Environmental Management Commission
Meeting Minutes – April 08, 2009
Meeting Location: Mid-America Regional Council, 2nd Floor, Westview Room

Attendance
Commissioners present: Carol Adams, Jimmy Adegoke, Bob Berkebile, Amy Bhesania, Faith Brennan, Taylor Haynes, Dustin Jensen, Marty Kraft, Rachel Norton, Jack Schrimsher

Staff: Dennis Murphey, Jerry Shechter – Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ); Matt Gigliotti – Law Department;

Guests: Kevin Chafin – Bruce Wiggins, Carolyn Davies - UMKC, Camealia Murray, Mike Hoey, Dave Crawford, Beverly Johnson, Claus Wawrzinek, Ron McLinden – RTA, Dan Verbeck – KCUR – FM 89.3

Carol Adams, Co-Chair, opened the meeting at 4:10 pm; a quorum was present

A. The Chair welcomed all Commissioners, staff and guests and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

B. Minutes – Bob Berkebile made a motion, seconded by Amy Bhesania, to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 11, 2009. The motion passed.

C. OEQ Reports – Dennis Murphey
   1. City Manager Cauthen has released the Annual Environmental Action Plan and has directed all department heads to update their individual Ozone Action Plans.
   2. Show Me Green Sales tax Holiday – The State of Missouri has passed legislation making the week from April 19-April25 and annual sales tax holiday for purchases of energy star rated appliances throughout the State. Each taxing jurisdiction within the state, such as the cities and townships, are allowed to declare a local sales tax holiday as well for the same time period. The City of Kansas City, MO opted in for 2009. Therefore, any residential or commercial purchasers will realize the benefits of reduced sales taxes as well as applicable federal tax deductions. KC,MO is the only city of the largest 8 cities in the State to have opted in and it did so along with 55 other cities. Dennis did a “Talk of the Town” taping with Councilwoman Brooks and the program is advertised on the websites of the City of KC,MO, Bridging The Gap, Metropolitan Energy Center. Both Missouri Gas Energy and KCP&L will advertise the program.
   3. State legislation – SB 376 – now known as the "Missouri Residential and Small Business Energy Efficiency Investment Act" would allow utilities to realize a return on investment for investment in energy efficiency measures as opposed to just new power plants is moving ahead with some compromises. There are some who want to tie this bill with a bill to allow charging customers for construction work in progress (CWIP) rather than for delivery of services.
   4. Dennis received a call from a reporter for FOX News of Chicago regarding the Energy Star rated new homes built by local community development corporation (CDC) Blue Hills Community Services Corporation. The reporter was trying to find people who were opposed to the construction of the energy efficient, affordable homes and would be willing to say something negative about them.
   5. Solid Waste Management – The interview/selection process for a consultant to help develop the RFP for a materials recovery facility/transfer station/education facility is completed and in

process of final negotiation. Sustainability has been emphasized in the process. Michael Shaw has issued a request for bids for recycling amid concerns about increasing prices.

6. Kansas City will be home to Smith Electric Vehicles at KCI. Although the company has been providing electric vehicles in Europe for the last 3 years, this is their first venture into the North American market. Smith EV is entering into multiple partnerships including Ford and possibly KOKAM Batteries in Lee's Summit to produce 100% electric, commercial use trucks. They expect a minimum of 120 jobs in two years and about 300 within three years. Both the Economic Development Corporation and the KC Area Development Council have been involved.
7. Dennis circulated a new booklet just released by the City Manager called "Sustainability in Kansas City". Only a few copies were printed; most copies will be distributed electronically. The booklet was done in-house using no City funds. The City's Annual Report, in complementary fashion, will feature sustainability.
8. City Budget – About 140 staff have been released along with eliminating about 250 vacant positions amounting to about 10% of the workforce. Bruce Wiggins, Aviation Department, has lost his job in the process. In Water Services Department, Scott Cahail and Deb Smith have been retained. The Budget Office was a tremendous help in finding money in support of OEQ. OEQ will internally provide more of the training for City staff. The contract with Bridging The Gap for Keep Kansas City Beautiful has been funded in total at $50,000 while the contract for environmental outreach and education, for $225,000, has been eliminated. The only remaining contract with BTG will be through Solid Waste Management for managing the drop-off recycling centers. There are no guarantees for next year.
9. Federal Economic Stimulus Funding – There are a range of funding sources included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) 2009 – the federal "stimulus act". Funds are available both through formula allocation and competitive grants. The biggest allocation is for the Home Weatherization Program in which the current $2 million per year program will be increased to about $20 million over two years. The element of the ARRA for which cities have the most discretion is the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. The EECBG was approved by Congress in 2007 for five years but was not funded at that time.

