

Athens City Environment and Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday June 1, 2022, 6:00 PM
Athens City Building
8 East Washington Street, 3rd Floor
Athens, OH 45701

1. Call to order—Chair Aimee Delach called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Members present include Aimee Delach, Sam Crowl, Ed Newman, Elain Goetz, Katelyn Rousch, and Jasmine Facun. Quorum was established. Members absent include Paul Logue, Sarah Conley-Bellew, Megan Almeida, and Megan Westervelt.

2. Disposition of Minutes—Crowl motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Facun seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion was approved.

3. Next Meeting Date— July 6th, 2022.

4. Old Business

A. Athens Beautification Days—the commission discussed the beautification project completed at the garden behind the community center and members expressed interest in doing more projects.

5. New Business

A. Poison Hemlock—Community members have expressed concerns about poison hemlock on the bike path. Poison hemlock is an invasive species that can be deadly if consumed. The plant should not be handled because of the danger of getting sap on hands in one's eyes, mouth, or nose. However, this plant does not pose a danger to community members in its vicinity, such as those who use the bike path. Mowing the plants at this point in the season will not prevent them from coming back, and use of pesticides along the river plain is not a good idea. The plant can be pulled cautiously, but this is most effective before flowering occurs. Plant species such as Queen Anne's lace, wild parsnip, and cow parsley are often mistaken for Poison Hemlock. Facun suggested placing informational signage along the bike path to educate the public about the risks and to express the city is aware of the issue.

B. Commission Seat Opening—The commission is looking for candidates to take on the seat left open by former member Austin Babrow.

C. Ohio Environmental Council (OEC)—Molly Jo Stanley is the Southeast Ohio Regional Director for OEC. She explained OEC's role in bridging different levels of policy and funding to ensure the stewardship of Ohio's water, land, energy, and democracy. Stanley will continue to attend commission meetings to foster connection and insight between the City of Athens and the greater southeast Ohio region.

D. Solar Energy—The commission discussed the variety of ways other communities are growing their solar energy capacity while maximizing ecosystem services of the sites of solar farms. For example, Rousch sited projects that placed solar panels over places where goats graze or over pollinator gardens. Rooftop and parking lot solar is another example of maximizing space.

6. Announcements and Updates—Carbon audit presentation upcoming in July or August meeting.

7. Adjournment--Crowl motioned to adjourn the meeting. Facun seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Katelyn Rousch.