

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 13, 2021

MEETING CONVENED: 7:02 p.m. GoToMeeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Sheila Smith, Beth Chajes, MaryClare Matsumoto, Helga Huntley, Andrew O'Donnell, John Mateyko (arrived late)

ABSENT: Robyn O'Halloran

STAFF: Tom Coleman, City Manager
Dave Del Grande, Finance Director
Jeff Martindale, Chief Purchasing & Personnel Officer
Jay Bancroft, Councilperson District 3
Nichol Scheld, Administrative Professional I

Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES MARCH 9, 2021:

Dr. Huntley recommended three changes to the minutes: replace "pressured City Council" to "asked City Council", "they can see better" to "they can be seen better", and "a member of Bike Delaware" to "a Newark resident".

MOTION BY MS. SMITH, SECONDED BY MR. O'DONNELL: TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9, 2021 MINUTES AS AMENDED.

MOTION PASSED: 5 – 0.

AYE: Smith, Matsumoto, Huntley, Chajes, O'Donnell.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: O'Halloran, Mateyko.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

3. ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR CITY USE - HELGA HUNTLEY

Dr. Huntley reminded that Newark had committed to convert as much of the municipal fleet as possible to electric vehicles (EVs) as part of the Sustainability Plan. The Plan pronounced the steps required for the migration, including building charging infrastructure and Dr. Huntley admitted the City had taken some steps forward because Council had already approved the purchase of several EVs. She revealed that Council recently approved a large vehicle purchase for the Newark Police Department (NPD) and claimed that neither staff nor Council considered EVs as an option. She felt there was a general misconception on behalf of Council that EVs for the Police were not feasible because they did not meet

the Department's demands or were too expensive for the City to consider and assumed that staff did not investigate prices. She and Mr. O'Donnell investigated EVs available for Police use, as well as the actions of other municipalities, and stated that Newark could no longer lead because other municipalities were already using EVs in Police Departments. She thought it was important for the Commission to educate Council and staff on the availability of EVs for specific Police use, price points, and the return on investment in order to lay out a plan so the next vehicle purchase considered electric options more seriously.

Ms. Smith asked how many vehicles were purchased, the percentage of the fleet, and when the discussion would be revisited. Mr. O'Donnell replied that staff was in the process of purchasing three EVs. Mr. Martindale congratulated Mr. O'Donnell on his appointment to the Commission and replied that five Police vehicles were either purchased or leased and staff would formally present three EVs to Council at the April 26th Council meeting. All of the EVs would be Nissan LEAFs for use in the Parking, Stormwater, and Electric Departments. He acknowledged the EVs were not for the NPD because staff wanted to incorporate any EVs for non-Public Safety purposes first and still needed to ensure that the City had a sustainable charging infrastructure available for municipal services. He reiterated that the City was moving towards EV purchases and staff did not want EV Police purchases to be the first for the City. Ms. Smith asked for the size of the NPD fleet and Mr. Martindale said he would investigate and return with an exact amount but estimated 30-40 plus. Ms. Smith noted there was opportunity to press the issue and encouraged the Commission to reach out to their Councilmembers. Ms. Chajes shared that she wrote to her Councilperson and said that she also discovered the Ford Interceptor was available as a hybrid, the same model the NPD were interested in purchasing. Ms. Smith noted there would be less idling with a hybrid, and Ms. Chajes confirmed the model was an SUV that was advertised as a Police vehicle. Ms. Chajes felt that no thought had been put into researching options but considered the recent purchase an emergency given the state of the vehicles. She considered education to be key for Councilmembers prior to the next purchase and Ms. Smith agreed. Ms. Chajes agreed with Mr. Martindale that the City had no experience with EVs and installing EV chargers, but she felt there was another fuel-efficient option.

