



MINUTES

City of Ypsilanti SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING Virtual Meeting

Monday, July 13, 2020
7:00 P.M.

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:01 p.m.

II. **ROLL CALL**

Keith Michalowski	Present	Katy Greenwald	Present
Nancy Heine	Absent	Beth Gibbons	Present
Julia Bayha	Absent	Christian Cannon	Present
Bryan Foley	Present	Takunia Collins	Present

Also Present: Council Liaison Steve Wilcoxon
Michelle Bennett, Beckett & Rader City Planner
Commission Recording Secretary, Nancy Hare-Dickerson

Additional Staff Present: Bonnie Wessler, Public Services Project Manager (Zoom Meeting Host)
Joe Meyers, Economic Development Director
Jamaica Barry, Code Enforcement Officer
Chelsea Thomas, Treasury Technician

III. **INTRODUCTIONS** – none

IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kate Levin, 704 Hemphill Street, expressed support and thanks for the resolution for pollinator-friendly plants.

V. **PRESENTATIONS**- none

VI. **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Greenwald (Second: Foley) moved to approve the Agenda as submitted.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

VII. **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of June 8, 2020 minutes

Cannon (Second: Greenwald) moved to approve the June 8, 2020 Minutes as submitted.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha

VIII. RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

1. Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission SJ-EJ Resolution

First Reading: Commissioner Gibbons read a draft of the Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission SJ-EJ Resolution into the record as follows:

A resolution of City of Ypsilanti's Sustainability Committee affirming its commitment to the principles of environmental and social justice in the wake of the combined disparate effects of COVID-19 on our community and the long history of police violence against African Americans.

Whereas, City of Ypsilanti condemns acts of brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive force by law enforcement officers.

Whereas, City of Ypsilanti supports strengthening efforts to promote accountability for individual law enforcement officers and police departments.

Whereas, the global pandemic COVID-19 has impacted the health, social and economic fabric of the City of Ypsilanti community;

Whereas, the disproportionate impact of the novel coronavirus has been on communities of color;

Whereas, City of Ypsilanti is committed to equity, fairness, justice, protecting its most vulnerable residents;

Whereas, the City of Ypsilanti is preparing to pass its first Sustainability Plan;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Sustainability Commission as follows:

The Sustainability Commission supports strengthening efforts to promote accountability for individual law enforcement officers and police departments.

The Sustainability Commission supports immediate steps to analyze police department structures, policies, and budgets and to reimagine how they can support local elected leaders' primary responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of their residents.

The Sustainability Commission is committed to centering the community's responses to the COVID-19 global pandemic in racial equity.

The Sustainability Commission supports the City of Ypsilanti dedicating resources, platforms, political will and authority to identifying and addressing the ways that the novel Coronavirus may exacerbate existing inequities in our communities and lifting up the medical and social needs of the most marginalized and demonstrate how centering their needs ensure the safety and health of all.

This resolution reconfirms our commission's commitment to social and environmental justice, and advancing the mission of this body to advocate, educate and promote the social, economic, and environmental health of the community now and into the future.

[At 7:12pm, a technical difficulty necessitated breaking from the meeting]

[At 7:18pm, meeting resumed]

Gibbons (Second: Cannon) moved to approve the Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission SJ-EJ Resolution as submitted.

[Discussion ensued as to the wide-range of topics included in the resolution and their relation to sustainability; as to additional items to possibly include in the resolution; as to ways to optimize the efficiency of the resolution in light of concerns of over-expansion in the resolution.]

Gibbons (Second: Cannon) moved to rescind the motion to approve the Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission SJ-EJ Resolution as submitted, in order to further review the resolution, to edit the language and to return it in revised form for approval at the next meeting.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

2. Sustainability Plan

A. Action Plan Prioritization for Ypsilanti's Sustainability Plan

Commissioner Michalowski explained that this was brought to the Commission by Public Services Project Manager Bonnie Wessler to serve as a reference guide to help the Commission work their way through the Plan and to help with making decisions on what needs to be done.

B. Commissioner Feedback

Commissioner Michalowski indicated that he received email feedback from Commissioner Gibbons as to the Plan. Commissioner Gibbons shared her feedback and proposed amendments to the Plan.

[Discussion was had between commissioners and Michelle Bennett, Beckett & Raeder City Planner, as to proposed amendments]

Gibbons (Second: Cannon) moved to approve the proposed amendments to the Sustainability Plan as discussed.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

C. Ypsilanti Resilience Hubs

Commissioner Foley shared updates as to a proposal he has in to the City of Ypsilanti DPW to install lights at the Parkridge Community Park Pavilion. Per query by Commissioner Foley, Public Services Project Manager Bonnie Wessler spoke as to the status of the playground equipment.

Foley (Second: Collins) moved to have Ypsilanti Resilience Hubs language added to the Sustainability Plan.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

D. Support for Pollinator-Friendly Plants

Commissioner Michalowski referenced the following Resolution as a proposed add-on to the Sustainability Plan.

