

The Prairie Village Environmental Committee met at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday February 26, 2025 in the Prairie Village City Hall multipurpose room. The recording secretary was Melinda Lewis.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Chair Greg Shelton, Vice Chair Ian Graves, Melinda Lewis, Piper Reimer, Travis Carson, Amy Brooks, Johanna Comes, Penny Mahon, Tamara McMahon, Travis Carson, Travis Wymore, Rick Wolfarth, and staff liaison Ashley Freburg. Nathan Kovac joined at 6 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Piper made a motion to amend the agenda to move discussion of Deep Roots events before she needs to leave. Rick seconded. All were in favor. Piper then moved to approve the agenda, and Amy seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Approval of January 2025 meeting minutes

Rick made a motion to approve the January 2025 meeting minutes. Penny seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Vice Chair introduction

Ward 6 Councilmember Ian graves was introduced as vice chair of the committee.

Old Business

1. **Deep Roots Events** - Piper asked that the Environmental Committee use some of its budget to promote the upcoming Deep Roots garden tour and plant sales on behalf of the Mayor's Monarch Pledge subcommittee. The committee's budget of \$8000 includes \$1,600 for promotions. Ashley will reach out to Shawnee Mission Post and look into social media advertising.

Piper made a motion that the committee cover the cost of supplies for seedballs, up to \$50, for the Deep Roots plant sale. Rick seconded the motion. All were in favor.

2. **Mayor's Monarch Pledge** - Piper requested to place an item on a future meeting agenda to reduce pesticides and take other actions on city-managed property.

Greg has separated the Mayor's Monarch Pledge from the Earth Day Proclamation, with a goal of action at the March 17 City Council meeting. EC members are asked to review the draft pledge and commit to council meeting date if possible (it is an obligation for the Mayor's Monarch Pledge process). After committee review, Greg will send to the Mayor for his review and action.

3. **Recycle Right Program Update** - JOCO has made it more than halfway through Prairie Village's recycling audit. They anticipate completing this spring (heading south, following Republic). We saw increased compliance after the first pass (40% error rate first time and single digits after corrective action). The limiting factor is personnel at JOCO (Health &

Environment). EC members are asked to talk with neighbors if there are questions about why people are looking through recycle bins.

4. **Annual Awards & Recognition** – MARC has started an awards program to recognize residents making significant impact on environmental action. Greg is hoping EC may take on identifying and nominating PV residents who should be considered for these awards (e.g. former Executive Director of Bridging the Gap). Would Environmental Committee want to take this on? Committee would be responsible for identifying potential candidates, discussing the nomination, and submitting the application. There are other award processes that we could also consider, to propose candidates that meet those criteria. There are Prairie Village residents who are overdue for this kind of recognition, and the city could recognize these PV residents even if they do not win the metro awards. We could perhaps model the process on the Arbor Day recognition the Tree Board undertakes each year. Greg will outline some awards he knows of, and EC members are asked to brainstorm potential PV residents to honor (~September/October timeframe, with consideration in July/August).
5. **Go Green Volunteer Update** – Greg found a community member to serve as this liaison to take the load off Nathan, but when Nathan arrived, he said he was willing to stay in this role. Rae Nicholson was willing to serve in that role if needed.
6. **Overland Park's Spring Recycling Extravaganza** - April 26 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Black & Veatch. The EC is committing \$1,062 in financial commitment for this event, but we also need volunteer support. There is an early and a late shift. You can contact Gayle at Overland Park to sign up. Greg wonders if EC wants to promote the call for volunteers, in addition to signing up ourselves (can do as a post in conjunction with promotions of Large Item pickup, with ~\$50 in promotions). The next Village Voice has the information on Large Item pickup and alternatives (since Large Item goes to the landfill).
7. **VillageFest Event Team:** At the last meeting, it was decided that Nathan is taking on the craft and Johanna/Piper are taking on the other components. Johanna will review the plan with the committee in April. Nathan has some new ideas for the craft and wants feedback from the committee. He's interested in wildflower paper that kids could plant to grow wildflowers at home. Johanna noted that the seeds would need to be native plants that are native to our area. This can be challenging to verify due to diverse sourcing. Or, we could have kids make their own paper, using toilet paper and seeds. Nathan has priced wildflower paper, but what is labeled 'native' may not be native to Kansas. Ian suggested that we could buy bulk seeds from Prairie Moon nursery. Tamara has made that before but worries that it will be too messy, and there are also questions about scale for an event of VillageFest's size.
8. **JazzFest Plan:** If we want to have composting at JazzFest, that will need to be written into the food truck's contracts, but we would need commitment from this committee to monitor the compost bins to make sure only compostable materials go in the bins—through the entirety of the event. We'd need ~11 volunteers (across shifts), which would be the entire