Mr. Martindale explained another variable was that the City purchased vehicles from either the Delaware State contract or another Countrywide procurement source and clarified that he was the Chief Purchasing & Personnel Officer, so he oversaw all of the City's contracts. He continued that anything over \$25,000 was required to go out for contract unless the City was able to proceed through another contract to procure a vehicle, of which there were many. The Nissan LEAFs slated for purchase later in the month were from a quasi-Delaware contract and staff secured better pricing from a local vendor, Porter Nissan, as opposed to Winner Ford of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. He continued that Winner Ford typically won the State contract and staff would have likely purchased the EVs through Winner if Porter had not outbid the State contract. He clarified that staff was constrained to the vehicles available on the contracts and informed that the Nissan LEAF was the only EV on the contract and there were few EVs for Police use. Ms. Smith asked if there was a chance to modify the contract to include electric options and Mr. Martindale replied there was not an option for the City but there was an opportunity at the state level. He reiterated that the City opted into the contracts, but the state was the responsible entity for writing them because they were able to collectivize and secure better rates than a municipality. Ms. Smith continued that Dr. Huntley indicated municipalities had gotten EVs and suggested that expressing interest with other municipalities would trigger the State to include EVs in the list of options.

Dr. Huntley contested that the City was not restricted to solely purchasing from a state contract and that the City was free to negotiate with any entity outside of the state contract. Mr. Martindale corrected that City Code indicated that staff was obligated to put a contract out to bid and the City was

unable to go pursue a contract unless an entity bid. Dr. Huntley conceded that the City could not make a purchase unless an entity was willing but maintained that there was nothing stopping staff from allowing other companies to bid. She stated that Tesla had made deals with other municipalities for police vehicles and suggested that if the City was interested in purchasing EVs then she expected Tesla would be interested in bidding. She maintained that the City was not restricted because the state did not have a contract with Tesla. Mr. Martindale confirmed Ms. Smith's suggestion that EVs be considered for the future but noted it was extremely time consuming for staff to put every single vehicle purchase out for bid and admitted it was a moot point for the NPD vehicles that were already procured. He maintained it was more time efficient to purchase from the state contracts or through Sourcewell, the country-wide procurement process. He believed Sourcewell would be the City's best bet in the long-term but noted that staff could bid itself although the country-wide option would likely secure the better rate. He believed the City could opt-in to additional programs over the next two or three years to secure better rates that would be available to municipalities around the country. Ms. Smith hoped there would be a change and suggested setting a percentage goal for City vehicles and acknowledged the recent purchase was an emergency.

Ms. Smith asked if there would be a public education campaign prior to the City's purchase of the Nissan LEAFs and whether they were first fully electric vehicles purchased by the City. Mr. Martindale confirmed staff would perform some outreach that would extend beyond a photo op with the dealer and would include details on EVs as well as the City's long-term goals through the Sustainability Plan. Ms. Smith preferred that the information be available on the vehicle to display to the public as it drove around town and Mr. Martindale agreed.

Mr. O'Donnell reminded that he had presented the topic two years prior to both Council and the Commission and would update the figures. He said that Council voted to purchase EVs wherever it made sense and believed that the recent purchase was short-notice due to a consistently bad vehicle that needed to be replaced early. He explained that staff opted to purchase more vehicles at the same time and chose two regular police Interceptors and two hybrids but the general sentiment at the Council meeting was that although the City was moving towards EVs, NPD did not want to lead from the front. He agreed with Dr. Huntley that the purchase was rushed, and staff did not investigate the numbers and resorted to typical excuses that EVs were expensive and took too long to charge. He argued that his presentation stated the contrary and he found that EVs were cheaper in the long run. He contacted Tacoma Washington, who already purchased six or seven vehicles, and promised to share their findings with him. He confirmed that Teslas were available for purchase without discount offers but he felt that the benefits of performance and safety were sufficient. He explained that he and Dr. Huntley spoke at the Council meeting, but he had the impression that staff had already chosen not to proceed with EVs so that residents would not be upset with a luxury vehicle in City service. He wanted to educate staff in order for the City to move forward because EVs were expensive but saved money on maintenance and fuel. He continued that staff's biggest issue was with the operation time of the current fleet because there were many vehicles in the shop at the same time, but he argued that EVs only took four hours to charge which refuted staff's claims.

