



CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Thursday December 21st, 2023 - 5:00PM

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

MINUTES

Voting Members:

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

Ex Officio Members:

	Present	Absent
Vacant		

City Staff:

	Present	Absent
Lauren Becker (Staff Liaison)	x	

Community Members Present: Liz Gersbacher, Laurel Toussaint, Chaya Rice, Frances Madeson

1. Call to Order and Roll Call (5:04pm)

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes: November 16th, 2023 (K. Clark moved, G. Klam seconded)

3. Citizen Comments and Questions

- L. Toussaint spoke about the guided tour she provided L. Becker on 12/21
- F. Madison shared about their own memory of a jarring tree cutting that occurred in New York and their deep grief at the tree removal that occurred at Evergreen Park
- L. Gersbacher shared about their involvement and leadership with the League of Women Voters, water protections, deep disappointment in the habitat removal that occurred at Evergreen Park, and support for both L. Toussaint's work and G. Klam's work.
- C. Rice shared that they would like to become a regular attendee of the Sustainability Commission and that they were recently appointed to the SIU Carbondale Sustainability Council
- L. Gersbacher and G. Klam expressed interest in revisiting the City of Carbondale's current water protections ordinance, which ensures public water supply is uncompromised, and that funding brought in by

the water department is directed to water protections.

- L. Gersbacher highlighted an opportunity for folks to hear a presentation from SIU professor, Dr. Brent Pease on January 14th from 1-3pm at the Crab Orchard Natural Wildlife Refuge. (To be distributed with the meeting minutes)

4. Presentations

5. Report of Officers, Committees, and Communications

- a. Sustainability Coordinator Monthly Progress Report (L. Becker, attached)
 - G. Klam requested more information about (1) the proposed structure of the Comprehensive Master Plan, (2) how the community will be engaged, and (3) whether previous studies and water-related plans have been/will be applied to the Comprehensive Master Plan, to ensure that information is not lost.
 - J. Cogie provided additional insight into her understanding that there was a study conducted surrounding the feasibility of a “stormwater utility fee”
 - L. Becker confirmed there was a feasibility study conducted surrounding a stormwater utility fee, and explained what a stormwater utility fee structure could look like
 - L. Becker provided more information about (1) the proposed structure of the Comprehensive Master Plan, (2) the Advisory Committee and public engagement portion of the planning process, and (3) confirmed that previous studies and water-related plans have been/will be applied to the Comprehensive Master Plan.
 - J. Cogie recommended reaching out to Marge Brooks at SIU Zoology, who may be a resource surrounding nutrients runoff
 - J. Davis requested a summary of “where we’re at with the process” surrounding the Energy Sovereignty, Security, & Democracy Proposal
 - L. Becker shared that we will hear back in January whether we’ve received the \$.5M planning grant, through the Department of Energy, that we applied to with the National Renewable Energy Lab, Elevate Energy, and Lawyers 4 Good Government. If awarded, it will provide a “go/no-go analysis” of the proposal. That is the next step.
 - L. Becker drew attention to the Investment Tax Credit exploration they are conducting with the Finance Director and Special Projects Manager for the Southern Illinois Multimodal Station (SIMMS) to the tune of \$200-\$500K
- b. Former Koppers Wood Treatment Site Report (A. Beck) No further updates

6. Old Business

Discussion | Gasoline Powered Lawn Equipment (L. Becker)

- L. Becker shared that they reached out to their colleague at the City of Naperville, IL to learn more about their program(s) and gained access to the Working Group Report shared with the Commission via email.
- L. Becker shared that given that it’s budget season, they have budgeted \$5K in funds, in the event that the commission were to recommend the creation of a rebate model initiative. It’s necessary to put in a request now to ensure there is funding available in Fiscal Year 2025

7. New Business

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

- S. Heyer read the draft memorandum aloud
- The commission expressed generalized support for the memorandum, no vote was held
- J. Davis expressed that she believes there are very few community members who are aware of the Sustainability Action Plan, and that a memorandum of this nature may “alienate” folks until they “buy into

the bigger concept” and that if more lawns were converted to pollinator-yards, there would be less need for mowing, but overall: “I am in for everything”

- A. Beck, L. Toussaint, and J. Davis all provided information on the availability of and the benefits of electric lawn care equipment within the community
- Chair Treesong proposed removing the idea of a ban from the memorandum, and instead encouraging staff to look at what other cities have done to encourage change
- J. Davis recommended holding off on putting forward any additional memorandums until a larger direction for the commission is established
- L. Becker reminded the commission that their power lies in “being an advisory commission to the City Council” and that memorandums directed to the City Council have the capacity to direct staff to take action, however if a memorandum moves forward that directs staff to explore/research what other communities have done, that L. Becker has already done that – by providing a working group report evaluating the pros and cons of different models.
- G. Klam shared that it could be interesting to know whether SIU Carbondale is exploring electrification of lawn equipment
- L. Becker shared that the C-LEAP coalition for Jackson County allows L. Becker to work alongside the SIU staff responsible as a collaborative force
- A. Beck shared that the impact of residential rebates has a powerful potential impact
- Chair Treesong reminded the commission that they’ve exceeded their one hour meeting and will need to wrap up
- J. Davis recommended “not using up our collateral moving things forward to the Council” and instead being “strategic” for instance increasing low-water usage landscaping, to be built on gradually
- L. Becker proposed a visioning session during the January 2024 meeting, similar to one held before commission turnover, during which commission members interrogate “what would the commission like to see moving forward” – this would propose all other business
- The Commission achieved consensus to the proposed visioning meeting
- G. Klam agreed with J. Davis and expressed interest in strengthening communication surrounding the implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan so that it is not a document that sits on a shelf
- S. Heyer agreed, J. Cogie concurred
- Chair Treesong supported a January 2024 visioning meeting
- L. Becker shared that the Sustainability Commission is not solely responsible for implementing the Sustainability Action Plan, and that recognizing the commission’s role as an advisory body
- L. Becker requested that the Commission interrogate “what the Commission means when they say we”

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

- Postponed due to time constraints

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

- Postponed due to time constraints

8. Announcements (No announcements)

9. Adjournment (J. Davis moved to adjourn, A. Beck seconded. Chair Treesong ensured consensus)