



CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Thursday January 18th, 2024 - 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	Traveling in Cuba
Jane Cogie	x		
Kevin Clark		x	Work Conflict
Sarah Heyer	x		
Yoonseo Jung (CCHS Student)	x		
Isaac Ludington (SIU Student)		x	Family Emergency
Gayle Klam	x		
Joan Davis	x		

Ex Officio Members:

	Present	Absent
Vacant		

City Staff:

	Present	Absent
Lauren Becker (Staff Liaison)	x	

Community Members Present: Laurel Toussaint, Chaya Rice, Mike Baltz, Becca Sullivan

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call** (5:04pm)
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** December 21st, 2023 (J. Davis moved, J. Cogie seconded)

Commission members expressed support for more detailed minutes.

3. Citizen Comments and Questions

- L. Toussaint summarized her experience speaking to City Council during the last General Meeting about her concerns surrounding public land stewardship and expressed she felt that her comments were well received, with Council members A. Loos and C. Killman recommending that a City Parks Director be hired. L. Toussaint expressed she does not believe that is the sole solution and gestured at the importance of an advisory body or committee. L. Toussaint, complementary to the materials she shared with the Commission via email on 1/18, expressed interest in determining what role this Commission plays in defining the direction taken.
- L. Becker asked L. Toussaint to connect them to Chris Benda

- J. Davis asked who manages Parks within the City.
- L. Becker provided a bit of background on the recent split of ownership between the Park District and the nascent City Parks Department, expressing that it is the result of a long history L. Becker could not do justice to.
- L. Toussaint expressed she sees this moment as an opportunity, given that both the City and the Park District are collaborating to contract the Parks Master Plan.
- G. Klam expressed that the mental or cultural shift that is necessary has already started on personal property and perhaps the Commission could send a letter to the City Council reminding them of our City's commitment.
- L. Becker reminded the body we will need to raise hands to be recognized by the Chair in order to ensure every member gets the chance to speak.
- J. Cogie expressed that a core component of this conversation is recreation, and that it will be important to have folks who are experienced in the blending of recreation and conservation at the helm.
- L. Toussaint expressed she will be getting ahold of the management plan for Cook County forest.
- L. Becker expressed surprise at the response Council provided to L. Toussaint's comments at the last Council meeting, highlighted the high level of stewardship outlined within the Sustainability Action Plan, and was transparent in sharing that early on in their time with the City, they had recommended hiring a City Landscape Architect. "It is going to take putting people in those positions, because without people doing the work, the work doesn't get done." L. Becker expressed respect for their colleagues' expertise and the actions that they take as experts in their field. "If it's not someone's job, the work doesn't get done."
- Chair Treesong expressed that it may be suitable to put a memorandum surrounding this topic on the agenda for future commission meetings.
- S. Heyer expressed that "the fact that the City and Park District are working together on contracting out this plan might be a good entry point to make a change [...]"
- L. Becker shared that Keep Carbondale Beautiful Executive Director Mike Baltz has kicked off synergy meetings that involve the Park District and the City of Carbondale, with Park District Executive Director Trey Anderson attending. L. Becker explained that as a City representative at those meetings, they are not the equivalent to Trey. "I do not have the same authority, or the same decision-making power surrounding stewardship of our public lands." L. Becker has requested an invite to these meetings be extended to Mark McDaniel, who is currently serving as the City Arborist and the Parks Department Director.
- Chair Treesong asked for a volunteer to draft a memorandum to City Council surrounding the topic to be discussed at the February Sustainability Commission Meeting.
- G. Klam expressed she would like to see formal communication to the City Council, as it is the Commission's role and responsibility.
- J. Davis expressed she would like to hold the Visioning Discussion prior to further activity on specific projects or proposals, as she has questions about the Sustainability Action Plan.
- J. Cogie expressed she appreciates J. Davis' comment, highlights the criteria for assessing priorities in the Sustainability Action Plan, and at the same time thinks that the Commission needs to grasp what's "in front of us and do-able".
- L. Becker shared that in the past year and a half the Sustainability Commission has adopted a model of Commission members drafting memorandums outside of the monthly Commission meetings to be reviewed by the Commission, discussed and voted on as business. L. Becker highlighted that from a technical standpoint, the Commission should have business on the table for meetings, otherwise the meetings are typically cancelled.
- J. Cogie expressed willingness to work on the Memorandum alongside another interested party.
- Chair Treesong expressed willingness to work on the Memorandum.
- L. Becker shared that their hope is Commission members will volunteer to take on the mantle of creating first drafts of memorandums to the City Council outside of the one hour Sustainability Commission meetings, synthesizing what the Commission has heard from community members and discussed so that Commission meetings can focus on review of the draft so the Commission is, "not starting from scratch".
- Community Member Chaya Rice asked "What is Carbondale doing in regards to solid waste management, composting, volume reduction, and disposal?"
- L. Becker offers to answer, that the City of Carbondale is participating in the Jackson County 5 Year Solid Waste Management Planning process, administered by Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission, and

