment plants to convert to CNG and other uses to reduce need for spreading. SOPEC's role will grow beyond solar to provide other sustainable energy services.

Carbon fee may generate up to \$150K per year and collection will start in June. Public hearings will be held to generate ideas. Luke would like to leverage the funds to stretch them farther. PPA projects can do that. Long-term he would like to create a revolving loan fund.

Energy efficiency programs under OHB 6 ended in 2019. Solar and wind and #1 and #2 sectors for job growth nationally. Wind setback rules have stifled development in Ohio. Solar is best bet renewable in SEO. SOPEC looking ways to leverage load and open pathways for distributed generation. SOPEC generates 200GWH per year of load. Athens is 100% green power from Texas wind.

- B. West Side Community Association collaboration—Aimee recommended this be considered for Earth Day. Aimee discussed raingardens. Commission members asked about what kind of support the WCA needs. Aimee is going to attend their next meeting.

6. Announcements and Updates

A. Wayne National Forest plan—Aimee reported that the forest assessment is moving forward again. Draft will be released end of January. There will be a 45 day comment period after draft is released including an open house on March 3 at Nelsonville HQ.

B. Elaine reported on sustainable village concepts. They submitted a small grant to get invasive species removed.

C. ACSD—Aimee reported on chimney swifts at East Elementary. Chimney has been torn down.

7. Adjournment

Stefan moved to adjourn the meeting and Hamilton seconded. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20PM.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Logue