

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 9, 2025

MEETING CONVENED: 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Cambron, Helga Huntley, George Irvine, John Mateyko, Andrew O'Donnell, A. R. Siders, Sheila Smith

STAFF: Jordan Herring, Administrative Professional I
Katya Raskin, Planner I

Dr. Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. WELCOME OF NEW CAC MEMBER, A. R. SIDERS (2 MINUTES):

- Dr. A. R. Siders introduced herself to the commission and gave a brief explanation of her background and expertise, including her specialty in climate adaptation and disaster response. Following her introduction, the commission members welcomed her to the CAC and shared their own backgrounds and interests related to environmental issues.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JULY 8, 2025:

MOTION BY DR. HUNTLEY, SECONDED BY MR. CAMBRON: THAT THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION (CAC) APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 8, 2025 MEETING.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6 TO 0.

AYE: CAMBRON, HUNTLEY, IRVINE, O'DONNELL, MATEYKO, SMITH.

NAY: 0.

ABSTAIN: SIDERS.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jan Baty, 807 Kenyon Lane, spoke about supporting native plants, community involvement, and shared experience with monarch butterflies, illustrating the importance of engaging the public in conservation efforts.

4. STATUS UPDATE ON CAC'S RECOMMENDATIONS (7/25 OUTDOOR LIGHTING, 4/25 COLLABORATION WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, 3/25 MAJOR PARKS PROJECTS, 12/24 LIGHTING AT PHILLIPS PARK, 8/24 CLIMATE CHANGE) – JORDAN HERRING (2 MINUTES)

- Ms. Herring shared the April 2025 recommendation to collaborate with the Planning & Development Department will be heard by City Council on September 15th. Ms. Raskin clarified City Council would vote on whether to include this recommendation on their list of priorities rather than immediate implementation. The commission agreed to designate a member of the CAC to attend the meeting to provide their input and answer any potential questions that Council

may have.

- Rob Allison, West Branch, asked where residents could acquire copies of the CAC's recommendations to Council, and if that included recommendations for existing light fixtures. He shared his own positive experience with reducing and dimming outdoor lighting.

5. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN – JEFF MARTINDALE (15 MINUTES)

- Postponed.

6. UPDATE FROM THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE, INCLUDING 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET & 2025 CAC BUDGET – JEFF MARTINDALE (20 MINUTES)

- Postponed.

7. COMMUNITY DAY 2025 – MIKE CAMBRON (15 MINUTES)

- Mr. Cambron noted he will support Community Day but would be unable to attend or coordinate the CAC's participation on September 21st, the day of the event. Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Irvine volunteered to attend the event and facilitate preparation, set-up, and tear-down.
- The commission discussed different ideas to share at their booth, with Dr. Huntley suggesting an overarching theme of residential yard topics. Such topics included English ivy removal, participation in the City's tree inventory, wildlife habitat designations, and sustainability messaging. Flyers promoting tree inventory participation were distributed, to which members agreed to scale down materials for easier management
- Dr. Irvine volunteered to bring a canopy, table, and composting demo; Ms. Smith would bring materials correlating to English Ivy; and Mr. O'Donnell would bring his electric bike for display.

8. TREE GIVEAWAY SURVEY RESULTS (15 MINUTES)

- The commission observed the heat map and survey result summary from the recent 2025 Spring Tree Giveaway, which received 98 responses out of the 328 surveys sent. Suggestions included better notification mechanisms and a desire for more flowering shrubs. The commission discussed where trees that were a part of the giveaway were dispersed, and why the volume of these trees was potentially denser in some areas or districts as opposed to others. They noted a possible correlation between tree giveaway participation and income/property values or outreach methods. They agreed to suggest increased outreach to underrepresented areas through City Council and targeted communication efforts. They noted to follow up with Parks & Recreation in regard to the upcoming fall tree giveaway.

9. RECOMMENDATION TO REPLACE OLD TREES ON CITY LAND (15 MINUTES)

- Dr. Huntley proposed this recommendation to address the absence in the Code of how to replace trees that have been removed, as trees that are needed in the future should be planted now to give them proper time to mature. The recommendation also includes working with the Planning

& Development Department to develop regulations or incentives to protect trees on private properties. The recommendation was that the City plant large or established trees that have either fallen or have been taken down, either as soon as possible or within a year, and to maintain the trees to increase the likelihood of survival. After discussion by the commission, Dr. Huntley agreed to further work on the language of the recommendation and then bring it back to a future meeting for further commission review.

10. CONSERVATION CORNER ARTICLES WITH THE NEWARK POST – HELGA HUNTLEY (5 MINUTES)

- Ms. Smith noted there is still a significant backlog of articles despite the reassurance from The Newark Post that they would eventually be published. She stated she would follow up with Josh Shannon to express the urgency of a time-sensitive article in the pipeline. The CAC discussed potentially considering different outlets or audiences for the articles due to this backlog.

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

- ***Old business:***
 - None.
- ***New business:***
 - Rescheduling of November CAC Meeting due to Veterans Day Holiday – *by Ms. Herring.* Ms. Herring noted the November CAC meeting will take place on November 11th, which will conflict with the City’s observance of the Veterans Day holiday. After a brief discussion between the commission, they agreed to reschedule their November meeting to Wednesday, November 12th.
 - Rittenhouse Trail upgrades — *by Mr. O’Donnell.* Mr. O’Donnell shared an idea to improve the accessibility and safety of a section of the Rittenhouse Trail, south of the train tracks and to the sharp southward turn past the Persimmon Creek Pool. He noted for pedestrians, such as children walking to Newark Charter School, the only other option besides this trail to walk in this area is West Chestnut Hill Road, which is not very pedestrian-friendly. He has gathered many stakeholders and has submitted public comments to the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) about this potential project. He believed the CAC could potentially support this project in the future.

12. NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 14, 2025

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Jordan Herring
Administrative Professional I

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