that Loren Polley, the City's Refuse & Recycling Coordinator, and Lauren Becker will be serving on that planning team. L. Becker shared that the City Manager has tasked L. Polley and L. Becker with creating a municipal composting service, which will be a central component of the JCSWMP. Direct questions can be directed to Loren Polley at lpolley@explorecarbondale.com

- M. Baltz shared that February 6th, there will be a Community Input Meeting, held by Angie Kuehl, the Jackson County Recycling Coordinator.

4. Presentations

5. Report of Officers, Committees, and Communications

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

- J. Davis requested more information about the Southern Illinois Aggregation Partnership (SIAP).
- L. Becker shared that the City of Carbondale is now municipally aggregated, which was an agreement negotiated by the City Manager, through contract with Affordable Gas and Electric, who is evaluating whether they would like to sleeve in their own solar assets to the renewable energy portfolio they can offer to their SIAP customers.
- G. Klam requested more information about the conversation held with the Sustainability Coordinator of Naperville, IL
- L. Becker expressed that they pursued a residential rebate, and provided the report that went out in the last Sustainability Commission agenda packet, which the Commission can review in order to select their preferred model. L. Becker highlighted that Naperville has not yet solved the question of how to encourage fleet and equipment transition of private lawncare businesses.
- S. Heyer asked whether Naperville's fleet has been converted.
- L. Becker responded they have not converted.
- J. Cogie recommended reaching out to Scott Tess at the City of Urbana as a resource
- J. Cogie requested more information on an Earth Day Calendar for 2024
- L. Becker requested that emails about Earth Day events be sent to both L. Becker and SIU Sustainability Director Aimee Lemrise, given that they need to touch base on whether SIU's calendar will include community-wide events.
- Community member Chaya Rice expressed willingness to help strengthen communication and was thanked by L. Becker
- J. Cogie asked whether there was a recording of the Morton Arboretum Inflation Reduction Act Funding Seminar.
- L. Becker responded that the event was live and no recording was available.

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

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Carbondale Sustainability Commission – Visioning Discussion

Chair Treesong opened discussion by highlighting the Criteria for Assessing Community Priorities, and recommended that these criteria be utilized when the community approaches the Commission with requests.

J. Davis draws attention to, "The Carbondale Sustainability Commission is responsible for advising [...]" and read directly from the Sustainability Action Plan, expressing a desire to clarify that the Commission must listen to public input, provide insight, and then take action. J. Davis asked "What are we supposed to do?"

J. Cogie shared that when they were formulating the plan, they did not have access to the City. "Sarah and I would knock on people's doors [...]" They were unclear whether there would be resources dedicated. J. Cogie highlights that L. Becker can be the Sustainability Commission's liaison on considerations. Through the

creation of this staff position, the Commission has access.

J. Davis expressed a desire to avoid being pulled in multiple directions at the same time .

G. Klam asked how L. Becker feels the commission fits into the larger work that they are doing to pursue Energy Sovereignty, Security, & Democracy.

