



## **Minutes of the Environmental Commission held on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 6:38 pm**

### **Call to Order**

### **Oath of Office and Commission Member Terms Limits**

Mayor Pribonic swore in the first members of the Environmental Commission which was an adopted Codified Commission by City Council this year, 2026.

Mayor expressed strong support for the new Environmental Commission and emphasized that members had the full backing of the city, including financial support when needed. He explained that the city could help with materials such as banners, brochures, and small giveaway items so the commission could better engage with residents at neighborhood pop-ups and other events, especially those held at the amphitheater site. He encouraged collaboration among all city boards and commissions—such as Urban Forestry, Inclusion, Planning, and the Arts Commission—stressing that their work interconnected and could reinforce each other, particularly in schools and community outreach. The Mayor noted that Stow was the third largest city in Summit County and that other mayors had already reached out to learn from initiatives like the city’s Mental Health Coalition. He said the commission members’ expertise was invaluable and that if the city had to pay for such knowledge it would be extremely costly. He reiterated that phone, text, and email lines to his office were always open and urged members to ask for whatever support they needed. He then described how he and Mr. Herman had reviewed 16 or 17 applications for this brand-new commission, originally planning for five members but expanding to seven because of the strength of the applicant pool, and he thanked the members for their willingness to serve and share their knowledge with the community. Mayor Pribonic then turned the meeting over to Council President, Kyle Herman, to say a few words.

Mr. Herman briefly explained the background of the new Environmental Commission. He said the Mayor had been working to strengthen and elevate all city commissions so citizens would know their input was valued and utilized, noting that there was significant expertise within the community that the city could draw on. He described an upcoming volunteer appreciation event in April that would bring together members of all commissions to collaborate. Mr. Herman emphasized that this Environmental Commission had been citizen-initiated rather than started by Council or the Mayor, arising from residents who saw a gap despite existing bodies like Urban Forestry and Parks and Recreation. He noted that environmental issues were a local, nonpartisan priority unanimously supported by Council, and that the number and quality of applicants had been overwhelming. He concluded by thanking the members, stressing that it was truly “their” commission, that they would choose the projects and initiatives, and that they had a partnership and strong support from both Council and the Mayor.

### **Roll Call**

Council Members Present:

Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty,  
Dennis Mariola, Marcie Kress, Patty

Spring, and Robert Misbrenner

Council Members Absent:

None.

City Officials Present:

Kyle Herman, John Pribonic, Kim Young,  
and Sonya Mottram

### **Committee Introductions**

Mrs. Spring introduced herself and explained that she had first become very involved in Stow civic life through the SKIP program back in 1991 and later served on the Parks and Recreation Board for a couple of years. She said that when her children got older she returned to work, spending nearly 25 years teaching in Twinsburg before retiring a few years ago. Mrs. Spring described how she had since become active with Kent Environmental, a 501(3)(c), and the Twinsburg Area Native Habitat Association. She expressed how thrilled she was that the Environmental Commission had come together so quickly after she first raised the idea in October, thanked everyone for helping it come to fruition, and said she was very excited and full of ideas, just as she believed the rest of the members were.

Ms. Orris introduced herself and explained that she had lived in Stow for over 40 years and served six years as an at-large member of Stow City Council in the 1990s. She said she had successfully run for council on an environmental platform centered on bringing Riverside recycling to the city, noting that at the time Stow became one of the first communities in Summit County to adopt such a program, with only Kent offering similar services in the area. She recalled being on council when they approved construction of the ReWorks building and related project, emphasizing that it had been a very significant environmental initiative for the community.

Mr. Misbrenner introduced himself and explained that he had worked as a consulting engineer for about 20 years from 1980 to 1999, then at Kent State University until his retirement about a year earlier. He said most of his work focused on solar energy projects, including roughly four megawatts of solar panels across nine facilities, notably the visible installation at the field house completed around 2012. He also described managing \$80–90 million in energy conservation projects for Kent State under House Bill 251, which aimed to reduce energy use by 20% and had produced cost-effective results. Mr. Misbrenner emphasized that he brought “nuts and bolts” technical experience rather than prior service on city boards and expressed hope that his practical knowledge could benefit Stow. He added that he had lived in the city for 38 years and said Stow had been a great place to live and raise a family.

Mr. Mariola introduced himself and said he had lived in Stow for 35 years after growing up on North Hill. He explained that he had worked for 41 years at Bridgestone/Firestone, finishing his career in a sales and leasing role that exposed him to many environmental issues through the transportation companies he served. He mentioned having been involved in efforts to secure assistance for bus companies facing requirements under the Clean Air Act and related regulations. Mr. Mariola noted that he served on the Stow–Munroe Falls Board of Education, calling it a challenging but worthwhile experience. He emphasized that environmental concerns were close to his heart and described how he routinely tracked his household’s gas and electricity use, reviewing month-to-month changes and hours of use. He concluded by saying he hoped he could contribute something meaningful to the commission and that he was eager to learn from the group.

