



CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Thursday February 15th, 2024 - 5:00PM

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

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes: January 18th, 2024

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

7. New Business

Approval of the 2024 Sustainability Commission Schedule of Meetings

Approval of Sustainability Commission Memorandum to City Council Regarding Biodiversity Protections

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)			
Vacant (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 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)

Good morning everyone,

The following will serve as my Sustainability Coordinator report of progress for the month of January 2024. 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
- Continued regular "Synergy Meetings" held by Keep Carbondale Beautiful Executive Director Mike Baltz
- Continued regular Southern Illinois Clean Heat meetings in order to plan "Clean Homes of the Future in Southern Illinois: A Healthcare Professional's Perspective"
- Continued regular media request check-ins with Public Relations Officer, Tourism Director, and Planning Department
- Attended "CEJA Workforce Network Hubs and Energy Transition Navigator Programs: Apply for Funding, Round 2" hosted by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) (1/5)
- Attended the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Networking Event – CEJA Workforce Hub hosted at Southern Illinois University (1/8)
- Followed up with Greater Egypt staff Tyler Carpenter and Kelsey Bowe surrounding Greater Egypt and Green Earth Inc.'s request for City of Carbondale support in submitting to the Army Corps of Engineers Section 206, which would award tailored analysis and assistance in restoring local aquatic ecosystems. (1/8)
- Attended CEJA Workforce Hub Brainstorming Session (1/12)
- Met with Dany Robles of the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) to discuss potential applicants for the Carbondale CEJA Workforce Hub (1/17)
- Moderated the WSIU and Carbondale Public Library's Indie Lens Pop-Up Film Screening & Discussion "Razing Liberty Square" with a strong focus on climate gentrification (1/17)
- Attended meeting between League of Women Voters Representative Liz Gerschbacher and the City Manager to discuss biodiversity protections (1/19)
- Collaborated with Liz Garnati of Box Turtle Seeds and Public Relations Officer Eva Fisher and Tourism Director Dena Haun on a video demonstrating how to winter sow native seeds for pollinator-supportive landscaping in your own backyard. This video was released on the City's facebook page. (1/22)

- Held brief check in with the selected consultant for the City of Carbondale and Park District's Parks Master Plan, MJ Hutchinson of Hutchinson Solutions, during which we established Hutchinson's willingness to ensure best management practices for biodiversity protections within the plan. (1/23)
- Attended "Communication, Case Studies, and Collaboration – hosted by the Local Infrastructure Hub (1/24)
- Attended the 2024 ICLEI USA Year Ahead Call (1/30)
- Attended "EPA Community Change Grants: Overview of NOFO" (1/30)
- Attended "Illinois Climate Bank's 2024 Activities and DCEO CEJA Implementation Stakeholder Listening Session & Presentation" (1/31)

Energy Sovereignty, Security, & Democracy Proposal:

- Continued regular Clean Energy 2 Communities (C2C) Expert Match team (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) bi-weekly check ins.
- Coordinated with Mayor Debi Gresham of the Village of Dowell to submit data request forms to Ameren Illinois and Egyptian Electric.
- Attended "Virtual Training – Solar Siting and Decision-Making Tools" hosted by the National Renewable Energy Lab (1/9)
- Met with RL Engineering and Tech Solutions, one of the providers of technical assistance awarded to the City of Carbondale through the Energizing Rural Communities Prize (1/10)
- Held first check in with Village of Dowell project manager Jeff Ashauer (1/10)
- Attended "Virtual Training: Introduction to the System Advisor Model (SAM) Financial Analysis Software for Renewable Energy Systems" hosted by the National Renewable Energy Lab (1/16)
- Attended "Elective Pay and IRS Energy Credits Online" hosted by the US Treasury (1/17)
- Held an in depth conversation with Mary O'Hara and Gayle Klam regarding the proposal ahead of the February Neighborhood Alliance Meeting (1/18)
- Attended the "Energizing Rural Communities Prize Training at NREL January 23rd and January 24th as a virtual attendee. (1/23-1/24)
- Submitted the location of primary benefits to the HeroX portal for the Energizing Rural Communities Prize Round 2

Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan

- Attended Greater Egypt's first internal meeting surrounding schedule and grant administration (1/11)
- Fielded interviews with local stations about the Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan (1/24, 1/30)

City Sustainability Commission

- Held 1/18 meeting

Jackson County Communities LEAP Community Coalition

- Met on 1/4
- Met on 1/18



2024 Calendar – Regular meetings
CARBONDALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Third Thursday of Every Month - 5:00PM
Carbondale Civic Center, 200 South Illinois Avenue

January 18th, 2024

July 18th, 2024

February 15th, 2024

August 15th, 2024

March 21st, 2024

September 19th, 2024

April 18th, 2024

October 17th, 2024

May 16th, 2024

November 21st, 2024

June 20th, 2024

December 19th, 2024



Community Development
200 South Illinois Avenue
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
Telephone 618-457-3248
Fax 618-457-3289
www.explorecarbondale.com

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: City of Carbondale Sustainability Commission

RE: Biodiversity Protections on Public Land

DATE: February 15th, 2024

In the Spring of 2022, the Carbondale City Council, through unanimous vote, passed the City of Carbondale Sustainability Action Plan, which includes the following goals:

“Include all City-owned lands, natural spaces and waters under a plan that results in neutral or negative carbon emissions, maximizes community benefits, and sustains biodiversity and ecosystem functions.” (Focus Area 2: Nature, Goal #1)

“Incorporate sustainability goals in all land use plans.” (Focus Area 2: Nature, Goal #2, Objective 1)

These goals affirm that protections of biodiversity and ecosystem functions are to be incorporated in all land use plans, public and private. The first two actions under that first objective specify the measures whereby this objective for landscaping on both public and private land is to be met:

1. *“Develop a resilient land use plan that incorporates goals in this plan where applicable and also explore and implement methods to measure carbon emissions, and improve community benefits, and biodiversity and ecosystem functions”* (Focus Area 2: Nature, Goal #2, Objective 1, Action 1)
2. *“Reduce acreage that requires mowing; increase number and variety of native species, including pollinator plants and tree species that provide habitat for wildlife”* (Focus Area 2: Nature, Goal #2, Objective 1, Action 2)

[Insert description of what occurred at Evergreen Park and what specific concerns were voiced]

This memorandum from the Commission, advising the City Council surrounding biodiversity protections on City land, had as its impetus concerns voiced by citizens at the January 9, 2024 (?) City Council meeting on the removal of pollinator supportive trees and bushes from both Evergreen Park and the ditch located near the Splash Park and CCHS, both parcels of land recently shifted to City control.

In thanking these citizens for their comments, City Council members Killman, Loos, Rye, and Maxwell echoed concerns at pollinator habitat removal from these two sites. And at least one Council member also echoed the need to transition City management practices to align with our community's need for pollinator supportive landscapes throughout the City. Given the specific knowledge base and staff time such adjusted management approaches require, this transition may entail exploring the need for additional staffing.

[Insert description of the specific ask being made, (i.e. the hiring of a Parks Director, the hiring of a Landscape Architect) that have been discussed during Commission meetings]

In order to implement the Sustainability Action Plan, ensure the implementation of pollinator supportive landscaping and all the benefits to the health of our community and wildlife that depend on such landscapes, the City of Carbondale Sustainability Commission deems _____ imperative.

The Sustainability Commission, according to the bylaws of our commission, is issuing this memo as a recommendation to the City Council of Carbondale.