L. Becker shared that when they came into this position, she was astonished by the beautiful, bold, audacious plan had been written. “I had been set up to succeed, by this guide on what our community would like to see.” They determined the first thing they needed to do was diagnose where our community was at surrounding our greenhouse gas emissions, given that the City of Carbondale has committed to carbon neutrality by 2050 and a 45% reduction by 2030. In order to reach that goal, L. Becker needed to roll up their sleeves and pursue implementation from the get go. “That is the root of the Energy Sovereignty, Security, & Democracy Proposal, which will reduce our annual, community-scale greenhouse gas emissions by 66% with one capital construction project, and simultaneously meet each of the Criteria for Assessing Community Priorities of the Sustainability Action Plan.” The Sustainability Commission was the first stakeholder group that L. Becker presented the concept to, given that L. Becker is directly responsible for implementing the SAP. Communication surrounding progress is meant to occur through the Sustainability Commission meetings and the Sustainability Coordinator Monthly Reports of Progress. L. Becker shared that the Sustainability Commission will continue to be one of the stakeholder groups consulted on the proposal.

G. Klam expressed that given the scale, she believes the Energy Sovereignty Proposal could be the Sustainability Commission’s primary priority.

L. Becker reminded the Commission that they already have a direct line to L. Becker, but that sharing Memorandums with the City Council allows the Commission to get a direct line to other staff members. “I can’t direct the actions of my colleagues, but you all can. This allows me to provide my colleagues with help.” “Hopefully I’ve cultivated such a relationship with my colleague that they feel they can call me and ask, ‘Can you find us some funding for x,y, and z?’”

J. Davis asked how the Commission can ensure that the projects aren’t dropped in L. Becker’s lap?

Chair Treesong expressed there is power in formalizing community perspectives.

L. Becker expressed that, “at the end of the day, our elected representatives are politicians, and they don’t like bad press”. “If direct and actionable Commission recommendations are brought to Council in concert with community members, things move. If no direct and actionable recommendations are presented, very often there is no movement.”

J. Davis brought the Commission back to the topic of alternative fuel lawncare equipment, highlighting that there are community members who would not like to see government interference. “Does our activity involve inviting public/asking for input at our Thursday night meetings?”

Community member Chaya Rice expressed confusion at the SIU Coal Fired Power Plant

L. Becker quickly summarized that in order to shutter operations of the coal fired power plant, SIU would need to convert their campus’ steam system. Replacement of this steam system is a massive overhaul and replacement of existing infrastructure that requires significant capital investment (i.e. geothermal). This is something Facilities and Energy Management staff would like to do, but it is costly.

L. Becker responded to J. Davis’ question surrounding public engagement - 100% if the Commission wants to attract more public attendance, L. Becker can pass along a request to PR staff to post to City social

G. Klam suggested review of the format of public engagement for the Sustainability Commission.

S. Heyer recommended a presentation be given about issues, followed by public discussion.

L. Becker asked “who would give the presentations”?

General discussion of whether the wider community would support a rebate occurred.

L. Becker expressed the Commission functions on the business that is presented to the body, and that their original instructions upon hiring was that if the Commission does not have formal business, the body should not meet. What that takes is a commission member saying “I’m going to write this Memorandum, so that there’s something workable the Commission can give feedback on, instead of starting from scratch.” “You don’t need my approval or your fellow Commission members’ approval in order to draft a memo.”

J. Davis shared that the City Council wants to see action come out of this Commission.

J. Cogie seconded it’s “hugely important to bring the public with you”.

Chair Treesong highlighted that the Commission is significantly over time.

8. Announcements

L. Becker circulated a draft copy of the Sustainability Commission 2024 Schedule of Meetings to be voted on next meeting.

M. Baltz shared that the February 6th meetings will be held at the Jackson County Health Department and virtually at 10am as well as a fully virtual at 6pm.

S. Heyer recommended watching “Bank of Dave”, reminded Commission members of the Hybrid Neighborhood Alliance Meeting that will be held on February 3rd

J. Cogie shared that on February 28th, Clean Heat advocates will be hosting “Homes of the Future in Southern Illinois | A Healthcare Professional’s Perspective” This will be a virtual panel of healthcare professionals held from 6:30-7:30pm.

9. Adjournment (S. Heyer moved to adjourn, J. Davis seconded. Chair Treesong ensured consensus at 6:25pm)