Mr. Prunty introduced himself and said he has lived in Stow since 2009. He described his

experience with landscaping and arborist work for nine years. He received a Bachelor's of Arts in geology and earth science from Kent State University. For the last twenty-five years, he has worked in the stormwater industry. He brings his landscaping and storm water engineering background to assist with green infrastructure to reduce stormwater.

Mr. Boateng introduced himself and said he had worked in sustainability and climate resiliency for about 20 years and had lived in Stow since around 2011 with his wife. He explained that he had led numerous city-scale programs and projects addressing climate action, energy efficiency, and climate-resilient solutions, including work on urban forestry, transportation-related initiatives, and a wide range of typical environmental issues. He described his earlier work at the national level in Ghana, where he helped create the country's Climate Action Plan in close collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, participating in international climate negotiations and strategy.

Ms. Kress introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Summit Akron Solid Waste Management Authority, which did business as ReWorks. She said it was an honor to serve on the commission and noted that while ReWorks was best known for materials management, she was excited by the commission's broader engagement with issues like solar, climate, and water and hoped to contribute on the materials side. She explained that she had first come to Stow in 1995 as an intern working at the household hazardous waste facility on Graham Road, which was her initial professional connection. Over time, she had advanced within the organization and became executive director in 2016. She added that she moved her family to Stow in 2006 and had put two children through the Stow City Schools, and she said she was very proud and grateful to serve on the commission and to help bring together the different environmental components represented by its members.

## **Election of Officers**

Mayor Pribonic opened up the elections of officers.

- **Election of Chair**

Mrs. Spring nominated Cari Orris for the Chairwoman. There were no other nominations.

Motion made by Patty Spring, seconded by Cari Orris, to approve Cari Orris for Chair person.. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Dennis Mariola, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrener. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Orris asked Mayor Pribonic how the commission term limits will be established. In Chapter 185, staggered term limits were established for the seven members. Mayor Pribonic stated the commission members could decide among themselves who would serve three-year, two-year or a one-year term.

- **Election of Vice-Chair**

Ms. Kress nominated Patty Spring for Vice-chair.

Motion made by Marcie Kress, seconded by Andy Boateng, to approve Patty Spring for Vice-chair. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Dennis Mariola, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrener. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

## New Business

- Establish Meeting Dates and Time

Ms. Orris requested to meet twice a month on Wednesday at 6:30 pm because the commission had lots of ideas and discussion to start off their mission. She wanted to meet more frequently in order to have discussion and allow members to do research before the next meeting. Most members were available on Wednesday evenings.

Motion made by Brian Prunty, seconded by Robert Misbrenner, to approve the Environmental Commission to establish their meeting schedule monthly on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm.. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Dennis Mariola, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrenner. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

- Environmental Commission Purpose

Mrs. Mottram read COS Chapter 185.04 Purpose and Authority of the commission.  
185.04 PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY.

The Environmental Commission shall serve in an advisory and educational capacity and shall have no regulatory or enforcement authority. Its purpose shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Advising City Council, the Mayor, and City staff on environmental, conservation and sustainability matters, including solid waste policy, recycling, sustainable development, and environmental technologies;
2. Reviewing and making recommendations on policies, plans, and projects that may impact the City's natural environment;
3. Promoting environmental education;
4. Encouraging the active involvement of local citizens in promoting wise stewardship of the city's natural resources, now and in the future;
5. Identifying grant opportunities and partnerships related to environmental initiatives; and
6. Providing an annual report to City Council summarizing activities and recommendations.

- 2026 Committee Goals and Projects

Ms. Orris asked each commission member to present their goals and project that they wish to accomplish for this commission.

- Beginning with Ms. Kress focusing on engaging Stow residents in using the new hazardous waste and materials collection facility on Graham Road and highlighting the importance of promoting multiple service providers and infrastructure for composting and diversion. The Mayor emphasized awareness and communication, encouraging use of city tools like postcards, newsletters, the water bill, and the city signboard to publicize programs such as ReWorks and food waste composting, noting that postcard mailings to all 14,000 households had produced measurable engagement in other initiatives.

- Mrs. Spring and others highlighted Rubber City Reuse's existing drop-off site near Silver Springs and discussed expanding industrial-scale composting locations in Stow while partnering with vendors and EnviroScience for technical expertise and community education.

- Mr. Boateng proposed framing the commission's early work around key environmental sectors such as energy efficiency, transportation emissions, solid waste and wastewater, and nature-based solutions such as urban forestry in order for the group to identify specific, high-impact initiatives in each.

