

Community Environmental Advisory Commission

Regular Meeting

April 4, 2019 -- 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Phillips Community Center, 2323 11th Ave S

Members in attendance: Allan Campbell, Anthony Varriano, Brady Steigauf, Cody Welchlin, David Watts, Erin Niehoff, Jason Alvey, Jimmy Randolph, Katie Hill Brandt, Marianna Hefte, Michelle Shaw, Molly Ellis, Nicholas Minderman, Sandy Fazeli, and Thomas Olsen.

Members unable to attend: Forrest Theisen, Lisa Daniels, Nichole Bauknight, and Tim Sexton

Staff: Council Member Jeremy Schroeder, Sara Gangelhoff, Kelly Muellman, Kennedy Kruchoski, Claire Baglien, Jim Doten

Guests: Brian Zakem, Hussein Mohammed, Catherine Malmberg, Charlotte Gorham, Noé D Amaya

Call to Order – 6:04 PM

Commission Chair Erin Niehoff called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and read the following Land Acknowledgement statement:

As we meet here today, we are reminded that Minneapolis is situated on the homelands of the Dakota people. An area that is steeped in rich Indigenous history, and today is home to Indigenous people from more than 30 different nations. As a City, we have a responsibility to care for the land on which we live and work and all of its natural surroundings. This stewardship is an integral part of our involvement in this commission, and we honor it as we begin our meeting.

Members and guests introduced themselves.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted at 6:12 PM.

Acceptance of Minutes of March 7, 2019

The minutes of the March 7, 2019 CEAC meeting were accepted at 6:12 PM.

Presentation – 6:15 PM

1. Regenerative Agriculture resolution – Council Member Schroeder

Council Member Schroeder asked the Commission for support on his resolution regarding regenerative agriculture, citing his efforts to bring the fight against climate change into the mainstream, acknowledging that the crisis connects everything and everyone. This resolution specifically speaks to the soil health and its ability to sequester carbon, as well as supporting other existing areas of agriculture-related work at the City. Claire Baglien (Sustainability Division) and Jim Doten (Health Department-Environmental Services) presented on the technical aspects of regenerative agriculture and biochar.

Regenerative agriculture is a holistic systems approach to agriculture, land management and land use. It encompasses everything from animal agriculture to farmer and worker rights, providing a systems approach to caring for and farming land and our own backyards. This approach to land management can sequester carbon from the atmosphere, since this is already happening through photosynthesis – we can aid this process.

Biochar is one of the most promising best practices for regenerative agriculture. Biochar increases the health of the soil, increasing plants' ability to pull carbon from the air and helping the soil sink more carbon. This can turn agriculture into a carbon negative source, instead of a polluter. The City is hoping to build capacity to use the Ash trees that have to be taken down (due to emerald ash borer) as biochar. Other best practices for regenerative agriculture include keeping soil covered and in place, planting diverse plant communities that are native to the region, using perennial plants with deep roots, and practices that reduce run-off.

The resolution supports the City's Garden Lease Program, which leases vacant city-owned lots to be used as garden space. This resolution would assure that regenerative agriculture practices are used in those spaces. The resolution also supports an existing pollinator-friendly policy. It also supports purchasing from farmers who practice regenerative agriculture, putting more money into our local food economy and supporting farmers who take care of the land.

Next steps for the resolution: Council Member Schroeder is asking for support from CEAC, before bringing the resolution to the City Council Public Health, Environment, Civil Rights, and Engagement Committee.

Initial suggestions from CEAC members: Members would like to see a dedication to equity or a mention of overburdened communities in the resolution, as well as the potential for job opportunities or other workforce development impacts. This should also go before the Northern Green Zone Task Force. CEAC member Brady Steigauf and CEAC's pollinator/food systems/climate subcommittee will draft a letter of support for the resolution. This will include the group's suggestions. The resolution will go to PECE in May.

New Business – 6:45 PM

1. How the City Works game

CEAC members and guests played a round of the "How the City Works" game, created to teach members of commissions and councils related to the City about City processes and what it takes to navigate within City leadership.

2. Navigating City leadership & Communications

Kelly Muellman provided an overview of protocol and strategy for the group's communications and navigating City leadership. Anything that is said on behalf of CEAC or from CEAC subcommittees needs to be approved by the whole group in advance. Standard protocol for reaching out to any City staff or elected officials will be to talk to Kelly first, so that she can provide an answer if she has it, or direct members to the right individuals. There also will be opportunities to combine requests, and requests should be timed appropriately, without using all of the division's political capital at once.

It is recommended that CEAC does not have its own Twitter or Instagram handles, but instead use a hashtag that is specific to the group, such as #CEACMpls.

Erin notes that the current bylaws require that an item be on an agenda in order to be voted on via email.

Announcements – 7:30 PM

- **April 10 - Water Action Day**, 8am-4 pm State Capitol
<https://fmr.org/events/2019/04/10/minnesota-water-action-day>
- **April 13: Environmental Commission Conference**. 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM at Hennepin Ave United Methodist Congregation (511 Groveland Ave, Minneapolis). This conference is an opportunity to learn about what other environment-related commissions and groups are doing and share ideas on helpful resources, successful projects, and environmental topics. Breakfast and lunch provided. [More details and registration.](#)
- **April 13: Mde Maka Ska Community Conversation (Part 3)**, 2-6, 3400 Dupont Ave. S., Mpls. <https://www.facebook.com/events/392502454637468/>
- **Upper Harbor Terminal applications due April 14.** <http://upperharbormpls.com/community-engagement/>
- **April 17: Homegrown Minneapolis Community Food Forum**. You are invited to join Homegrown Minneapolis, and its food council for a community gathering and facilitated discussion about the food systems in Minneapolis and the launch of their new Minneapolis Food Action Plan. The event will be held on Wednesday, **April 17** from 5-7:30pm at the Minneapolis Schools Davis Center 1250 West Broadway Ave. See <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/homegrown/WCMSP-217472> for more information.
- **April 17: Ward 3 Happy Hour featuring Boards and Commissions**. 5:00-7:00 pm. GoldRoom Restaurant & Lounge. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1307890729349043/>
- **April 18: [Energy Efficiency + Rebate Info Session](#) with Ward 11 Council Member Jeremy Schroeder**
- **April Transportation Workshops**. The City will be holding a series of community workshops throughout April to begin refining ideas and strategies that could be included in our new Transportation Plan. The open house style workshops will take place on the following dates:
 - **April 9** at Richfield Lutheran Church from 4:00-6:00pm;
 - **April 11 at Longfellow Recreation Center**, 3435 36th Ave S, from 5:00-7:00pm;
 - **April 22** at the Central Library from 4:00-6:00pm;
 - **April 23** at the Northeast Rec Center from 4:00-6:00pm and
 - **April 24** at Fairview Rec Center, 5:00-7:00pm.

Visit <http://go.minneapolismn.gov/> to learn more about the plan goals, topics and how to get involved.

- **April 20: CEAC tabling at MPRB Earth Day event**. 9:30 AM to Noon. Boom Island Park. https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/activities_events/events/earth_day_cleanup/
- **April 21: Comments due for MPRB Ecological Systems Plan.** https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/ecological_system_plan/
- **Free Trees for May Day from Heart of the Beast**: 1,035 trees (currently tiny saplings) need homes on private property within the next few weeks. People commit at some level to picking up the tree on May Day (May 5th). People also are encouraged to carry their tree in the parade

and decorate their can. Besides signing up to plant a tree on your property, additionally volunteers are needed to help facilitate this whole process. Contact Sandy with Heart of the Beast with questions: sandralspieler@gmail.com Sign Up: <https://hobt.org/trees/>

