



Environmental Management Commission Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2014

Meeting Location: Mid-America Regional Council, Westview Room

Commissioners present: Carol Adams, Tom Brink, Rachel Guthrie, Jim Hansen, Julie Koppen, Marty Kraft, Ken Kramme, Robin Martinez, and Jack Schrimsher

Commissioners Absent: Jensen Adams, Bob Berkebile, Lance Conley, Maria Coppock, Caroline (Molly) Davies, Julie Davis, Sal Madge, Tom Wyrsh

Staff: Dennis Murphey – Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ); Matt Gigliotti – Law Department

Guests: Gretchen Waddell Barwick (Sierra Club) and Joel Kraft

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm; a quorum was present

- A. Welcome and Introductions - The Chair welcomed commissioners, staff, and guests.
- B. Minutes – Rachel Guthrie made a motion, seconded by Julie Koppen, to approve minutes of the meeting of June 2014 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. Sustainable and Beneficial Uses of Vacant Lots – Robin Martinez
Robin provided hard copies of an 11 page summary of the task force report on vacant lots. The full draft document will be substantially longer and will be shared with the EMC for review and comments. The report will focus on three primary concepts:
 - Prevention
 - Maintenance
 - Re-use and distribution

There will be several policy recommendations in the report. The scope of the problem (>18,000 current vacant properties, including lots & structures) and costs will be identified. The report will emphasize recommendations for solving the problem by reframing vacant lots as assets. No single solution is possible, but the task force believes the City needs to compile sufficient data together in a usable format in order to create a decision matrix for reuse or holding based upon 3 key focus areas:

- Rebuilding neighborhoods
- Making use of environmental assets
- Economic development opportunities (based upon City policies and site-based priorities), such as urban agriculture and infill development

There was considerable discussion & comments by the EMC members:

- Marty Kraft – Urban ag has experienced huge growth in recent years, but it's not enough. The City has a significant history of tree planting, but there's been a low survival rate of the planted trees.
- Tom Brink – 10 acres of land at the Kauffman Foundation has been put into fruit & nut trees with trails.
- Julie Koppen – Giving Growth is a good model for community gardens that requires a committed steward.
- Tom Brink – Corporate sponsorships could be a key support system.
- Rachel Guthrie – Prioritizing data is a key issue & it's important to make it easily accessible to the general public.
- Jim Hansen – Greg Franzen, City Building Codes Official, said that the City is moving to a new tracking system from KIVA (EnerGov) that will allow better communication among departments.
- Julie Koppen – Is there a master list of vacant properties? (several respondents replied no – various organizations have separate lists of properties for which they have responsibility)
- Rachel Guthrie – Significant revitalization of the urban core is occurring in areas of KC.

- Robin Martinez – TIF (tax increment financing) can be a valuable tool for vacant properties, but it requires careful use in order to avoid gentrification which makes it difficult for existing residents to stay in the area
- Carol Adams – She would like to ensure that the new EnerGov system incorporates vacant lots & would like to have further discussions with Greg Franzen (or whomever might be the appropriate person) re this issue.

Robin requested that additional comments on the summary document & the full task force report (which will be provided to the EMC) be sent to him via email. The task force is also seeking input from various neighborhood associations via Legal Aid of Western MO.

