



**Environmental Management Commission  
Meeting Minutes – November 14, 2012**

Meeting Location: Mid-America Regional Council

Commissioners present: Carol Adams, Jensen Adams, Tom Brink, Molly Davies, Jim Hansen, Marty Kraft, Ken Kramme, Robin Martinez, Jack Schrimsher, Tom Wyrsh

Staff: Dennis Murphey and Jerry Shechter – OEQ, Amelia McIntyre – Law Dept; Scott Cahail – Water Services; Alice Hannon - Parks & Recreation; Jeff Martin - Public Works

Guests: Claus Wawrzinek – Sierra Club

Carol Adams, Co-Chair, opened the meeting at 4:05 pm; a quorum was present

A. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed commissioners, staff and guests on behalf of the EMC. Each person introduced themselves.

B. Minutes – Tom Wyrsh made a motion, seconded by Ken Kramme, to approve the minutes of the October, 2012 meeting. The motion was approved.

C. Policy related to Trees and Sidewalks

Carol Adams noted there are four general situations:

1. Sidewalks installed by the City for redevelopment
2. New sidewalks installed by a developer
3. Old sidewalks and mature trees
4. Never existed

- Ken Kramme said he walked the sidewalks in Manheim Park and felt that making decisions regarding trees and/or sidewalks was not an easy call
- Dennis Murphey noted the City is also trying to meet federal ADA requirements re accessibility
- Jack Schrimsher talked about liability and that the City may have some legal liability if it knows about or should have known about any sidewalk defects
- Amelia McIntyre, Law Department, Said liability may depend on who owns the sidewalk – such as a developer, a homes association, etc.
- Dennis introduced City staff attending the meeting – Alice Hannon, City Forester, Parks & Recreation, and Jeff Martin, Assistant City Engineer for Neighborhoods, Public Works.

Jeff Martin – Sidewalk design in reconstruction projects is an issue in which there is consistent problems regarding trees, such as some may be too large for the available space, or some have a tendency to run roots more horizontally than others, etc. Public Works is working with Parks & Recreation to find the most appropriate trees – to use the right tree for the right spot.

Alice Hannon – Most of the trees involved in the neighborhood controversy were planted 60-70 years ago. The City intends to replant trees based on expected size at maturity. She noted that most tree root systems are within the top 3 feet of the ground. Some may send a tap root down but most cannot penetrate packed clay conditions. It is easier for tree roots to break up concrete. Even trees that, on the average, do not lift sidewalks will sometimes do just that. In Manheim, there are a lot of small tree lawns where the City will look to plant small diameter trees. But this will decrease shade, decrease air pollution removal and carbon uptake.

Carol Adams asked what the EMC could do that would be helpful to make it easier? Should there be wider rights of way, home owner easements, etc? Adjacent property owner should be consulted early in the process. EMC is interested in identifying options with staff to meet multiple needs.

Carol Adams thanked both Ms. Hannon and Mr. Martin for taking their time to have this discussion with the EMC.

D. Sustainable and Beneficial Uses of Vacant Lots – Robin Martinez

The first EMC-sponsored meeting about vacant lots was held on November 2, 2012 at MARC. A group of 17 people attended bringing a wide range of perspectives. Several of the people who were asked to participate were not able to attend. Robin presented an overview of the problem focused on the approximately 4000 vacant lots the City has to address, the lots that will be transferred from Jackson County Land Trust into the newly established Land Bank, the \$ million per year the City expends just for mowing lots, and other issues. The 3-pronged approach is to address

1. Short term - reducing the cost of mowing vacant lots
2. Intermediate term – finding ways to get beyond simple ground cover
3. Long term – the range of options that may be available to the City and to neighborhoods. The Neighborhoods and Housing Department has just published the “Guidebook for Infill Lot Improvement Strategies”. The team that produced this guidebook, including Davison Architects – who attended the meeting – used resources such as that produced by Cleveland. This is the same materials the EMC looked at in a previous Commission meeting. The guidebook is a good start.
4. Challenges include
  - a. Defining the set of correct plantings that might be used
  - b. Public education and engagement
  - c. Legal issues – zoning, ownership, liability
  - d. Funding – Could we go to potentially interested private firms (eg, Bayer)
5. Next steps – Determine stakeholder interest in specific subject matter and possibly form study/work groups. A significant question is expansion of stakeholder participants and inclusion of neighborhoods.
6. Amelia McIntyre suggested the EMC might work with Andy Bracker, Brownfields Coordinator with regard to possible environmental assessments, etc.
7. Make sure that Neighborhoods and Housing (Dave Park and Stuart Bullington) are involved.

E. OEQ Report – Dennis Murphey and Jerry Shechter

1. National paper recycling day is tomorrow – 11.15.12. The City is participating in a friendly competition with Jackson County for weights of paper shredded/recycled.
2. The City is in its budget development process now for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2013. OEQ, along with other departments, have made budget requests. Of the several made by OEQ is a request for funds to update our Greenhouse Gas Inventory/Climate Protection Plan
3. The KC Green Team is developing a competition for neighborhoods for green activities which will come with awards and street signs proclaiming the neighborhood a “green neighborhood”
4. The City was recognized for its overflow control program and green solutions pilot program in the Middle Blue area and show-cased in Cincinnati last month. KC was one of four cities recognized.
5. KC is participating in the Heartland Take Charge Challenge among seven cities in the mid-west. Businesses will be challenged to participate by increasing energy savings improvements in the period February through October, 2013.
6. The Clinton Foundation was in Kansas City doing a readiness assessment of our programs and operations to determine if we would enter into a partnership with them. The partnership would be to develop and implement a program called the Home Energy Affordability Loan (HEAL) Program. HEAL is an employer-sponsored energy efficiency program for a company’s employees. The gist of the program is to operate it as an employee benefit with employee assistance occurring at the workplace. A determination has not yet been made about entering into this partnership.

F. Liaison Reports – None

G. Old Business – None

H. New Business - Marty Kraft (1) noted that President Obama had a press conference this afternoon in which he spoke of the necessity of addressing climate change, and (2) distributed a flyer for a hip-hop artist who is also an organic gardener who will be in KC November 20, 2012.

I. Visitor Remarks – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm

The next monthly meeting is scheduled for  
December 12, 2012  
4:00 pm to 6:00 pm  
Mid-America Regional Council  
600 Broadway – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor