

Kent Environmental Council

Summary Notes of Proposed Agenda for Action

2010

I. Ongoing Commitments

- Annual Meeting February 22nd
- Spring & Fall Forums (date, location and topics to be announced)
- Organize a Summer Picnic to encourage a social gathering of members and friends, including opportunities for hiking and biking along Portage County/Kent trails and programs for family participation.
- Earth Week April 23 & 24 “Who’s Your Mama”: Transportation Theme
Environmental Film Festival & speakers with emphasis on supporting the continuing development of mass transit, particularly high speed commuter rail along the CCC (Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland) corridor.
- Environmental Conservation Awards Dinner, April 10, to benefit the newly formed Portage Park Foundation. Encourage Portage County environmental groups to attend. Solicit business sponsorships of attendance by student groups.
- River Day, May 15, continue to provide activities for participation by school children and families.
- Haymaker Landscaping: Continue Helen Green’s guidance toward a more sustainable landscaping design.
- Heritage Festival Booth- Encourage inclusion of activities that would attract young families.

Vision & Planning : Environmental Areas of interest – Priorities for 2010 & Beyond

Sustainability (Ecology; Economics; Equality; Education)

- Develop a sense of community sustainability including getting a better understanding of economic issues facing our community (including how taxes are distributed by governmental entities as well as lobbying efforts by polluting industries).
- Continue support for sustainability projects and sustainability issues, especially sustainable agriculture initiatives.
- Continue review of Kent Planning/Zoning Regulations and related efforts to encourage adaptive reuse, strong neighborhood standards and historic preservation.
- Environmental Justice - Consider the impact of environmental decisions on the area’s most vulnerable citizens.
- Continue to support cooperative community planning and development efforts by the City of Kent and KSU.

Energy

- Continue to advocate for the adoption of a green building code by the City, KSU, Kent City Schools and local churches.
- Advocate legislation and regulation to control and improve the processing of extraction of gas, oil, & coal
- Promote energy conservation and efficiency
- Promote alternate renewable energy projects & funding available to our community. Publicize the government programs available on KEC website.
- Encourage KEC members with expertise to provide their insight to the organization

Land Use/Transportation Policies and Air Quality

Open Space/Farmland Preservation/Water Quality

- Keep parks open and accessible to the public
- Advocate protection from pollution and enhancement of high levels of water quality in Portage County watersheds, including Portage County water supplies
- Oppose gas, oil, and coal extraction processes that endanger ground and surface water quality
- Continue to monitor storm water management regulation and promote environmental education in this area.

Solid Waste Management: Reuse/Reduce/Recycle

- Continue to monitor current and future operations of the Portage County Solid Waste Management District
- Evaluate Portage County's upcoming study for upgrading the County Recycling Center operations and establishing a new transfer station facility.
- Advocate continued source separation of recyclables
- Investigate the effectiveness of a single stream recyclables operation.

Education/Public Information

- Promote environmental/ecological education
- Work to enhance use of newspaper articles, letters to the editor, KEC newsletter and website as well as KEC LISTSERV messages to inform or alert KEC members and friends to environmental action.
- Work to ensure all costs are presented when assessing environmental impacts of operations or developments.
- Continue to raise funds to support Legacy for Learning grant projects.

Networking: Cooperative Partnerships

- Support Portage Park District – Environmental Conservation Dinner working along with other environmental groups in Portage County (Hiram, Garrettsville, Aurora, Ravenna, and Streetsboro).
- Continue support for Haymaker Farmer's Market and consider other cooperative arrangements KEC could/should suggest or encourage in the interest of energy efficiency, healthful living, etc.
- Support Breakneck Creek group's activities and help organize other watershed groups such as Fish Creek and Plum Creek.
- Strengthen ties with Kent City Schools extending support for work of Young Families Focus Group
- Strengthen ties with KSU, staff and students, especially working collaboratively with Sustainability Manager
- Renew efforts to build collaborations with local church congregations
- Continue to actively support and be guided by the work of the Ohio Environmental Council.
- Consider other requests from national and regional groups who are beginning to solicit KEC support, such as RePower America or Clean Fuels Ohio.

Action Projects suggested for 2010

- Implement fully this year's KEC plan for two General Public Forums, a Summer Picnic get-together, and a winter business-organizational meeting.
- Give more attention to strengthening our "focus groups" structure, especially identifying willing conveners to carry out group projects.
- 40th Anniversary suggested events/projects: (1) work along with KSU Sustainability Manager Melanie Knowles to celebrate National Sustainability Week in the Fall. Incorporate the possibility of cosponsoring an Energy Conservation Fair during that week, working collaboratively with organizations such as the Community Action Council, Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, Green Energy Ohio, Sierra Club, E-4S; (2) A formal proposal will be sent to the KSU Honors College to enlist two Honors students to perform oral histories and work with KEC founding members to develop a Time-Line of KEC accomplishments with the possibility of producing a video presentation; (3) Promote contributions from former and present KEC members to KEC's two Portage Foundation accounts, endowment and Legacy for Learning grants; (4) Make KEC archival materials more accessible to the public.
- Perhaps enlist the aid of another Honors College student to undertake a "Sustainability Assessment" of the New "Downtown" project with focus on degree of ownership, connections to Kent by owners, managers, and resource efficiency (locally grown/made products vs. imported) and degree of recycling. How is the downtown renewal adding to or taking from the economic, ecological and social-cultural asset base of the City? Valuable work on "Indicators" by former members of the City's Environmental Commission would be appropriate to be included in this research.
- Improve our organization's system to engage more members in activities, meetings, forums, etc.
- Involve more university students, perhaps by invitations directly to departments.
- Establish a stronger membership response to alerts for action and website visits.
- Encourage the Kent Sustainability Commission to continue its campaign to reduce/eliminate the use of bottled water within the City administration offices. Make use of our KEC website to record messages informing the public of the negative impacts on the environment of consumption of water in plastic bottles.
- Support the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent's efforts to qualify as a "Green Sanctuary" Church.
- As part of KEC's community sustainability initiatives, approach local churches requesting their denomination's educational and program materials addressing environmental/ecological concerns ("stewardship for the earth") as well as identification of environmental projects being undertaken within their congregations. KEC might also invite representatives of area churches to meet and share these findings.