



CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Thursday November 16th, 2023 - 5:00PM

Carbondale Civic Center – Room 103
200 S. Illinois Avenue, Carbondale IL

MINUTES

Voting Members:

	Present	Absent	Comment
Treesong (Chair)		x	Excused
Aur Beck (Vice Chair)	x		
Jane Cogie	x		
Kevin Clark	x		
Sarah Heyer	x		
Yoonseo Jung (CCHS Student)		x	Excused
Isaac Ludington (SIU Student)	x		
Gayle Klam	x		
Joan Davis	x		

Ex Officio Members:

	Present	Absent
Vacant		

City Staff:

	Present	Absent
Lauren Becker (Staff Liaison)	x	

Community Members Present: Chaya Rice, Laurel Toussaint

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call** (5:09pm)
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** October 19th, 2023 (J. Davis moved, K. Clark seconded)

Chair Treesong recommended via email that the minutes be amended to include Commission intention to draft a memorandum to City Council regarding energy efficiency

Vice Chair Beck noted the typo “choke” in “two-stroke leaf blowers”

3. Citizen Comments and Questions

The Commission received a detailed presentation from community member Laurel Toussaint, accompanied by photographs of Evergreen Park, regarding the importance of protecting and restoring our park’s natural remnant areas.

L. Toussaint drew attention to the City Council decision on October 10th, 2023 to pass an Intergovernmental

Agreement (IGA) between the Park District and the City to contract out a Parks Master Plan through Hutchinson Solutions. L. Toussaint drew attention to the lack of consideration the IGA gives inventorying and evaluating the natural resources of these public parks/spaces, and the lack of consideration the IGA gives to the importance of eliminating invasive species.

With over 655 visits to Evergreen Park since 2017, L. Toussaint logged 168 species personally through the Cornell app “Merlin” with 217 species in total. This designates Evergreen Park as a “hotspot” for biodiversity. “It is the second birdiest place in Jackson County” shared L. Toussaint. In addition, Evergreen Park is a site for remnant spring wildflowers. However, invasive species threaten the biodiversity of our region, strangling native species.

L. Toussaint notes that there is no mention of the natural resources, including a plant inventory. L. Toussaint shared that she believes each park should be surveyed for plants that benefit pollinators and that “we need to think beyond butterflies”. In addition L. Toussaint recommended consideration of our aquatic resources through the Parks Master Plan, considering the comprehensive ecosystem. L. Toussaint highlights that other communities have installed swift towers.

L. Toussaint commented that the Parks Master Plan provides, in tandem with the commitments made in the Mayors Monarch Pledge, provides the opportunity to steward our .5M acres of biodiverse public land. “We have more tree species here than all of Europe.” “We don’t know what we have, even those of us who care. We need professional evaluations. The eye cannot see what the mind cannot know.” “That will require an inventory and then education and training and a plan.” “My hope and vision is that we can connect to the greater ecosystem.” “We need a plan that’s a Southern Illinois park.”

J. Cogie shared that Ozark Koala has been performing work regionally and that this work takes time.

L. Toussaint stressed that this work will not be able to be completed by volunteers, that it will take folks being compensated for their time performing this critical service.

Liaison Becker shared that they are surprised the IGA does not incorporate ecosystem considerations in the scope of work to be performed, and that the Planning Department has not been a part of this process.

General discussion regarding Evergreen restrooms being closed.

4. Presentations

February 2023 Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Award (Vice Chair Beck)

Vice Chair Beck clarified that there has been discussion regarding two awards – the annual Chamber of Commerce Award and the less formal action of highlighting of sustainable actions in Carbondale businesses.

Vice Chair Beck shared that he’s seen, just in the past couple of weeks, public requests of a list of businesses that don’t use styrafoam, or businesses that have EV charging. He shared that a community member had been surprised to hear that New Kahala will make your takeout containers compostable for a small upcharge of 25 cents. Vice Chair Beck expressed he’d like to see the commission start to award folks for sustainable behavior.

G. Klam shared “when you give an award out, it implies this person is ‘perfect’” She shared she thinks it would be better if it was implied that “this was an entity moving us toward a better society”. “they’re not perfect” “they haven’t done everything” “a step toward”

Vice Chair Beck recommends “highlighting they did something better”.

J. Davis brought up concern that Burger King was awarded the Bright Spot Award.

Liaison Becker shared that they were not the Planner on that site plan, but that the City does require landscaping in new development.

J. Davis shared that the Sustainability Commission's mission is to discuss things and then draft proposals for City Council to discuss – so perhaps the Commission could recommend to the Council that they improve the landscaping requirements in the site plan, regardless of awards. "That's actually something very tangible that could be done, to show action, as a Commission."

Liaison Becker offered to give the Commission a presentation outlining current City Code landscaping requirements.

J. Cogie brought up the consideration "how do you compare apples and oranges" and that she believes the logistics of the awards are what has slowed the Commission down.

Vice Chair Beck and Liaison Becker provide the reminder that per the Open Meetings Act – more than two commission members are not able to gather (virtually or in person) to discuss business of the body. This includes replying to emails.