Resolution No. 2020-002

2020-02-24

RESOLVED BY THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION:

WHEREAS, there is an ongoing global biodiversity crisis, with current rates of species' extinctions estimated at 1000 times the historical background rate across evolutionary time; and

WHEREAS, this biodiversity crisis is impacting animals responsible for pollinating the vast majority of food plants used for human consumption (hereafter "pollinators"); and

WHEREAS, monoculture turf grass (lawn grass) does not support biodiversity, requires unsustainable inputs of fertilizers, water, and fossil fuels for mowing and maintenance; and increases runoff and stream bank erosion; and

WHEREAS, native plants and other habitat- and food-providing plants (hereafter "pollinator-friendly plants") support pollinators and other wildlife; and

WHEREAS, pollinator-friendly plants can be well-adapted to local soils and climate, and insect- and disease-resistant, therefore requiring less water, chemical application, and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ypsilanti has been designated as a "Bee City;" and

WHEREAS, perception of lawn, property, or garden aesthetics is a personal choice;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Ypsilanti shall make every reasonable effort to use pollinator-friendly plants on properties owned by the City, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council will instruct the Planning Commission to update the City Zoning Ordinances to (a) strike the plant height limitation; (b) prohibit only invasive and noxious weeds; and (c) reflect support of pollinator-friendly plants and plantings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council will instruct the Administrative Hearings Bureau to disregard plant blight violations until the Zoning Ordinance is updated, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sustainability Commission will make every effort to educate and empower residents with the goal of transitioning private properties to include pollinator-friendly plants.

Invasive and Noxious Weeds

(List adapted from the resources below, along with consultation with professional botanists and restoration biologists.)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Plant Type
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Forb
Ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i> L. var. <i>elatio</i> r (L.) Descourtils; <i>Ambrosia elatio</i> r	Forb
Spotted Knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>	Forb
Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Forb
Canada Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Forb

Bull Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Forb
Queen Anne's Lace	<i>Daucus carota</i>	Forb
Teasel	<i>Dipsacus</i> sp.	Forb
Giant Hogweed	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	Forb
Dame's Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Forb
Purple Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Forb
Sweet Clover	<i>Melilotus</i> sp.	Forb
Wild Sweet William (Bouncing Bet)	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>	Forb
Bladder Campion	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Forb
Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	Forb
Orchard Grass	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Grass
Japanese Stiltgrass	<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Grass
Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Grass
Japanese Barberry	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Shrub
Autumn Olive	<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	Shrub
Japanese Knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Shrub
Asian Honeysuckles	<i>Lonicera</i> sp.	Shrub
Giant Knotweed	<i>Polygonum sachalinensis (Fallopia sachalinensis)</i>	Shrub
Common Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	Shrub
Glossy Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus frangula (Frangula alnus)</i>	Shrub
Multiflora Rose	<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	Shrub
Poison Sumac	<i>Toxicodendron vernix</i>	Shrub
Oriental Bittersweet	<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Vine
Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus</i> sp.	Vine
Sweet Pea	<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>	Vine
Poison Ivy	<i>Toxicodendron pubescens</i>	Vine/Shrub

Resources:

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) List of Prohibited and Restricted Weeds
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdard/Michigan_Prohibited_and_Restricted_Weeds_641413_7.pdf

State of Michigan Invasive Species Database
https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/0,5664,7-324-68002_71240---,00.html

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Michigan State-Listed Noxious Weeds
<https://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious?rptType=State&statefips=26>

Commissioner Michalowski also referred to a draft Native Landscaping Resolution/Ordinance Recommendation emailed by Public Services Project Manager Bonnie Wessler. Project Manager Wessler explained that she took a look at what other communities may be doing and provided it as assistance to the Commission in the development of their own resolution.

[Discussion ensued regarding Draft language]

Greenwald (Second: Michalowski) moved to approve Resolution No. 2020-002 Support for Pollinator-Friendly Plants.

[Discussion as to resolution language]

An alternative motion was made by Commissioner Collins to table the motion to approve Resolution No. 2020-002, in order to get more clarity on certain plants. No support was received; therefore, the motion was not acted upon.

[Clarifying procedural discussion was had]

Greenwald (Second: Michalowski) moved to approve Resolution No. 2020-002 Support for Pollinator-Friendly Plants as submitted.

[Further discussion continued as to language]

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon
Nays: Collins
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

Commissioner Greenwald and Council Liaison Wilcoxon will work together on bringing the Resolution before Council.

E. Temporary Hand-Washing Station for Parks

Commissioner Michalowski initiated discussion regarding temporary hand-washing stations being purchased and maintained in Ypsilanti City parks. *[Commissioner query and comments followed]* Commissioner Michalowski asked for commissioners to email any feedback they may have to assist him in preparing a draft resolution for the next meeting.

F. Commissioner Feedback

- Commissioner Greenwald shared additional feedback as to Plan language related to conservation and biodiversity. Commissioner Collins shared feedback as to language supporting local food systems. *[Discussion was had]*

Greenwald (Second: Cannon) moved to add the biodiversity recommendations and supporting existing local food systems language to the Sustainability Plan, as discussed.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

- Commissioner Gibbons provided additional comments as to correcting the Table of the Action Plan section that begins on page 45 -- action which is adaptation as well as mitigation.
- Commissioner Collins provided a comment to add “no-spray” language in the pollinator-bee section of the Plan. He also asked to add a “bee and butterfly-friendly zone” to the language of the Plan.

Collins (Second: Cannon) moved to add “bee and butterfly-friendly zone” language and to add “no-spray” language to the Sustainability Plan, as discussed.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Cannon, Collins
Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Heine, Bayha
Motion: Carried

Commissioner Michalowski addressed the lateness of the hour.

A motion was made by Commissioner Collins to extend the meeting time past 9pm. No support was received; therefore, the motion was not acted upon.

IX. WORK SESSION-none

X. COMMISSIONER REPORTS-none

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kate Levin, 704 Hemphill Street, expressed her thanks for the approval of the pollinator-friendly plants resolution and her support of the SJ-EJ resolution.

XII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

Commissioner Michalowski asked commissioners to email any items for the August agenda within the new two weeks.

XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday, August 10, 2020

XIV. ADJOURNMENT: 9:13 p.m.

Gibbons (Second: Cannon) moved to adjourn the meeting of the Sustainability Commission.

Voice Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Carried