Ms. Matsumoto thanked Dr. Huntley and was not sure that the Council agenda posting would have given the Commission enough time to prepare. She reached out to Councilmember McDermott who explained the EVs were not for standard patrol operation. She admitted she did not know much about the vehicles and was unsure if the EVs were made in the fashion of a regular Police vehicle. She suggested another presentation to focus on Police vehicles in other locations and was sure the pertinent information

was available online. Ms. Smith saw the situation as an opportunity for the Commission to reach out to Council with concerns.

Ms. Scheld interjected and said that Dr. Bancroft entered the following message into the chat function: The last purchases did get lots of electric discussion, and there all kinds of constraints on the \$. Police have a hybrid - but testing a bit before outfitting as an interceptor. Thx guys

Dr. Huntley admitted she got frustrated when staff illustrated why EVs were not an appropriate purchase and suggested speaking to Mr. Martindale and Chief Tiernan to learn of their concerns. She believed staff's concerns were legitimate and the Commission could provide solutions. She offered to research with Mr. O'Donnell and return to staff with an updated presentation for Council and tailored to the Police Department. Ms. Smith read Mr. Bancroft's suggestion that the Commission should provide a comparison chart with exact models that should be acceptable to the police and thought Mr. O'Donnell's presentation included similar information. Dr. Huntley wanted to invite a member of the NPD to share their concerns about EVs. Ms. Smith asked if the comments from the Council meeting regarding EVs were included in the minutes and Ms. Scheld noted the meeting minutes included the concerns and noted that Mr. McDermott offered his perspective as both a Councilmember and a New Castle County Police Officer. Ms. Smith suggested that Mr. McDermott could share his specific concerns and Ms. Scheld reminded that the meeting was available for public download. Dr. Huntley believed Mr. McDermott was the appropriate person to share concerns with the Commission but wondered if the NPD would appreciate a direct contact. Mr. O'Donnell asked when the Council meeting took place and Mr. Martindale responded March 8th.

Mr. Mateyko asked if any Police Departments in the area were using EVs and Dr. Huntley said there were none in Delaware and the closest was Hyattsville, Maryland. Mr. Mateyko suggested inviting a representative from Hyattsville to speak with the Commission. Ms. Smith first wanted to speak with the NPD to discover specific concerns and asked Mr. O'Donnell to share his presentation with the Commission. Mr. O'Donnell confirmed and continued that EVs were used in dozens of cities throughout the Country in Colorado, Florida, and New York. He noted that Police in Ohio used a Model 3, California was the first to use a Model S, and Tacoma was procuring a few Model Ys. He felt the Model Y was the best option for Police vehicles because the Model 3 was too small, and the Model S was too expensive. He highlighted a graph in his presentation showing estimates, including the vehicle base price, Police modifications, and maintenance. Ms. Smith asked who manufactured the Model Y and Mr. O'Donnell explained he was speaking about Tesla models. He described the Model Y as an SUV with a hatchback which was ideal for Police use in Tacoma and reiterated that the price was suitable for the Newark and would perform to the NPD's needs.

Ms. Smith asked how much the new purchases cost and Mr. Del Grande replied the Interceptors were near \$33,000 prior to outfitting. Mr. O'Donnell noted the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) included six SUVs for 2023 slated at \$65,000 each. Mr. Del Grande clarified that the CIP assumed that the new vehicles would be Tahoes and the Explorers were coming in less expensive than the Tahoes. Dr. Huntley suggested postponing the conversation about the details on the different available models and include them in a future discussion.

