

Athens City Environment and Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda
Zoom Conference Call
Wednesday April 7, 2021 6:00 PM

1. Call to order Chairperson Aimee Delach called the meeting to order at 6:06PM with a land acknowledgement statement. Members present include Aimee Delach, Sarah Conley-Ballew, Jasmine Facun, Stefan Gleissberg, Sam Crowl, Austin Babrow, Elaine Goetz, and Megan Almeida. Members absent include Paul Logue, Ed Newman, and Abby Rodiam. Quorum was established. Guests include city planning intern Lauren Conner.

2. Disposition of Minutes the minutes from March 2021 were reviewed by the commission. Elaine Goetz motioned to accept the minutes as submitted to the commission. Sam Crowl seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The minutes were approved.

3. Next Meeting Date – May 5, 2021

4. Old Business

A. Backyard Chickens – Sarah Conley-Ballew shared a link in the zoom chat to a google survey that is to be shared via social media with Athens residents regarding the interest of Backyard Chickens in the City of Athens: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3QNMvNGJU1o-FqtAgU9iKNr63jp401me1z7yBv8i1C2aP1Q/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0&gxids=7628>. Sarah asked the commission members for opinions and feedback on the questions asked in the survey. To keep the interest of survey takers, Austin Babrow suggested that the first few questions be interesting questions about backyard chickens instead of the demographic questions. Aimee suggested adding a “I prefer not to say” option on the “What is your age?” and “What is your household income?” questions. Jasmine Facun suggested that multiple choice questions be moved to the top and keep open ended questions at the bottom. She also suggested rewording the “Do you live in Athens?” question to “Do you live within Athens City limits?” to make it clear for those who live in Athens County. Sarah asked that if anyone had any other suggestions to send them to her, Jasmine, or Megan Almeida. Jasmine said that they will work on the questionnaire for one more month and then request a motion to approve the questionnaire to be sent out to City of Athens residents via social media at the next commission meeting.

B. Earth Day 2021 – Sam Crowl shared that the Earth Day website lists numerous events on how to think about and celebrate Earth Month, Earth Week, and Earth Day in April. There are specific Athens County events listed to engage residents locally. Elaine Goetz shared the Earth Day website in the zoom chat: <https://athensohioearthday.weebly.com/virtual-earth-month.html>. Sam also shared that the sustainability awards were really impressive this year and winners will be announced on April 22nd.

C. Bee City USA – Sam shared that Bee Campus USA and Bee City USA will be announced on April 22nd. The sustainability commission is officially the Bee Campus USA committee for Athens. The City of Athens renewal date for Bee City USA will be in February 2023. Ohio University already approved an IPM plan, and the City of Athens has a number of IPM principles. The community will be working with the city to have a formal IPM plan and use the Ohio University IPM plan as a base. Those at Bee City see the IPM plan as the main thing that supports pollinators. There will be educational events for the community and a number of them can be partnered with the university.

Sam also asked commission member Ed Newman to serve on the OU Bee Campus committee due to his prior work with the university as well as his experience as a beekeeper.

The Arts, Parks, and Recreation department is the official sponsoring agent for Bee City USA. Mayor Patterson will be doing an annual Earth Day proclamation and he is going to work the Bee City USA announcement into that. Sam thought it would be a good idea to do an official announcement of the biodiversity section of the sustainability plan within this proclamation.

An organization called The Film Collective reached out to the university and they offer Earth Day films for free. There will be three short films available to watch the week after Earth Day (April 26th).

D. Clean Energy and Sustainable Toolkit – Sam asked that if there are items in that toolkit that people are excited about to let him know.

E. Equity Coaching Program – Sarah shared that the City of Athens is part of the Power for Clean Future Coalition and as a city, Athens has elected to participate in their equity coaching program. This is a 4-hour coaching session that city commissions and city council will be able to send a person to. By participating in the equity coaching program, the city qualifies for a greenhouse gas analysis done by the professional consulting group – Unpredictable City.

5. New Business

A. Student Appointee to the Commission – There are two outstanding candidates for the student position on the sustainability commission. Kaitlyn is an undergraduate student majoring in education who is set to graduate in 2023. Megan is an MFA candidate who has done a short film on birding. With only one vacant commission member opening, Aimee is saddened to let one of these candidates go. Sam recommended to appoint Megan for one year and then Kaitlyn the following year after Megan graduates. Aimee asked that Sam run this idea past both candidates. She also asked that the government channel invite Megan and Kaitlyn to the next meeting.

Jasmine asked if there is a place for others to support this commission without being on the commission. Aimee explained that the commission is open to the public and by attending meetings there are opportunities to engage with sustainability. Jasmine wanted to emphasize that if the commission member chooses Megan as the student appointee, to also encourage Kaitlyn to be involved with the commission by attending meetings.

6. Announcements and Updates

A. Wayne National Forest plan – This announcement can be dropped from the agenda.

B. Federal Update – This will continue to be monitored.

C. Bailey Trail System – Jasmine shared that the Bailey Trail System reopens to cyclists on Thursday April 15th. She encouraged the commission members to get out there and ride bikes or hike along the trails. There is a work day Saturday the 10th at 10am. If anyone is interested, email Aimee.

D. Used Bike Donations – There is a recycle program to donate used bikes to the people of Chauncey. There has been a phenomenal outpouring of bike donations through the program already. Sarah asked if the bikes need any parts or tools for repairs. Aimee said that they are working with a bike shop in Athens and after delivering the bikes to them, they perform a safety check, cleaning, and repairs.

7. Adjournment With all agenda items satisfied and no additional announcements or updates, Sarah Conley-Ballew motioned to adjourn the meeting. Austin Babrow seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Conner (city planning intern).