



Little Rock Sustainability Commission

Minutes of Meeting for July 24, 2020 at 11:30am

Webex Virtual Meeting

1. Chair Karen Zuccardi called the meeting to order at 11:31 am. A quorum was present.

2. **Attendance:**

A. **Commissioners Present:** Jan Baker, Michael DeAngelis, Katharine (Kay Kay) DeRossette, Grant Duensing, Niki Evansingston, Rachel Furman, Ron Hughes, Andrew Jester, Uta Meyer, Michael Nichols, Randy Pierce, Malik Saafir, Casey Shepard, Karen Zuccardi

Commissioners Absent: Linda Bell

B. **Guests Present:** Dennis Wightman, Chris Flores

C. **Staff Present:** Director Capi Peck, Director Kathy Webb, Melinda Glasgow – Sustainability Officer, Lennie Massanelli – Sustainability Educator, John Landosky – BikePed Coordinator, Jon Honeywell – Director of Public Works

3. **Approval of Minutes from June 26, 2020 meeting:**

Zuccardi made a motion to approve last meeting's minutes. Jester seconded the motion. All Commissioners approved.

4. **Committee Reports:**

Energy – Andrew Jester, chair

Met through Zoom on Tuesday, July 7th @ 4:00 p.m.

- Jester reported on Street Lighting tariff, Entergy – trying to get the right people in the room together to move action forward, which is beginning to happen with Municipal League contact

- 2016 Energy benchmarking report from CLEAResult
 - ✓ Data from every building in the CLR
 - ✓ Energy committee wants to review and get an updated audit

Jester made a motion for the Energy committee to pursue developing an updated energy audit. DeAngelis seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- Hughes - Home energy ratings project update – seeking more stringent testing requirements for all new home construction – next step is working with City Planning Department

Jester made a motion for the Energy committee to work on the home energy new construction testing requirements and ratings. All were in favor.

- Dark Skies Ordinance – Jester shared power point, which included areas with the most light pollution in the CLR – working on ordinance that all new commercial construction, where they install new lights, would have to be Dark Skies compliant.

Jester made a motion to vote on whether we bring this project to the Commission next month. Zuccardi seconded. All were in favor.

Environment, Health and Wellness – Michael DeAngelis, chair

Met through Zoom on Monday, July 20th @ 6:00 p.m.

- Monthly meetings will be moved up a week – next meeting August 17th at 6:00 p.m.
- 2 project proposals:
 - Meyer leading effort on Fourche Creek Watershed Management Plan – she’s gathering a small group together to discuss what’s previously been done
 - Holly Anderson updated on USDA grant, which has to do with community gardens

DeAngelis made a motion that EHW committee revive and continue to work on drafting an invasive species ordinance. Zuccardi seconded. Discussion included challenges of bringing numerous expertise in to enforce ordinance. All were in favor.

Waste & Reduction – Randy Pierce, chair

Special meeting called in lieu of regular Committee meeting to discuss drafting letter to the Board of Directors in support of extending Waste Management recycling contract without glass addition

- Next W & R meeting will be held August 20th at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom
- Pierce reported on changes in recycling market, due to COVID-19
- Plastic bags in yard waste will continue to be on W & R agenda, discussion to resume in August

Education & Community Outreach – Niki Evansingston, chair

2 projects:

- Making sure that there is an environmental curriculum in each after-school and out of school program
 - ✓ Evansingston met with Dana Dossett, Director of Community Programs, trying to figure out how to make this project work virtually
 - ✓ Evansingston spoke with Paula Flores, the EPA Environment Education Coordinator for our region (region 6), trying to get curricula together for 6th-12th graders for after-school programs
 - ✓ Evansingston was able to find a few good resources regarding funding and educational resources for those projects via EPA – she can email the information to those interested
- Radio Show – Evansingston will send committee chairs additional email to piggyback the one she sent March 2nd, asking how each committee can participate on the show – planning 6-series shows for Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. – they won't be live due to COVID-19 – each show will be pre-recorded
- Next ECO meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 11th at 6:00 p.m.

Transportation – Karen Zuccardi, interim chair

- Slow Streets vs. Open Streets projects discussion

Zuccardi made a motion for Transportation Committee to work on Open Streets project.

Director Peck brought up several points, including concerns about maintaining social distancing in an Open Streets environment.