   City staff have been meeting for the last several months to select a range of projects and long term programs to recommend to the City Manager. The City Manager will, in turn make his recommendations to the City Council for inclusion in the EECBG application. It appears the City will, based on the Department of Energy (DOE) formula, receive about $4.8 million from EECBG sources. Programs and projects to be recommended by staff include updating energy codes, making area plans more conducive to sustainable programs, completing the change-out to LED traffic lights, traffic signal synchronization and a synchronization command center, at least one trail that is high on the list and does not have another apparent source of funds. Additionally, DOE is requiring submission of an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (EECS) that takes into account the various other plans done by the City – Climate Protection Plan, Trails KC, the Development Code, Solid Waste Management – as well as coordination, and potential collaboration, with adjacent cities in the region.

   One problem in the process is that the DOE did not provide any funds for counties in several states including Johnson County, Kansas, which appear to be eligible counties. A re-allocation of funds may be necessary.

10. Green Impact Zone – Congressman Cleaver has been working with a number of people to create a "Green Impact Zone" in which programs and projects can be concentrated to increase their individual impact. The Impact Zone is targeted for the area from 39th St to 51st St, from Troost to Prospect and an area that is east of the southern end of this area. Money would be leveraged at every opportunity. Planning has been coordinated by MARC. KCP&L may have funds to invest in the area and may want to work on a smart grid and solar panels. The Metropolitan Energy Center and the Full Employment Council are involved to help channel people into training – green collar jobs. There is expected to be green infrastructure opportunities as well as the development of a climate protection/sustainability center. Dustin

Jensen noted that Charles Lee – US-EPA in Washington, DC has been here to see what we are doing given that the MEC has been awarded an Environmental Justice Grant that will be part of the mix. Carolyn Davies asked how the work by Dr. Jacob Wagner at UMKC has figured into the project. Dennis responded that Dr. Peter Eaton of UMKC has been involved for a number of years in developing databases and metrics for the area but that the two had not been involved in this project together. Dr. Davis said she will try to get them together.

D. Liaison Updates
   1. Air Quality Forum – No report. However, it was noted that a large number of controlled burns had been done in the Flint Hills with resulting haze covering Kansas City.
   2. Solid Waste Planning – No report.

E. Project Reports
   1. Rachel Norton – 2009 Environmental Achievement Awards – A total of eight nominations were received for review and, of that eight, five projects/activities were selected for an achievement award. These include: (1) Birmingham Tree Nursery, (2) Stream Buffer Ordinance, (3) Recycling at the Convention Center, (4) Vehicle Impound Facility (tow lot) for targeted LEED-Gold rating, and (5) Water Services Department for its staff rain garden.

      Dennis Murphey reported it is being recommended the awards be given at the EMC monthly meeting in June in the MARC Board Room. Carol Adams will work out the details with Dennis and Andy Savastino. It is suggested the awards ceremony begin at 3:30 pm, that it last for 90 minutes and that the Mayor and City Manager be invited as usual. The EMC would conduct a shortened business meeting after the awards. The Commissioners agreed with the approach.

F. New Business Announcements –
   1. Carol Adams asked the EMC to consider something like a meeting with the City Council in lieu of a retreat. She proposed that the EMC needs to move beyond advocacy and to look more closely at changes in public policy – climate protection planning, carbon reduction strategies, land use, etc. Bob Berkebile noted there is a lot happening but it is not integrated – the City is still operating in silos, the budget is not healthy, and we do not look easily at bigger picture things. Jimmy Adegoke noted that UMKC is looking at benefits to the larger community via their synthesis project with 6-7 teams of students looking climate and its intersection with different areas. By the summer of 2009, they will have a first draft at a sense of opportunities that will possibly help inform the EMC.
   2. Carol Adams asked the EMC to take a moment to recognize Bruce Wiggins for his service to the City and to the EMC. Bob Berkebile seconded the sentiment.
   3. Bruce Wiggins announced the upcoming American Planning Association meeting at which he is giving a workshop using Kansas City climate planning leadership as a case study. He is working with the Sustainability Coordinator in Minneapolis and with ICLEI.
   4. Marty Kraft noted the House of Representatives is hearing about negative impacts of the proposed HR 875 – the Food Security Bill – that might cause problems for small and organic farmers. Bob Berkebile indicated he felt the impact would not be so negative.
   5. Dennis Murphey reported the US-EPA has proposed mandatory greenhouse gas reporting rules to create a database to inform policy.

G. Remarks from Visitors
   1. Mike Hoey provided information about the Transition Missouri website.
   2. Ron McLinden informed the EMC about the National Public Radio show – “All Things Considered” – with a segment on the “new normal” to follow the recession. He will send the link to everyone.

H. Events
   1. Jimmy Adegoke – April 22-April 23 – Energy Summit in Columbia featuring T. Boone Pickens
   2. Jerry Shechter – April 27-May 1 - reminded everyone about the Affordable Comfort Conference to be held in Kansas City at the Hyatt Downtown (ACKC 2009).

3. Carol Adams – May 2 – environmental festival at her church – she will distribute information
4. Dennis Murphey – April 22 – ImagineKC community forum sponsored by KC Public Television and Bridging The Gap. ImagineKC has a blog on which people are posting specific statements.

The next monthly meeting is scheduled for

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2009
Time: 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Place: MARC – 2nd Floor, Westview Room

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.