Vice Chair Beck recommended each Commission member coming up with their own criteria.

S. Heyer shared that she spoke to Chamber President Lo, and that if the Commission sent a name, once a month, he would send it out regularly with the Chamber of Commerce newsletter. S. Heyer shared a template of a news release she drafted. S. Heyer shared she would like to see it done once a month, but that nominations will need to go to someone.

Vice Chair Beck recommends using the Sustainability Commission email.

Liaison Becker shares they don't believe the email is being distributed to all Commission members.

J. Davis asked how often this process would occur.

Vice Chair Beck recommended a rolling basis for nominations, but that the only award he wants the Commission to have a discussion about is the Annual Chamber of Commerce Award. In that case, the Chamber will provide a plaque or certificate.

Liaison Becker clarified that given we're talking about two different awards, with different purposes, that it may be best to give them different names. Perhaps the formal, annual Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Award and the "Striving Toward Sustainability Shout-out" that is less formal, which communicates G. Klam's recommendation that the shout-out is for "effort" and puts to bed the baggage surrounding the Greenspot name.

Vice Chair Beck and J. Davis recommend the Annual Chamber Award incorporate the Sustainability Commission into its title.

Liaison Becker shared that this type of regular award management falls outside their role and wheelhouse as Staff Liaison or as Planner/Sustainability Coordinator, but it does have the potential of falling in the wheelhouse of our new Public Relations and Tourism folks. Liaison Becker offered to reach out to their colleagues to see if they have the bandwidth to manage a regular shout-out on social media and if so, what recommendations they have surrounding structure.

Liaison Becker clarified Commission intention to have the "shout-outs" be all businesses in Carbondale, but the Annual Chamber of Commerce Award be solely Chamber members. Commission members confirmed.

G. Klam clarified how a community member at large would make a nomination, if Liaison Becker does not have the bandwidth to take them. Liaison Becker brought up the potential of a portal, or a dedicated city email

address, similar to the Halloween decorating competition that was held in October.

Vice Chair Beck offered to be responsible for the intake of nominations. Liaison Becker shared they believe it will be easier for a city staff member to be responsible for managing nominations across the city website, designated city email address, and social media given that they have unfettered access to all three.

Vice Chair Beck shared that the Chamber of Commerce sends out a regular email asking for nominations, that are made through their website.

Liaison Becker clarified “who is asking for nominations for the Chamber of Commerce Award” Vice Chair Beck responded that it is send out to all Chamber Members. Liaison Becker clarified that the proposed Sustainability Award at the Chamber would be voted on by Chamber Members. This remained undetermined.

Liaison Becker clarified that given more discussion is necessary, that the Commission will be unable to submit a Chamber Award for this coming February and that the rolling shout-outs are automatically considered when making an annual selection for the Chamber Award. Vice Chair Beck confirmed the latter. S. Heyer confirmed the former.

5. Report of Officers, Committees, and Communications

a. Sustainability Coordinator Monthly Progress Report (L. Becker, attached)

Liaison Becker highlighted that last week they submitted the \$.5M planning grant to the Department of Energy for the Energy Future Grant, in partnership with Dowell, Jackson County, the National Renewable Energy Lab, Elevate Energy, and Lawyers 4 Good Government.

S. Heyer highlighted that Liaison Becker conducted a community consultation with the Neighborhood Action Group that resulted in the NAG dedicated the February meeting to a more accessible presentation and discussion of the Energy Sovereignty Proposal.

J. Cogie highlighted that Liaison Becker has conducted twenty-six community consultations so far surrounding the proposal.

b. Former Koppers Wood Treatment Site Report (A. Beck)

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Further Discussion Surrounding Two-stroke Leaf Blowers

S. Heyer shared that she is working on a draft memorandum.

Further Discussion Regarding Chamber of Commerce Award (Discussion held above)

Further Discussion Regarding Mayors Monarch Pledge – Accountability (Discussion held above)

8. Announcements

J. Davis highlighted the Carbondale Times article regarding a delegation of SIU faculty and community members who traveled abroad to evaluate agrivoltaics – and inquired whether the Sustainability Commission has any connections with them.

Liaison Becker shared yes, they work closely with both Ken and Justin, and are involved in conversations

surrounding Southern Illinois agrivoltaics, along with J. Cogie and K. Clark, who are representatives on the Communities LEAP Coalition for Jackson County.

J. Davis requested a list of entities the Commission is working with, and an explanation of what each entity does. J. Cogie shared that it is a bit more complex than solely the Sustainability Commission working alongside an entity – that there is quite a bit of overlap.

G. Klam requested more detail about the missions of each of the entities highlighted in the monthly Sustainability Report of Progress.

Liaison Becker shared that the time to ask for more information about the mission of the entities is during the Sustainability Commission meetings, during the “Sustainability Coordinator Report of Progress”.

Vice Chair Beck announced the Alternative Gift Fair at the Civic Center, Sunday December 3rd. You can give to the nonprofit in a loved one’s name.

Liaison Becker announced that minutes will come the morning after meetings.

9. Adjournment (6:21pm) J. Davis motioned. J. Cogie seconded.