Director Webb mentioned that Hillcrest neighborhood residents are actively talking about measures to restrict traffic on a given Saturday or Sunday to allow for pedestrians to utilize street space more broadly and safely – Slow Streets.

All were in favor of Transportation Committee pursuing ways to create Open Streets in CLR.

- Becca Green, Director of Public Engagement at Rock Region Metro, joined the Transportation Committee in July.
- Green is offering LRSC a tour to help Commission better understand:
 - ✓ The importance of public transportation.
 - ✓ The challenge RRM is facing during pandemic.

The tour would be about 1.5 hours and would guide LRSC through RRM process, how this business works, and give the Commission opportunity to ask questions.

Zuccardi made a motion for LRSC to have RRM tour (probably in October, when it's cooler outside). DeAngelis seconded. All were in favor.

*Zuccardi will get back with LRSC about possible dates and times for a tour.

5. Little Rock Sustainability Office staff reports:

- Glasgow – LRSO helped Energy Committee connect with Municipal League on Street Lighting tariff.
- Massanelli engaged with free energy home assessment and is sharing out the program benefits with CLR residents via social media
- LRSO has been very active with community gardens, especially Dunbar Garden. Glasgow has also been active with Pulaski Heights Elementary garden. Dunbar has “pay as you can” market each Wednesday, a free compost program, and the Little Free Pantry is consistently in need of boxed and canned food donations to help with food insecurity in that area.
- LRSO spent quite a lot of time in meetings and other communications, regarding the Waste Management recycling contract extension.
- LRSO looks forward to participating in the first of six series of ECO committee radio shows
- Consistently posting Sustain Little Rock on Facebook and Instagram @sustainlittlerock and encourage any Commissioners to contact LRSO with related messaging for residents
- Communicating frequently with John Landosky, in regard to Open Street possibilities in CLR, and more

6. Waste Management Recycling Contract Extension

- LRSC worked together to form knowledgeable letter to the Board of Directors in support of contract extension, but without glass
- Director Peck reported that she and Director Kumpuris are working on action steps to secure more glass recycling, particularly from restaurants and bars

7. Green Restaurant initiative

- Director Peck reported on this certification program needing to be on hold during the pandemic, and that the GRCP committee might have to create a different version of the program, post-pandemic. She anticipates waiting till early 2021 to restart the GRCP.

8. Top Golf project at War Memorial

- DeAngelis – Environment, Health & Wellness committee would like to work on this proposal to help CLR understand the environmental impact of project.
- Jester – “lease of land” proposal – Top Golf wants to pay CLR to borrow land for (10-30?) decades. Concerns about usage from general public, as they made comments at last BoD meeting, such as it is not the right location for the community and the need to keep this area a green corridor.
- Director Webb – the task force working on Top Golf issue has been doing a good, thorough job. She encourages LRSC to write a letter in opposition of the project, perhaps, and to spend energies pursuing other pressing matters.
- Director Peck – echoed Director Webb’s statement and emphasized the importance letters can make with the BoD. She added that the BoD votes do not seem to be there for this project to pass – RFP extended to August 5th.
- Baker supports forming ad hoc committee to focus on War Memorial development, rather than a single construction project like Top Golf, to give informed recommendations to the BoD.

DeAngelis made a motion to form an ad hoc committee to study sustainable development options for War Memorial and what could be done with that green space. Jester seconded. All were in favor.

DeAngelis made a motion to postpone bylaws discussion till August LRSC meeting. Baker seconded. All were in favor.

*Evansington encouraged all commissioners to look at ordinance 21-632 before August meeting, and compare it to what’s being proposed to update within the bylaws.

9. Committee meeting times each month

- DeAngelis – concerned that public cannot join meetings that are scheduled during weekday work hours
- Zuccardi – encourages all committee chairs to talk with committee members about whether they are satisfied with their committee dates/times or would like to see them changed

10. Citizen input

- Chris Flores posed question: What can LRSC do to help smaller towns form their own sustainability commissions?
- LRSC discussed ideas
- Shepard – she has best practices from her AECC workplace regarding their Green Team and will share those for the LRSC to consider

Next virtual LRSC meeting will be on August 28th.

Webex details will be made public later this month, and emailed to Commissioners, committee members, Directors Peck and Webb, and residents on LRSC mailing list.

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Minutes taken by Lennie Massanelli