- Mr. Prunty suggested goals including dark-sky and night-sky preservation, support for native landscaping and meadow plantings (including possible code changes), riparian setbacks and stream protection, stream stabilization methods such as beaver analogs, and promotion of incentives like Akron Regional Air Quality's "Mow Greener" mower rebate. He also raised land preservation and use of Clean Ohio and stormwater funding to protect sensitive open spaces, as well as public education on urban wildlife issues like coyotes, referencing Ohio State's expertise.

- Mr. Mariola stressed the need to communicate clearly with residents about what Stow had already done and what the commission was working on, arguing that public awareness and buy-in were essential. He urged the group to leverage grants and learn how to apply for funding when city budgets might be limited.

- Mr. Misbrener reinforced the central role of education, quoting the idea that education created awareness and awareness fostered positive action. He proposed an Environmental Commission web page with practical links and lists of local recycling and disposal options, noting that many residents did not know about existing resources. He described opportunities around solar energy for businesses and nonprofits, warning that the window for certain incentives was closing, and suggested providing residents with a curated list of reputable solar installers as a starting point, without endorsing any single company. Mr. Misbrener also described his experience with energy-efficiency retrofits (especially lighting and HVAC) and pointed to funding tools like the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority's low-interest financing, suggesting Stow consider similar projects for city buildings. The group discussed potential near-term priorities, including pursuing Power Clean Future Ohio resources, promoting Earth Day and Earth Hour activities, exploring EV charging infrastructure (with a structured assessment rather than ad hoc siting), and aligning their work with grants from state and federal programs.

Ms. Orris proposed focusing on a small number of clear, early projects to build momentum, specifically: engaging with Power Clean Future Ohio; ensuring the commission had a visible presence at the upcoming Earth Fest to gather community input; and exploring hybrid and EV options for city fleet vehicles. He emphasized that the commission should function as a working body: members who proposed ideas were encouraged to take the lead on research and legwork, with the rest of the commission providing support and connections to staff, council, and external partners.

- Community Outreach

Mrs. Mottram provided a list of events the City's Park and Recreation Department would be organizing this summer. The list included Earth Fest which will be held on Saturday, April 25th. The Commission discussed who would be able to attend, how to register to attend, and what kind of information would be presented to attendees. Ms. Kress said that she would be attending on behalf of ReWorks. Mrs. Spring asked if Rubber City Reuse would be attending for awareness of their bin in Stow. Mr. Boateng provide comments from his experience attending on behalf of the Urban Forestry Commission.

- Commercial Solar Tax Credit presented by Cari Orris

Ms. Orris presented information about a commercial solar tax credit and recommended that the Environmental Commission formally encourage the city to share it. She read a proposed notice explaining that businesses and landlords with LLCs who installed solar could qualify for a federal Investment Tax Credit equal to 30% of project cost if they either started construction before July 4, 2026 (with no deadline for placing the system in service) or completed construction and placed it in service by December 31, 2027. The notice advised interested businesses to consult their tax advisors and solar installers for details. She explained that while recent federal changes had eliminated certain residential solar tax credits, the commercial credits remained available, and she saw publicizing this to local businesses as an appropriate educational role for the commission.

Motion made by Brian Prunty, seconded by Patty Spring, to approve using city communications distribute information regarding the solar commercial credit to Mayor and City Council.. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Dennis Mariola, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrenner. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Herman addressed the commission during public comment to explain what the Summit of Sustainability Alliance (SSA) did. He said SSA was a county-level coalition of organizations and local governments focused on sustainability. He noted that the City of Stow had been invited to participate but lacked staff capacity to regularly send a city representative. Mr. Herman suggested that if any commission member was interested, one person from the Environmental Commission could attend SSA meetings, which were held at 1:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at rotating locations around Summit County. He encouraged participation, saying it would be a good way to connect with regional sustainability efforts.

### **Commission Member Terms Limits**

Mr. Prunty reminded Ms. Orris of item 3, term limits for discussion. Ms. Orris reviewed the term limits in 185.04.

Members of the Environmental Commission shall be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. Members shall serve staggered three-year terms. Members shall serve without compensation.

To allow for staggered terms, initial members of the Environmental Commission will serve terms as follows:

Three (3) members will serve three-year terms, two (2) members will serve two-year terms, and two (2) members will serve a one-year term. All terms conclude on December 31. Members may be reappointed.

Commission Members decided among themselves the following term limits for each member.

Term Limits:

Three-year term ending December 31, 2028: 1. Cari Orris 2. Brian Prunty 3. Andy Boateng

Two-year term ending December 31, 2027: 1. Dennis Marisola 2. Rober Misbrenner

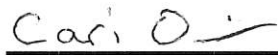
One-year term ending December 31, 2026: 1. Marcis Kress and 2. Patty Spring

### **Adjournment**

Motion made by Marcie Kress, seconded by Brian Prunty, to adjourn. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Dennis Mariola, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrener. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.

  
Clerk

  
Chairman