Mr. Coleman interjected that the intent to purchase EVs was derailed over other concerns more so than cost savings. He was only able to find one Model Y in service and emphasized that it was not in patrol use. He clarified that the NPD was not against EVs but did have concerns over electric patrol vehicles because the City had a small patrol fleet. He reiterated that the NPD was open to EVs in other roles, just

not for patrol use, to which the recently purchase vehicles would be assigned. He continued that most of the Teslas in Police forces were for non-patrol use. Dr. Huntley interjected that her research was very different to Mr. Coleman's and she discovered that out of the nine cities she found, eight used EVs for patrol. She requested that the discussion proceed and said that Mr. Bancroft suggested that the Commission speak to Fleet Maintenance, so she wanted to identify staff in the NPD to provide insight into how EVs were viewed and Police concerns. Mr. Coleman informed Dr. Huntley that he was speaking on behalf of the NPD. He explained that major concerns were range and size requirements for the equipment inside the vehicle, as well on the officers' bodies, because there had to be clearance between the door and the center console, so officers' service waistbands did not get stuck. The City initially chose SUV options because the available Sedans were too tight around the officers' immediate sitting area. He reiterated that more factors dictated the decision, not just the price of EVs. He was interested in researching if Police agencies of a similar size used EVs and continued that many agencies had take-home cars, but the NPD's vehicles were constant rotation. He noted that Newark had a small patrol fleet so if a vehicle was inoperable, then the fleet lost 6% to 8% of its patrol and shared the concern that the first electric vehicle in the City's fleet would be assigned to the highest use and most intense operation. He confirmed that staff supported EV purchases but were cautious about purchasing a vehicle that was unsuited for its intended use. He repeated that the City would eventually reach its goal. Dr. Huntley repeated her request for a complete list of Police concerns and appreciated that Mr. Coleman had provided a few. Mr. Coleman would provide the Commission with a concise list.

Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Coleman for the comments and felt there was interest in the City to improve operations around energy, saving money, and procuring the best equipment. Dr. Huntley repeated her need for the complete list from the PD and assumed that Mr. O'Donnell would help her address concerns and they would let Ms. Smith know when they were ready to present on an agenda.

4. STRAW FLYER DISTRIBUTION PLAN UPDATE – CAC MEMBERS
(Ms. Smith addressed items #5 and #9 first)

Ms. Chajes asked Leanne Moore of The Newark Partnership for an additional survey blast. Ms. Moore mentioned she was hosting a meeting with restaurants on April 6th, but Ms. Chajes said that no additional surveys were submitted. She suggested tabling the topic until in-person interaction was possible. Ms. Smith asked how many bookmarks had been distributed and Ms. Matsumoto received one in her library pick up and would follow up with the library. Ms. Chajes offered to distribute bookmarks to Newark Charter students and Dr. Huntley reminded that Mr. McDowell offered to do the same, even though he was no longer a Commission member. Ms. Chajes would reach out to her contacts to discern any interest. Mr. Martindale believed it was possible that some bookmarks could be left with the bailiffs at City Hall or set out for visitors to take on their own. Ms. Smith asked if there were any afterschool programs and Mr. Martindale replied that capacity was limited, and he would speak to the Parks & Recreation Department. Dr. Huntley added that Downes Elementary was hosting a Math and Literacy Night and she wanted to pass out bookmarks to the children who were physically attending school. Ms. Matsumoto also wanted to target students who frequented fast food establishments without considering straw usage.

Ms. Smith moved to Anti-Idling.

5. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION NEXT STEPS – TOM COLEMAN

Ms. Smith explained that Mr. Coleman created a spreadsheet based on the Commission's interest

in speaking to members of the different Departments to discern where they aligned with the Sustainability Plan and how to move forward. She explained to the new members that David Athey, a consultant, interviewed City staff to complete the framework for the Sustainability Plan.

Mr. Coleman explained that he compiled the goals from the Sustainability Plan and created a spreadsheet for the Commission with space to update. He began to verify which staff members were responsible for each goal and allowed for track changes but admitted he had not gotten far in the process. He wanted to have the Commission's feedback before he went further and reiterated that his goal was to provide members with a quick reference tool that could be updated monthly or quarterly. He would likely post the spreadsheet on the City's website alongside the Sustainability Plan so the public could see where the City stood on different initiatives. He noted there were a few items for the Commission, but he wanted to address the greenhouse gas (GHG) baseline because it would be a critical tool. He noted the further out the City went, the harder it would be to get accurate data. He suggested the Commission could use one of the City's planning consultants to perform the work and report back with regular updates and update every few years as necessary.

Ms. Smith asked if the consultants would perform the entire baseline study and Mr. Coleman clarified that the consultants would complete whatever work was assigned. Dr. Huntley thanked Mr. Coleman for compiling the chart and thought it would be helpful for the Commission. She thought that quarterly updates were frequent enough and asked that the Commission be included with large initiatives. She suggested to include dates so the data could be accumulated, and the Commission could have a status and compare for progress. Mr. Coleman agreed. Ms. Smith asked if Dr. Huntley was requesting change over time with the dates or just dates. Dr. Huntley wanted to be able to monitor accomplishments by dates for quarterly reporting. Ms. Smith thought it would be helpful to include a historical time with a brief description, so the document was not overwhelming. Dr. Huntley did not know why the Commission was put in charge of hiring for monitoring the GHG inventory in the Sustainability Plan and thought City staff was more suited to the task. Mr. Coleman recalled that the goal was to have the Commission involved in developing the scope and to review what was provided. He agreed that staff would be responsible for the contract as it belonged to the City but thought the intent was for the Commission to use its funding to cover the associated contract. He was unaware of the cost but said the City had consultants with experience in GHG and he would speak with Director Gray and Director Filasky for their opinions on engineering and planning consultants. He asked for the Commission's assistance on helping staff find the scope of the project and what should be included. He understood there had been discussions on whether "City" was defined as the City government or the 34,000 residents, government, and businesses as a collective unit.

Mr. Mateyko asked if the discussion could be continued the next month because President Biden was due to release his goals for the US the following week. He informed the Leaders Summit on Climate would be held on April 22 and 23 and assumed the goals would be announced on the final day. Ms. Smith assured Mr. Mateyko that the conversation would be ongoing and reiterated that Mr. Coleman would speak to Ms. Gray about potential consultants to create the GHG baseline so it could be updated and monitored. The consultants would share the information with the Commission, suggest the scope of work and the best path forward. She asked if the cost for building the baseline would be funded through the Commission but said she was under the impression that the City was efficient in grant processes for City projects. She assumed the definition of "City" in the Sustainability Plan was the government, not the City and residents.

Dr. Huntley admitted she was not certain but recalled that the GHG inventory was conceived as

City operations, not businesses and residents. She also recalled that Michelle Bennett, UD's former Sustainability Coordinator, was knowledgeable in GHG inventories and mentioned there were different levels that went more in depth at each step. Dr. Huntley suggested starting with the basics and believed that when Mr. Coleman identified a contractor, the Commission could discuss how to narrow the topic down. Mr. Mateyko agreed but noted that whatever President Biden released after the Summit would be the new marching orders. Ms. Smith agreed the announcement could change many things and repeated that Mr. Coleman would choose a consultant who would determine the most logical starting point for the GHG baseline because inventory would mean less the longer it took to establish. The consultants would also give the Commission the framework and the cost to determine how the inventory would be funded. She asked the members for their opinions and agreed with Dr. Huntley that the project was beyond the CAC's capabilities.

Mr. O'Donnell noted the City was behind on starting the baseline and informed the Commission was assigned ownership of the plan going forward and tasked with updating every two years or at least once every five years. He wondered whether it was the Commission's responsibility to fund the project and requested quotes. He was concerned that if the Government part of the whole City was a small percentage, then the Commission would be focusing a lot of effort on a small portion. He thought it was possible that the Commission would need to target more of its budget towards the larger impacts of the City. He wanted to determine the most impactful goals for the CAC to concentrate its efforts and decide how its budget could be spent most effectively on the top priorities. He offered to serve on the task force under Goal 1.4.A. Dr. Huntley thought The Newark Partnership (TNP) Sustainability Initiative would adopt the role to some degree because they hoped to coordinate between the City, UD, and other entities. Mr. O'Donnell stated that Goal 1.4.A would be assigned to TNP, 1.4.B would be assigned to the consultant pending funding, and the results of the report would be crafted into a Climate Action Plan by the Commission for Council approval. He suggested that the CAC concentrate its efforts on the GHG issue while continuing to plant locally. Ms. Smith thought it was possible that States could receive a mandate to act.

Ms. Matsumoto agreed that the project required a consultant and was a top priority item. She appreciated Mr. Coleman's spreadsheet. Mr. Coleman referred to Dr. Huntley's previous comments on different levels of GHG inventories and said that page 20 of the Sustainability Plan listed the three scopes:

- Scope 1: GHG emissions from sources within a City boundary (e.g., fuels burned within the City)
- Scope 2: includes grid supplied heat, steam and/or cooling within the City boundary
- Scope 3: emissions that occur outside of the boundary because of activities within the boundary

Mr. Coleman assumed the scopes could be even more detailed to include building materials and City purchases. He reminded the City was undergoing a \$10 million project to modernize its buildings, which left only electric supply and fleet electrification and not much room for more action. He informed that the City had been considering electrifying the residents' homes and staff preferred not to have more natural gas in the City. He wondered if the City wanted to offer promotions, subsidize cold climate heat pumps to make them more financially competitive with natural gas, or have a heat pump electric rate. He noted there were many actions that could be taken to affect the City's and residents' GHG emissions that would outweigh anything the City government could do within its own buildings. Mr. Mateyko would be surprised if President Biden did not include similar steps in the upcoming bill, including attractive subsidies for a switch from gas to electric.

Ms. Smith wondered if it made sense to begin with grid-supplied energy and expand overtime because UD's Sustainability Committee and TNP would be involved in some manner so that the Commission could begin with a version of Scope 1 or 2. Mr. Coleman thought Ms. Smith's suggestion was reasonable and his intent was to include the consultant at the next meeting with some estimates. He informed that the Sustainability Plan began as an \$80,000 initiative and was now a \$90,000 initiative spanning three calendar years and included multiple public meetings which drove up costs. He agreed with Dr. Huntley to first build a simple framework and add on as necessary. Mr. Mateyko interjected and stated that any boundaries were plausible and could be useful. He thought the whole initiative could be dismantled if the City, TNP, and UD did not agree on the same types of boundaries because it would be easy to spread misinformation. Ms. Smith thought it was possible that each entity would begin their own scopes and combine them later. Mr. Mateyko thought there could be a conceptual agreement on which scope was easiest for the three entities to address. He reiterated that if the boundaries for each entity were different, the numbers would not be accurate. Ms. Smith repeated her point that the parameters should start small and new components could be added if necessary. She thought it was beyond the Commission to address the entities and their goals and noted the Commission's collaboration with TNP was only two months old and UD's Sustainability Committee was relatively new.

Dr. Huntley interjected that the GHG emissions inventory was an involved process and there was no way TNP would be in a position to assist over the next five years. She continued that UD performed a GHG inventory roughly five years ago and were supposed to be updating but Michelle Bennett no longer worked at UD and the new Sustainability Committee had no budget. She did not believe UD would be involved with the GHG inventory in the near future so there was nothing to coordinate. She emphasized that the Commission would be the sole entity and Ms. Smith agreed.

Ms. Chajes agreed with previous responses and refuted that Goal 1.3.A had not yet started because the Commission had put forward names for the Newark Energy Transition Commission. Mr. Coleman apologized and informed that he had received the information that day and would make the correction.

Ms. Smith asked if the GHG inventory baseline and monitoring would include a dashboard. Mr. Coleman replied that initial discussions on the dashboard indicated it would be used to track the savings generated by City initiatives, but he added that the dashboard could display the baseline and savings to show the impact. He recalled the intent to use UD graduate students and suggested UD as a resource and using their GHG inventory as a starting point and framework. Ms. Smith wanted to revisit the discussion after hearing from the contractor and learning more about UD's GHG inventory. Dr. Huntley agreed and thought the metrics for tree canopy increase and other goals should be included in the dashboard to track progress. She wanted to know how much waste was taken to the landfill, how much the City recycled, and how much renewable energy was in the City's electricity mix. Mr. Mateyko thought the tree canopy was a good marker for how much the City was sequestering in biomass because trees were inexpensive and self-reproduced. He noted it was easier to remove carbon from the air and trees were cheaper and more secure. Ms. Smith agreed. Mr. Mateyko wanted the contractor to base the scope on President Biden's announcement. Ms. Chajes interjected that President Biden would likely present goals while the Commission wanted to address the current inventory of practices to work towards the goals. Ms. Smith noted that President Biden's goals would likely be aspirational unless he issued Executive Orders but agreed with Mr. Mateyko to observe the announcement.

Dr. Huntley asked when Mr. Coleman would have the status completed. Mr. Coleman replied that

he would improve the update process on the tracker, and then forward it to the Directors. He was confident the tracker could be updated by the next meeting. Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Coleman and proceeded to a New Business topic while Mr. Coleman was still in attendance.

(See Item #9)

6. ANTI-IDLING AND PUBLIC EDUCATION UPDATE – SHEILA SMITH

Ms. Smith had no updates but shared that she approached an idling City truck and asked them to turn off the vehicle.

7. MONTHLY CONSERVATION ARTICLE WITH THE NEWARK POST – SHEILA SMITH

Ms. Smith thanked Ms. Matsumoto for her article and Dr. Huntley verified that her submission was due on April 30th and said that she would likely collaborate with Mr. O'Donnell. She asked Mr. Martindale when residents would be eligible to opt in or out of the Renewable Energy Program and he would investigate but encouraged her to submit the article sooner rather than later. Ms. Chajes spoke with Mr. Mateyko and together suggested various topics:

- Energy efficiency measures for residents (insulation, replacing light bulbs)
- Electrifying the home through long-term purchases (switching to heat pump and replacing gas appliances)
- Lawns and lawn chemicals
- Eco-psychology and how outdoor activities improved mental health
- Climate grief and anxiety

Ms. Smith informed that no one had yet written an article on trees which were a part of sequestering GHGs. Mr. Mateyko noticed that conversations typically focused on reducing GHGs and informed the only way to achieve 0% carbon was to discuss and promote trees. Ms. Chajes added that chemicals could also apply to products used inside the home. Ms. Smith offered to write an article on lawns and another on trees. Mr. O'Donnell suggested promoting clover cover as lawns and Ms. Smith informed the lack of clover was impacting European honeybees. Ms. Chajes offered to write an article on electrifying options and Ms. Smith pointed that anti-idling was an energy efficiency issue and was a problem during the summer months. The members discussed the article schedule and Ms. Matsumoto informed that the fall migration was from August 15th to November 15th. Ms. Smith promised to revisit the schedule at a future meeting.

- May – 100% Renewable Energy – Helga Huntley & Andrew O'Donnell
- June – Lawns – Sheila Smith
- July – Energy efficiency – Beth Chajes
- August – Flooding and Riparian Buffer Zones – Helga Huntley
- September - Lights Out – Sheila Smith

8. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Ms. Chajes, Ms. Matsumoto, and Dr. Huntley all attended a Planning Department Coffee Hour and Ms. Smith asked if anything was tied into the Sustainability Plan. Ms. Chajes explained that the format

was to allow the public to ask questions and Ms. Matsumoto maintained that she had an issue with annexations that were not connected to the City by sidewalks or bicycles but admitted she had not attended any other meetings. Ms. Smith agreed that connectivity had been a topic of community and City planning for 35 years.

Mr. Mateyko informed that connectivity was separated as Chapter 12 in the IPCC Climate Mitigation which considered the issue as absolutely essential to return to walkable communities. He argued that the City needed to commit to not negotiating connectivity because it was part of the City's climate plan and a way to remain carbon neutral. Ms. Smith asked Mr. Mateyko to address the Biden Announcements and how they would impact the City at the May meeting.