committee. Travis asked if the food vendors are on board with purchasing compostable materials, but we need to cover the costs of composting. Johanna is a bit worried about people getting angry. Or we could set up a table to sort and then we put waste into the appropriate bins correctly; however, this could remove the educational component (and it would be more difficult after dark). Greg took a vote re: preference; Travis Carson is in favor of the composting, Nathan is in favor of either, Penny wants to try it. JazzFest is the first Saturday in September. The question remains: how can we recruit more volunteers? Rick will reach out to compost companies for quotes and availability.

9. **NEJC Fall Recycling Event Plan (Extravaganza):** Four people volunteered to take this on at the last meeting: Piper, Tamara, Amy, and Nathan.
10. **Earth Month promotional campaign:** Arbor Day, Native Plant Sale, Recycling – Greg noted there will be an Arbor Day commemoration the week before Earth Day (4/22/25). A tree will be planted in a city park in honor of a Prairie Village resident who has made significant contributions on sustainability or another front.

New Business

1. **Composting pilot program** - Assistant City Administrator Meghan Buum and Environmental Committee Staff Liaison Ashley Freburg have been working with staff at KC Can Compost to develop a pilot program for drop-off composting for Prairie Village Residents. The program would operate as follows:
 - City staff would work with KC Can Compost to install smart cans at Wassmer Park, Harmon Park, and Franklin Park.
 - City staff would work with KC Can Compost on launch timelines, provision of materials, and a public education campaign.
 - After launch, those residents who are interested in participating can sign up for a no-cost account through KC Can Compost, which enables them to order supplies and receive updates
 - City hall would be stocked with the appropriate compostable liners. Residents can order them through the app and pick them up at city hall.
 - Residents who have signed up for an account can use their smart phones to access the smart cans and empty their food waste as often as needed.
 - KC Can Compost will service the bins on a regular weekly schedule.
 - Smart cans are equipped with technology that allows the fullness to be remotely monitored. Not only does this allow composting staff to know when to service the bins, but it also allows residents to see if the bin nearest them is approaching capacity.

Delivery and installation of three smart cans is \$450. Monthly maintenance of three smart cans is \$936/month or \$11,232 annually. Additional pickup if necessary is \$30/week/bin, or \$4,680 annually. The Environmental Committee would contribute \$3,000 and ask City Council for additional funding for the pilot program (we also have some budgeted funds carried over from the Keramida Climate Action plan that could go towards this one-year

pilot).

After discussion, Travis Carson moved to advance to City Council; seconded by Tamara. It passed unanimously.

2. **Tomahawk Elementary STEM Night Plan** – Piper said Tamara is going to be the beekeeper for this event this year. The Monarch guy will be back, and public works will be transporting the butterfly prop for use at the event.
3. **Climate Action KC Annual Summit Attendee Selection** - Summit is Saturday, April 5 from 1pm - 5pm at the Unity Temple on the Plaza. Greg wants names of those who want to go by March 7. Nathan, Johanna, and Tamara all indicated they would like to attend. Greg will do a random drawing to determine who is selected to attend.

Announcements

1. Next meeting: March 26, 2025
2. Next deadline for the May/June Village Voice is April 4, 2025 (Johanna may write a piece in the Village Voice in advance of the fall Deep Roots garden tour.)
3. T-shirts are available. Please take a shirt in the size you ordered!

Adjournment

Amy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rick seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56