

Commission on Sustainability meeting November 19, 2020

Thomas Kovacs opened the meeting at 1 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2020

There was a notation that Kaja Zum Mallen name was misspelled but will be corrected before the minutes are posted.

Kevin Kucera put forth an amendment to approve the minutes with the correction of Kaja's name.

12 approvals. No objection.

Introductions and attendees:

Thomas Kovacs, Chair  
Gracie Thompson, sophomore at EMU  
Demetrios Kyprianos, Executive Chef for Eastern.  
Savannah Koth, senior at EMU  
Mary Jane Fallot  
Katy Greenwald  
Ronald Rich  
Luke Yates  
Kevin Kucera  
Kaja Zum Mallen  
Lyla Ellens  
Chris Grant  
Sherry Owens

Reports:

Commission chair report

Commission achievements include

- website ([emich.edu/sustainability](http://emich.edu/sustainability)) with substantial university sustainability information,
- Unanimous passage of resolution SC-OP-1-2019, to recommend to the president's office that the replacement for the manager; Technical/Mechanical Trades and Utilities would preferably have a background that includes sustainability-related experience,
- Unanimous passage, acceptance, and implementation of resolution SC-OP-2-2019, to recommend to the president's office that each request for proposal contains standard language that requests information from the prospective vendor about the vendors corporate sustainability commitments and how their proposal would improve the

university's Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) score, and

- Partial or complete filling out of 40 of the 63 STARS criteria in the STARS reporting tool and the transfer of data from STARS v. 2.1 to STARS v. 2.2. This information awaits submission to AASHE, which will require a financial commitment. It will also require a more substantial human resource commitment.

Report from the various subcommittees:

Academic -- Members Ron Rich and Katy Greenwald. There are 3 categories for STARS that we don't have information on. We do not have it on research so Commissioner Kovacs has contacted ORDA. Commissioner Kovacs will be setting up a meeting with ORDA. ORDA does not think that they can quantify sustainability in research even though he has given them 10 metrics from the STARS manual.

Engagement – Commissioner Fallot gave report. No updates since we have turned in our report earlier in the year. Lots of room for us to grow in this area. Our biggest area to grow would be in campus life. We could also work with employee orientation.

Operations – This is an important area. Commissioner Kovacs will verify if Commissioner Valdes is going to be the subcommittee chair.

Administration – Commissioner Kucera gave report. We could do some updates since the information in the subcommittee since the report and data is old. It was noted that data can be used up to 3 years before it is considered old and not usable. Commissioner Kucera feels that we could update the report without too much trouble.

Commissioner Kovacs said we will not be officially reporting this year but it would be helpful to have the data and know where we can get the data so we can obtain easily when needed.

OLD BUSINESS:

By-laws approval –

Commissioner Kovacs displayed the committee bylaws which are kept on the team drive. He reviewed them with the committee.

Two items:

There was discussion if the Office of the President appoints the chair or if the committee decides.

There also needs a section in the by-laws of how a motion passes.

Commissioner Kovacs entertained a motion to approve the by-laws with the two revisions:

- 1) Under section II., replace the last paragraph, regarding the appointment of commission chair with the following statement, "The EMU president will appoint the commission chair at the beginning of each academic year."
- 2) Under section V., add, "4) Motions pass by a majority of attending members" to the end of the section.

Motion by Mary Fallot.

Second by Chris Grant

No discussion

11 for approval. No objections. (note that Kevin Kucera had to leave the meeting early due to another meeting).

Completion of STARS Rating system:

Commissioner Kovacs shared a template and a list about where we are on STARS report. 40 items have been complete or nearly completed. 23 have not been started.

He raised the issue could we institutionalize sustainability by having data gathered on individual criteria by an annual report of each responsible office?

When we hire new employees in the Physical Plant could we incorporate into their job description an annual report on sustainability?

Commissioner Fallot thinks that some of these might be easier than others since some of the items would be in different positions.

There was further discussion that from the list on the drive could the committee members assigned find out who or which position would be responsible for finding this information and reporting out?

Commissioner Ellens said she would be open to more reporting but would like more information about how much additional reporting this would entail.

Kaja Mullens said we started to reach out about the HR issues and then the pandemic occurred and HR changed leadership. Commissioner Kucera and I will reach back out and try to get the line items related to HR updated.

Commissioner Kovacs brought up that he had asked the Office of the President that when key positions in the Physical Plant get filled if sustainability could be part of their job description. Commissioner Grant has not heard any conversations if they are going to hire anyone in the Physical Plant. Commissioner Kovacs said that before the positions become posted or filled it would be best practice that the annual reporting of sustainability measures becomes part of their job description. Commissioner Grant agreed that he thought that was possible.

If sustainability becomes part of the campus culture than this reporting would be much easier in the future.

#### Executive Committee:

Commissioner Kovacs asked the group if last year did the committee chairs want to get together as an executive body? What was the purpose?

Commissioner Fallot -- It was a way to unite the efforts of what the other committees doing. It was a way to stay updated since the full commission does not meet very often.

Commissioner Yates thinks that it would really be up to the committee chairs.

Commissioner Fallot recommended we table this and leave it to the committee chairs.

#### New Business:

Commissioner Greenwald – She sits on the City of Ypsilanti sustainability commission. Their sustainability plan has moved onto the City planning commission to be incorporated into the master plan. She can forward that onto this commission for review.

Second item was there has been a lot of talk of removal or repair of the Peninsula Park dam just north of campus at the city level. There are a lot of good faculty research and educational opportunities in these areas from the sciences (hydro and biology) to historical preservation.

Commissioner Kovacs – Asked Commissioner Greenwald to put the sustainability plan from the City in the share drive. She said she would do that and let the members know it is not a final report but a pretty close final draft.

Commissioner Kovacs – Asked is there a date set for the removal of the dam?

Commissioner Greenwald – There is not a date but the approval from the City has been obtained but funding needs to come from other sources. City of Ypsilanti can come up with \$500,000 but the total bill will be at least \$800,000. Some groups have applied for state and federal funding for this removal.

Phase 1 is investigation on the impact on the removal. This is what most of the state and federal funding applications have been for at this stage.

Repair is estimated for \$800,000.

Removal is supposed to be \$2.3 million.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Grant. Second by Commissioner Fallot.

