

Transportation and Environmental Sustainability Committee

Minutes of August 25, 2022 meeting, prepared by Kathy Petrey

The meeting was called to order by Charlie Mosbrook at approximately 7:00 pm. The meeting was held virtually, except that Catalina Wagers, the convenor, attended at City Hall.

Present: Catalina Wagers (convenor), Charlie Mosbrook (member), Cindie Carroll-Pankhurst (applicant for membership), Kathy Petrey (member), Gail Larson, Council Liaison, and Tony Cuda, Council member.

Charlie agreed to be the acting chair of the Committee for purposes of the August 25 meeting. Kathy Petrey agreed to provide minutes of the meeting, subject to a recording of the meeting being made available by the City.

It was recognized that there was not a quorum of members. However, Kathy suggested that a quorum should not be needed as long as the Committee was not taking formal action.

Approval of Minutes: There was brief discussion as to whether the members should approve the minutes without having a quorum. Members agreed that Pat Hanavan had done a very thorough job in preparing the minutes, and Kathy said that she had read them carefully and thought they were accurate. Kathy moved for approval of the minutes, Catalina seconded that motion, and all in attendance voted to approve the minutes.

Report from Councilmember Gail Larson – Caledonia illegal dumping update. Gail reported that the environmental condition at the ravine was daunting, and that more attention to that site should be given by the City, the County and perhaps the State. She had sent an email to Mayor Seren, with copy to Council President Melody Hart, asking that the situation be addressed. The Mayor responded by asking Gail to submit a complaint on the Access Cleveland Heights app. Gail submitted a complaint around the end of May but did not receive a response. After submitting a second complaint to the app, on August 19 she received a response to the effect that several other people had submitted complaints about the ravine to the app, and that the complaints have been consolidated under one complaint number so as to avoid duplication and improve the City's service delivery. The message said that all the people who had submitted complaints would receive notice as to actions taken. Gail said she intended to follow up 30 days after the date of that message, and that she hoped that the City and County were discussing the situation.

In response to a question about the role of the County in this matter, Gail responded that the County has more expertise and remediation powers and access to funding if it turns out that the ravine contains a potential brownfield or similar level of environmental contamination.

Catalina suggested that the City will need to stop the dumping at the ravine if the situation is to be changed. It is unknown if any patrolling is done in that area. "No dumping" signs have been removed and thrown into the ravine. Gail raised the possibility of installing cameras, but Cindie said this would require computer connectivity that is probably not available. Charlie suggested the use of motion detection cameras.

Catalina said that the dumping in the area of the elementary school appears to be coming from homes that back up onto the ravine, and that the worst dumping has been near the abandoned observatory on Taylor. Some of that area is in East Cleveland. Charlie pointed out that if the County gets involved that should make less relevant the issue of whether the problem is in Cleveland Heights or East Cleveland. In response to a question from Catalina, Gail said that she sits in on meetings of Council's Community Relations and Recreation Committee, which has overlapping concerns with Gail's Public Safety and Health Committee, but she did not take detailed notes for that committee's most recent meeting.

Chair's Remarks. There being no permanent chair of the Committee, there were no Chair's remarks. Charlie asked others to consider volunteering to chair the Committee, and he said he might nominate Howard at the next meeting.

Committee-Initiated. Cindie inquired about when Council's administrative services committee is going to deal with citizen committee member appointments. Catalina pointed out certain inconsistencies between the TESC bylaws and Council proceedings regarding the committee membership and purposes. Tony said the committee was going to consider having common rules and structure for the citizen committees and clarifying the appointment processes and purposes of the committees. He reported that the Clerk of Council will be keeping records for the committees and that she will maintain a web page with committee information.

Cindie suggested that all citizen committees be in one location on the City website. Kathy asked that a copy of the City's complete and green streets policy be available with the TESC information on that website.

Kathy identified certain provisions of the complete and green streets policy that the City has not implemented or continued to follow, particularly the requirement that the City prepare project checklists that would confirm that City's transportation improvements are planned, designed and installed in compliance with the policy. Noting that City compliance with its complete and green streets policy is more important than the functions of the TESC, she asked that Council assert itself as a driver of policy and raise the issue of compliance with that policy. If the City is not going to comply with the policy, it should repeal the policy.

Gail explained that Council's administrative committee is reviewing bylaws and authorizing legislation for all citizen committees with the goal of making them more consistent. While this is a daunting task, it should resolve many questions being raised by members of TESC and other committees.

Catalina pointed out that the City has not fleshed out the environmental sustainability component of the Committee's mission. That mission is broader than the complete and green streets policy. After some discussion, but without a formal vote, the attendees of this meeting reached consensus that Council should revisit the question of creating a separate citizens environmental sustainability committee, like Shaker Heights has done. The Transportation Advisory Committee could then focus on its mission as set forth in the complete and green streets policy.

Community/resident-initiated. Councilman Cuda described concerns raised with Council members by residents of Grandview Avenue, a residential street running from Cedar to North Park. Trucks are permitted to enter that street from Cedar to access the Dave's grocery store parking lot. The "no trucks" sign that applies to the balance of the street is positioned behind a tree and thus not visible to drivers.

Residents would like that sign to be relocated. There is a no trucks sign at the entrance from North Park which should stay in place. Residents also report that speeding is a problem on Grandview. They have been told to report this on the Access Cleveland Heights app. It was noted that it would have been helpful for a City staff member to be in attendance to participate in this discussion. Kathy stated her view that a call to the police department should be enough to get response from the City. The traffic calming program's petition requirement is a practical and economic barrier. Also, it is not consistent with the complete and green streets policy, under which the City is responsible for identifying and addressing transportation safety problems.

Old Business – Surveying Bus Stops and Crosswalks. The group continues to view this as a City responsibility, pursuant to the Americans With Disabilities ACT (ADA). Charlie asked if the City should hire an ADA compliance officer for this and other ADA provisions. Gail volunteered to raise this issue at the next Council discussion regarding staffing.

Special Statements. Cindie suggested that the TESC members formally and publicly acknowledge our appreciation and thanks to Sam Bell and Laura Marks for their years of service and significant contributions to TESC and its mission. Kathy volunteered to reach out to Howard Maier, a former chair and one of the initial members of the Committee, to ask if he would like to draft such a letter.

Next Meeting.

The 4th Thursday in November falls on Thanksgiving. Need to propose new date

The 4th Thursday in December is the 22nd and does not necessarily need to be moved but you may also want to move it.