



## **CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION**

Thursday December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 - 5:00PM

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

### **AGENDA**

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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes:** November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**3. Citizen Comments and Questions**

**4. Presentations**

**5. Report of Officers, Committees, and Communications**

- a. Sustainability Coordinator Monthly Progress Report (L. Becker, attached)
- b. Former Koppers Wood Treatment Site Report (A. Beck)

**6. Old Business**

Discussion | Gasoline Powered Lawn Equipment (L. Becker)

**7. New Business**

Memorandum Review | Gasoline Powered Lawn Equipment (S. Heyer)

Discussion | “Establish systems and procedures for community awareness and participation” (S. Heyer)

Discussion | Biodiversity Protections/Stewardship Standards (L. Becker)

**8. Announcements**

**9. Adjournment**

Voting Members:

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

Ex Officio Members:

|        | Present | Absent |
|--------|---------|--------|
| Vacant |         |        |

City Staff:

|                               | Present | Absent |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Lauren Becker (Staff Liaison) |         |        |

Community Members Present:



## CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Thursday November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - 5:00PM

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

### MINUTES

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#### 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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.

Good afternoon everyone,

The following will serve as my Sustainability Coordinator report of progress for the month of November 2023. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions and comments.

### **Table of Contents:**

1. Uncategorized Updates
2. Energy Sovereignty, Security, & Democracy Proposal
3. Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan
4. City Sustainability Commission
5. Jackson County Communities LEAP Community Coalition
6. Carbondale's Cabinet for Children & Youth

#### **Uncategorized Updates:**

- Continued regular check-ins with Wade Halva, Faith in Place
- Continued regular check-ins with Justin Harrell, SIU Facilities & Energy Maintenance
- Continued bi-weekly check-ins with Gary Williams, City Manager
- Continued attending weekly "Federal Funding Fridays" and "Federal Funding Flurries" offered by the Midwest Climate Collaborative
- Coordinated with Solstice, vendor of Microsoft's Philanthropy arm ENGIE to explore opportunity to decrease the Carbondale Warming Center's energy bills (11/3)
- Met with the Clean Energy 2 Communities (C2C) Expert Match team (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) for an additional scoping call, during which our PNNL technical assistance provider provided a presentation of draft suitable technology examples that could be investigated (11/6)
- Attended "Forging Ahead: Investing in Domestic Clean Aluminum (11/7)
- Served on higher education "Early Career Planning Panel" for aspiring urban and regional planners (11/7)
- Represented the City at the State's Energy Transition Workforce Commission Hearing (11/9)
- Met with local business owner Dave Mattingly to discuss improvements to municipal code made in order to encourage pollinator-supportive landscaping (11/16)
- Coordinated investigation of application of the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) to qualifying investments within the Southern Illinois Multimodal Station (SIMMS) with Finance Director Jeff Davis and Special Projects Manager Mark Bollmann, with the potential for a direct payment of \$.5M, awaiting confirmation from the Federal Transit Administration (11/28)

#### **Energy Sovereignty, Security, & Democracy Proposal:**

- Finalized and submitted the \$.5M Department of Energy (DOE) Energy Future Phase 1 Planning Grant, in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Lab, Elevate Energy (who coordinates the State's solar programs), Lawyers 4 Good Government, and the Village of Dowell, IL (11/8)
- Conducted another "Energy Sovereignty – The First of Many Community Conversations" with Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission, Study Circles, Stephanie Eichholz of Green Earth Inc., and the LiUNA Laborers' Local 773 with an overwhelmingly positive response
- Presented the Energy Sovereignty Proposal to the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee and received an overwhelmingly positive response (11/9)



- Attended “Coining a Cleaner Future: How to Finance Your Emissions Reduction Plan” (11/28)

#### Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan

- Completed required award forms through the Delta Regional Authority portal
- Coordinated with Greater Egypt to develop an intergovernmental agreement to be passed through City Council in December

#### City Sustainability Commission

- Held 11/16 meeting
- Began investigating models for reducing community usage of gas-powered leaf blowers, mowers, and other lawn equipment
- Began investigating community expertise to be applied to city land stewardship practices, with specific focus on habitat and biodiversity protections

#### Jackson County Communities LEAP Community Coalition

- Met on 11/9 and determined group interest in applying for C-LEAP Phase 2

#### Carbondale’s Cabinet for Children & Youth

- Met on 11/27 (Business meeting and Impact Tables)



**Community Development**  
200 South Illinois Avenue  
Carbondale, Illinois 62901  
Telephone 618-457-3248  
Fax 618-457-3289  
[www.explorecarbndale.com](http://www.explorecarbndale.com)

## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** The City of Carbondale City Council Members / Gary Williams, City Manager

**FROM:** City of Carbondale Sustainability Commission

**RE:** City Council Support for Transition to Electric Lawn Equipment

**DATE:** December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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One response to climate change has been to convert to electric power over fossil-fuel sourced power for motor vehicles and home appliances. Another area where such a conversion can be made is with power tools used in landscaping, from leaf blowers to riding lawn mowers. There are sustainable, battery-operated alternatives available on the market and the City should encourage their use. The advantages of such a transition include reduced noise and air pollution (particularly nitrogen dioxide, which causes respiratory problems). According to nlc.org, “Operating a gas-powered leaf blower for an hour, creates as much smog as a Toyota Camry driving 1,100 miles.”\*

One approach being taken by local governments is to provide funding for making the switch to electric. Rebates could be offered to residents 1) at or below median income, 2) when purchasing a new battery operated piece of equipment, and 3) when a gas-powered piece of equipment is disposed of.

A second step is to target commercial/business and municipal equipment. Battery-operated lawnmowers that can run for more than a couple hours are costly (\$30k and up), so the transition would be gradual, with a deadline of five years, for example, when no gas-powered equipment would be used in the city limits/zoning area. Again, rebates could be used for businesses and grants for city and park district equipment.

Funding to facilitate such transitions in other places has come from the American Rescue Plan Act (State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds), air quality grants from state departments of health and state EPAs, and from nonprofits like Quiet Communities (quietcommunities.org) and the American Green Zone Alliance (agza.net). Local banks could also be enlisted to support small landscaping businesses with loans to cover the initial investment in equipment and batteries. The Sustainability Action Plan calls for such transitions to be equitable and accessible.

With this memorandum, the Carbondale Sustainability Commission is requesting that the City Council direct city staff to explore potential sources of funding, both internal and external, and possible rebate programs.

Taking this step will be another way that Carbondale sets an example for other communities in Southern Illinois. It will advance implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan, approved by the City Council in Spring 2022. It helps us move toward clean renewable energy and reduce air and noise pollution, maximizing community benefits.

\* <https://www.nlc.org/article/2022/12/22/one-thing-city-leaders-can-do-to-support-electrification-electric-lawn-equipment/> Note that expected reductions in CO2 emissions are relatively minor, and NO2 is not a greenhouse gas, but it is a pollutant and contributes to the creation of tropospheric ozone, a greenhouse gas.