- **Minneapolis Asthma Program** - The health department now has a coordinated response to help children with asthma who live in Minneapolis. We provide a home visit to talk about healthy homes, and provide durable “medical equipment” such as HEPA air purifiers and bedding encasements to help reduce asthma triggers commonly found in the home such as in dust mites, mold, allergens, pests, etc. Also, as weather warms and windows open, lead poisoning spikes. If you haven’t had your home tested, do it!
- **City of Minneapolis Adopts new City vision and mission** that includes climate change. <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/WCMSP-217948>
- **May 6 – Deadline for Hennepin County education grants.** Applications are being accepted until 3 p.m. on Monday, May 6 for environmental education grants to engage youth and adults in Hennepin County. Eligible organizations include registered nonprofit organizations, park districts, private and public schools and school districts. See the website for more information: www.hennepin.us/greenpartners
- **May 22: Environmental Initiative Awards celebration.** 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Nicollet Island Pavilion (40 Power St, Minneapolis, MN 55401). Go to <https://environmental-initiative.org/events/awards/> or contact [Erin Niehoff](mailto:Erin.Niehoff@environmental-initiative.org) with questions.
- Information on the [Minneapolis Adopt-a-Drain Program](#) and [Adopting Recycling and Litter containers](#).

Unfinished Business – 7:45 PM

1. Subcommittee Updates

Letters will be sent via email for voting that need a decision prior to the next CEAC meeting. Email votes take place over three business days. There will be opportunities to revise letters before a vote takes place. In the future, subcommittees should send draft letters to Kelly before the group meets, so that it is on the agenda and can therefore be discussed.

1. **Zero Waste + Beautification.** Chair: [Cody Welchlin](#).

Cody Welchlin provided an update on the letter drafted to Council Member Gordon in reference to the Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance. The letter states that CEAC does not support the ordinance, and provides suggestions for improving the ordinance. The letter is available on the CEAC Google Drive, and is open for comments. Next steps include a discussion and finalization of the letter at the May 2nd CEAC meeting. Council Member Gordon’s staff is aware of the concerns voiced in the letter.

2. **Pollinator-Friendly Habitat + Food Systems.** Meets 4th Saturday @ 9:30 AM. Chair: [Jason Alvey](#)

Jason Alvey announced that the subcommittee is drafting a letter of support for the [Park Board’s Ecological Systems Plan](#). While the Park Board Document is very extensive in the area of environmental protection, it misses opportunities to prioritize pollinators. The group has listed suggestions for the document.

There are currently bills at the state legislature regarding pollinators. CEAC has the opportunity to encourage the City to support these issues at the state level. All bills at the legislature should be included in one letter to City Council.

3. **Environmental Justice + Community Engagement.** Meets 5pm prior to monthly CEAC meeting. Chair: [Michelle Shaw](#).

This group is intending to create flyers to post around members' communities prior to upcoming CEAC meetings.

The Park Board is hosting an event for Earth Day.

4. **Climate + Energy + Air Quality.** Meets 8pm following monthly CEAC meeting. Chairs: [Jimmy Randolph](#) and [Anthony Varriano](#).

In the future, this group would like to see guest speakers touch on the Climate Action Plan and stormwater.

5. **Sustainable Transportation + Land Use.** Chair: [Nick Minderman](#)

The group would like to support the adoption of policy supporting electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in new construction and renovations, as well as EV readiness in parking lots – commercial, multi family, and surface lots. Minimum parking requirement may also be removed. Support for all of these items will be bundled into one letter, although none of these are urgent.

Council is interested in adopting something, but nothing has been drafted. Letter of support will be ready once the City Council has something drafted. Specific recommendations could also be sent in a letter now. St. Louis Park has passed a similar policy already. This would need to be proposed at a full council meeting and directed to a subcommittee.

Incorporate to shared mobility hubs – Bloomberg work.

Matthew Dyrdaahl is coordinating a meeting between this subcommittee and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee to discuss where their work intersects.

6. **Green Workforce.** Chair: [Brady Steigauf](#).

The group is looking for times to meet with the workforce development subcommittee of the Energy Vision Advisory Committee (EVAC) to discuss where their work intersects.

Adjournment – 8:11 PM

Next Meeting: May 2, 2019 6:00-8:00 PM

Location: Eastside Food Coop, 2551 Central Ave NE

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the Sustainability Division at 612-673-3014 or e-mail kelly.muellman@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626. Para asistencia 612-673-2700 - Rau kev pab 612-673-2800 - Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 612-673-3500.