9. OLD/NEW BUSINESS – SUSTAINABILITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION NEXT STEPS

Earlier in the day, Ms. Smith forwarded an article informing that during the spring and fall bird migrations, large buildings and lights could negatively impact bird migration and raise mortality rates. She noted birds already had difficult migrations because they were only able to rest in fragmented forests. Dr. George Irvine sent Ms. Smith an article on the subject with the hope that the Commission could weigh in. She noted that UD and TNP were already involved and were working with partners downtown to reduce the amount of lights within in the City during the migratory months, from April through the end of May. She informed that many large Cities recently initiated the lights out, including Philadelphia. She admitted it was cumbersome but thought it could quickly catch on and shared that the US lost 33% of its bird population in the last 25 years. She spoke to Mr. Filasky who confirmed that the City was already looking to reduce its electric bill through light reduction and intended to install dimmers on streetlights. She emphasized that reducing electricity, saving money, preserving the bird population, and reducing GHGs and light pollution were positive initiatives. Mr. Filasky suggested she broach the subject to the Commission because she participated in the conversation as a member of the Delaware Ornithological Society.

Mr. Coleman explained that part of the City's \$10 million project, staff were converting the last 800 street lights to LED and were also retrofitting the other 2,000 street lights to be connected through the Verizon 4G network to a central hub at City Hall where they could be brightened or dimmed on an individual basis as requested. He continued that baseline assumed that all of the lights in the City would decrease wattage by 20% but explained the lumens did not reduce linearly with wattage so a 20% reduction in wattage did not equal a 20% reduction in lumens. He noted that residents were very particular with lighting but if the Commission made a recommendation and Council approved, arguments could be made in support of a seasonal reduction, at least for City facilities and parking lots.

Ms. Smith noted that the spring migration was already underway, and any action would require support from Council. She wanted to make Lights Out an institution and begin the initiative for fall. She informed that light pollution also contributed to the loss of insects which were the basis for the food chain. Mr. O'Donnell offered to post an article on the Nextdoor app to promote visibility and Ms. Chajes suggested to address the issue with a Conservation Corner article. Ms. Matsumoto was supportive but did not think City Council could add the topic on an agenda in the near term, so she wanted to be prepared for the fall. She asked if the lights could be dimmed without the Commission's recommendation. Mr. Coleman clarified that the City did not yet have the dimming capability and confirmed he would not need Council approval because it could be handled through the Facilities Department. Mr. Martindale and Mr. Filasky would investigate any measures for the Maintenance Yard because City Hall was already dimmed, save for the parking lights. Mr. Coleman explained that the City's parking lot lights were either all off or

all on and he was unsure of the exact schedule for the Verizon system installation and whether it would be running by the fall. He believed the next item in the project was the installation of solar rooftops, followed by HVAC, so a realistic scale would be fall or spring. He thought it could be possible to have the contractor prioritize the parking lots so staff could attempt to dim the lights for the fall migration.

Dr. Huntley supported the initiative and agreed with Ms. Chajes that there should be an article prior to the fall migration. Ms. Smith offered to write the article because she had already addressed the subject. Mr. Mateyko agreed. Ms. Smith believed the staff were doing what they could and asked Mr. Coleman to pay attention to the upcoming public education pieces and he offered to push the topic through the City's social media. Ms. Smith would instruct Leanne Moore at TNP to reach out Jayme Gravell at the City to create social media postings. She asked that Mr. Coleman prioritize the parking lots.

(Ms. Smith then returned to agenda item #4.)

10. NEXT MEETING – MAY 11, 2021

Mr. Martindale reminded that staff would formally present the purchase of the three EVs at the April 26th Council meeting and asked for the Commission's support.

MOTION BY MS. MATSUMOTO, SECONDED BY MS. CHAJES: TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Nichol Scheld
Administrative Professional I

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