- D. Environmental Achievement Award Planning – The awards event will be held at the Kauffman Foundation, KC Room, on Wed, August 20 at 4:00 pm. Carol will contact Molly Davies re preparation of a PowerPoint presentation for the event. Carol has invited Mayor James to attend, but won't know until closer to the date of the event. Dennis believes Troy is planning to attend, and will confirm. Since the awards event is a week later in August than the normally scheduled date of the EMC meeting (Aug 13), Carol wants to make sure reminder notices are sent prior to Aug 13 to all the people who normally receive notices of EMC meetings.
- E. Office of Environmental Quality – Dennis Murphey
1. There continues to be good progress toward completion of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory update. A draft was distributed to various stakeholders the week of June 16th and work is still underway to fill in remaining data gaps. The Brendle Group has also begun work on preparing a Climate Action Road Map to help chart a path toward achieving the 2020 GHG reduction goals in the City's climate protection plan.
 2. Kristy Manning, Policy Director for the Division of Energy in the Missouri Department of Economic Development, attended the 6/30 Energy Efficiency Summit at Union Station (co-sponsored by the City and the GKC Chamber of Commerce) and has asked KC to participate in development of the State Energy Plan, which Governor Nixon has directed the Division of Energy to complete by the end of May 2015. The Division of Energy has issued an RFP for technical assistance to prepare the plan and hopes to have a consultant on board in the next few weeks.
 3. The 2nd annual National League of Cities' workshop on local government sustainability will be held at Shadowcliff on Aug 10 – 14. Bob Mann, Eileen Horn of Douglas County/Lawrence, Kansas, and Dennis will be the primary faculty. Southwest Airlines is providing free airfare for the first 20 registered participants.
 4. On June 27, 2014, there was a press conference where Mayor Sly James announced his Energy Challenge (requesting all building owners in KC to benchmark energy use with ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager and work to achieve ENERGY STAR® certification) and Jim Heeter, President & CEO of GKC Chamber of Commerce, announced the Chamber's new KC Energy Initiative (to promote energy efficiency improvements by building owners across the metro area).
- F. Liaison Updates –
1. City Energy Project – Tom Brink – Tom reported that the Energy Efficiency Summit on June 30 in the Chamber's Board Room in Union Station was well attended and the roundtable discussion by key stakeholders was excellent. A write-up of the roundtable discussion is being prepared for distribution. The next CEPAC meeting is scheduled for August 1 at a location still to be determined.
 2. Air Quality Forum – Carol Adams – The AQF meeting on July 8 was devoted to EPA's proposed rules to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from existing fossil-fueled power plants. The proposed rules were published in the Federal Register on June 18 and the 120 day public comment period will end on October 16. EPA intends to issue final rules in June 2015. A representative from EPA Region 7 gave an overview of the proposed rules, followed by remarks from representatives of KDHE, MDNR, and NRDC. The state agencies (who would be tasked under the proposed rules to prepare a State Implementation Plan) and submit it to EPA for review and approval) are still reviewing the proposed rules to determine the projects impacts of the proposed rules. However, MDNR & KDHE are very concerned re their ability to meet EPA's expected timelines for preparation of a SIP, considering the staff cutbacks they've experienced in recent years. MDNR will hold an initial stakeholder meeting re EPA's proposed rules in Jefferson City on July 14.
 3. LEED – Jim Hansen – The LEED Standards Committee will be meeting again on August 21, after a working group of the committee has met to prepare recommendations on guidelines for application of LEED standards to various projects and whether alternative rating systems (such as the Envision rating system for infrastructure projects) should be utilized on City projects for which LEED is not applicable. The working group will also discuss the issue of some City ordinances perhaps making it more difficult to implement sustainable elements in projects (such as the City's nuisance code re weedy plants).

- G. Matt Gigliotti – In follow-up to Jim Hansen remarks re EnerGov and Carol Adams indicating that she would like to ensure the new system roll-out incorporates the vacant lot issue, Matt noted that EnerGov was replacing KIVA as the tracking system for permits and other City info.
- H. Old Business – Membership Changes – Ken Kramme has sent a letter to Mayor James indicating that he is resigning his EMC position following the August meeting (i.e. the Aug 20 Environmental Achievement Awards event). Carol also reminded Dennis that he needs to follow up with Mayor James' Office re expired/expiring terms of current commissioners.
- I. New Business – Rachel Guthrie said she would like to see brief bios of the EMC members posted online.
- J. Remarks from Guests – Gretchen Waddell Barwick told the EMC that the local Sierra Club chapter is focused on the area in Jackson County that is currently designated as non-attainment for SO₂. Carol Adams noted that this has been a topic of discussion at past Air Quality Forum meetings and, at a future AQF meeting, MDNR will discuss what action they intend to take.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm

The next monthly meeting is the KCMO
Environmental Achievement Awards event:

August 20, 2014 at 4:00 pm
Ewing Marion Kauffman Conference Center
4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO