



## Minutes of the Environmental Commission held on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 6:30 pm

### Call to Order

### Roll Call

Council Members Present:	Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrener, and Sonya Mottram
Council Members Absent:	Dennis Mariola
City Officials Present:	None.

### Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to approve this evening.

### Special Presentation

- Public Records and Open Meetings Act Training by Law Director, Drew Reilly.

Mr. Drew Reilly, Stow Law Director provided his Public Records and Open Meetings Act presentation for the Environmental Commission as a new meeting body and explained public records and how commissioners should respond to public records requests. He said that a public record had to satisfy three statutory elements: it had to be a document, device, or item (something tangible, not thoughts or unrecorded conversations), it had to be created or received by the public office and fall under that office's jurisdiction, and it had to serve to document the functions, policies, decisions, or activities of the organization. He noted that the form did not matter—paper, electronic, or other media could all qualify. He explained that personal notes taken by an individual for their own use and later discarded were not public records, but if those same notes were circulated to others as notes from the meeting, they became public records. He emphasized that the record had to exist when the request was made. He also clarified that the city did not have to create entirely new documents in order to answer a request, however, if a simple report could be generated from an existing database (such as running a query by date or vendor), then they were expected to run that report and provide it. Mr. Reilly stated that records created by outside entities acting for the city, such as independent accountants or outside law firms, could still be public records if they documented city business, even if the city did not physically possess them. In mixed emails personal emails which mentioned city business, he said the city would treat the communication as a public record but would redact the purely personal portions before releasing it. He recommended that the commission designate a single person to handle public records requests for the body. He said that if any member received a request, they should forward it to that point person so

the response would be consistent and complete. He added that the designated person should log the requests, keep copies of what had been provided (including redacted versions), and consult the law department whenever there were questions about what must be released or could be withheld. Finally, Mr. Reilly mentioned the Ohio Attorney General's "Sunshine Manual," a lengthy annual publication covering public records and open meetings law. He said the law department reviewed that manual each year to keep up with changes and that commissioners could ask the law department for the manual or for legal guidance on issues related to their official commission duties.

The commission and Mr. Reilly had a follow-up discussion focused on how the Open Meetings Act applied to their real-world situations, and on some practical legal boundaries for their work. Mr. Boateng asked whether it would violate the Open Meetings Act if a majority of the commission attended a city council meeting, spoke on an issue, and effectively reached a consensus among themselves there. Mr. Reilly replied that it would not, because in that scenario they would be present at another public body's meeting, not holding a separate meeting of their own. He cautioned, however, that if they stayed afterward and gathered separately to debrief or deliberate together, that follow-up could start to look like a separate meeting and should be avoided; he advised them to wait for their next scheduled commission meeting for that kind of discussion. Mr. Reilly then addressed subcommittees. He said that if the commission created an official subcommittee of three people to work on a specific project, that subcommittee would itself be treated as a public body. Its quorum would be two, and once it existed formally, any time two of those three met to deliberate on subcommittee business, they would have to follow Open Meetings requirements (notice, openness, and minutes). He contrasted that with three commissioners informally talking after a meeting about how they felt; that would not be a public meeting as long as it was not an official subcommittee and not a majority of the full body. He urged them to consult the law department before forming subcommittees or making assumptions about what counted as a meeting, and he pointed out that they had more legal protection if they relied on advice from the law department than if they made legal judgments on their own. He emphasized that calling something a "work session" or a "retreat" did not change the legal analysis. Any meeting that was pre-arranged, involved a majority of members, and involved discussion or deliberation of public business, it was a meeting under the law, regardless of what they named it. However, he noted that one-on-one or small conversations involving less than a majority were generally not meetings, unless they turned into what courts call serial or "round-robin" meetings. He explained that if members intentionally used back-to-back conversations or a chain of phone calls to build consensus or conduct deliberations outside a public meeting, a court could deem that a violation of the Open Meetings Act. Mr. Reilly addressed emails and warned that if members used "Reply All" on group emails to debate the merits of an item (for example, announcing "I'm going to vote no because..." and others responding with arguments), that could be treated as deliberation by a majority and might be considered a meeting. He recommended that members generally avoid "Reply All" and instead respond only to staff (for instance, to confirm attendance) and reserve discussion and debate for the public meeting itself. He said it was acceptable to send informational emails to the whole commission—such as agendas, background materials, or notices—so long as members did not start deliberating in the email thread. Mr. Reilly distinguished discussion/deliberation from other types of communication. He said that an exchange of ideas, back-and-forth debate, or weighing of options counted as deliberation, but isolated one-way communications or purely informational presentations did not. He pointed out that if the law department simply provided a legal update or training without the body deliberating on specific policy decisions, that could fall outside the definition of a

“meeting” in some contexts. He also mentioned executive sessions, explaining that there were narrow, specific reasons that could justify them (such as certain personnel or litigation matters), and that to enter executive session the body had to state the reason clearly and take a roll-call vote. He added that, in practice, he did not anticipate many legitimate reasons for this particular commission to use executive session. Later in the segment, Ms. Kress asked about virtual meetings and proxy voting. Mr. Reilly explained that the city’s meetings were required to be held in person. He said that the temporary state-level flexibility for virtual meetings during COVID had expired, and given the city’s charter requirements and live-streaming obligations, they should assume meetings had to be physically open to the public. He also stated that the city did not permit proxy voting, so members could not authorize someone else to cast a vote for them if they were absent. He reinforced that if members had questions as they encountered specific scenarios, they should contact him or the law department so he could help them stay compliant with the Open Meetings Act.

### **Report from Chair**

- [April 8, 2026 Report](#)

[April 8, 2026 Meeting.pdf](#) 

Ms. Orris stated in the interest of time, the summary was included in the agenda packet.

### **Unfinished Business**

- [Summit of Sustainability Alliance General Meeting Report](#)


Mr. Boateng reported on the most recent meeting of the Summit of Sustainability Alliance which met on March 25 and that the main topic had been funding for sustainability in Summit County. The group discussed both specific funding opportunities and their overall strategy for pursuing available grants as an alliance of member communities and organizations. Mr. Boateng explained that the Alliance brought together sustainability and environmental professionals, as well as interested residents, from multiple cities and organizations across Summit County. He said one of the key questions they considered was how to improve human conditions equitably for current and future generations while conserving the environmental systems needed to support healthy communities. He noted that the conversation emphasized integrating the three core pillars of sustainability—social equity, financial viability, and environmental responsibility—rather than treating them separately. He then highlighted a specific funding opportunity the Alliance was actively exploring: the Knight Foundation Knight Cities Challenge, a \$5 million open call to individuals and organizations across 26 communities. He said that within the Alliance they had formed a core group, together with additional experts, to work on a proposal for that challenge. The concept they were developing was a Sustainability Alliance Data Hub that would function as a data clearinghouse for sustainability-related programs and information across Summit County. Mr. Boateng explained that the data hub would centralize data about initiatives in different communities and, over time, could grow into a larger nonprofit-based structure that would house and organize information on Alliance initiatives. He mentioned that the Alliance was considering a request of around \$20,000 for this project and that they were working under a tight timeline, since the Knight Cities Challenge application deadline was April 30. He closed by saying that they were


gathering information and refining the proposal, with the ultimate aim of creating a resource that would track and support sustainability work countywide.

- "MowGreener" Rebate Program for the City of Stow Residents - Brian

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Mr. Prunty reported that at the previous meeting he had been asked to write a short description of the program and share it with the city. He distributed copies of his write-up to the commission, noting that they had received permission from the Akron Regional Air Quality Management District to use the graphics he had included. Ms. Orris asked what the commission's plan was for spreading the word to residents. Mr. Prunty replied that he had simply been told to prepare the write-up, and he had now completed that piece. Ms. Orris asked whether the commission supported his write-up and the idea of promoting the program to the community in a way similar to what they had done for the commercial solar credit previously. Mr. Prunty emphasized that the program was time limited and that he wanted residents to hear about it quickly, adding that other nearby communities, such as Northfield Center, Richfield, and Tallmadge, were already publicizing it. He moved that the commission formally proceed with publicizing the program to Stow residents through channels such as the city website and other media. The commission discussed the motion briefly, including how it would be pushed out. During this time, Mr. Misbrener described his personal experience using the program: he had applied on April 1, received a prompt response, taken his old mower for salvage, purchased a new one, and submitted the required documentation. He pointed out that the only inconvenience was that participants had to go in person to the Department of Health to pick up the Visa gift card, but otherwise the process had gone smoothly. Mrs. Mottram added that once the commission approved the effort, she would forward the materials to the website committee and work on getting it posted in city communications. Ms. Orris mentioned that she had already seen information about the program appear in the "Spotlight" digital media newsletter and suggested other local outlets.

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Motion made by Brian Prunty, seconded by Patty Spring, to approve press release for The Akron Regional Air Quality Management District's new Lawn Mower Exchange Rebate initiative aimed at improving local air quality and reducing emissions in our community. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrener. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

- Power a Clean Future Ohio Update

Ms. Orris and Mr. Boateng reported on the city's relationship with Power Clean Future Ohio (PCFO) and how they hoped to use that partnership. Ms. Orris explained that PCFO was a statewide organization that worked with communities on environmental and sustainability issues. She said that Drew Reilly had previously been the city's contact for PCFO. Mr. Reilly was happy to transfer that role to the Environmental Commission. Ms. Orris described a recent Zoom meeting she and Mr. Boateng had held with PCFO staff to learn what the organization could offer Stow and what it had already done for other communities. Ms. Orris said she

had been particularly interested in grant opportunities—what kinds of grants existed, what might fit Stow, and how PCFO could help identify and pursue them. She said the meeting had been productive and that they wanted to treat PCFO as an ongoing resource they could return to as they identified city needs and potential projects. Mr. Boateng then expanded on the substance of PCFO’s support. He said that, in broad terms, PCFO would be providing technical assistance to the city across several key areas: energy efficiency, transportation, renewable energy, land use, and general consulting. Under general consulting, he mentioned sustainable planning, action planning, stakeholder engagement strategies, communications, and help with identifying funding opportunities. He gave more detail within each technical area: for energy efficiency, he said PCFO could assist with building performance policies and programs, greenhouse gas emissions inventories, and related planning. For transportation, he listed fleet electrification assessments, vehicle inventories and assessments, and electric vehicle adoption analysis. In the renewable energy space, he said they could help with solar site assessments, community choice aggregation, and energy burden assessments. Under land use, he cited tree canopy assessments and canopy management strategies, green infrastructure planning, and work related to coastal or similar resources. Mr. Boateng stressed that, based on his prior experience working with PCFO on other projects, they were strong partners and provided solid support to municipalities. He framed the partnership as an important opportunity for Stow to tap into outside expertise and organized information, particularly around the complex and constantly shifting landscape of grants and funding. Ms. Orris added that PCFO regularly sent out a grant “snapshot” summarizing opportunities they were aware of. She said she had reviewed one of these snapshots and noted that many of the current grants were targeted to very specific types of communities or problems and at this time, Stow did not fit existing profiles for grant opportunities. However, she emphasized that she and Mr. Boateng intended to keep exploring the evolving list of opportunities and that, despite the current mismatch in some categories, PCFO remained a valuable resource the commission wanted to stay engaged with.

- Earth FEST - April 25, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM @ Adell Durbin Park

Ms. Spring talked about the commission’s plans for Stow Earth Fest and introduced the idea of a logo project. She explained that Stow’s Earth Fest had been running for several years and that the Environmental Commission would have a table there. She said Mrs. Mottram had already arranged practical needs like a table, chairs, and a canopy. Ms. Spring noted that she and Ms. Orris would be at the event from noon to 3 p.m., and she asked if any other commissioners could also be there. She mentioned that she planned to bring a spinner game as a fun activity and that they were lining up small giveaway items for visitors.

Ms. Spring then shifted to the logo idea. She said she was interested in the commission having its own logo and confirmed the city’s communications team could help with design. Ms. Spring suggested involving students in the school system by running a logo contest. She proposed that students could submit logo designs for the Environmental Commission, with the commission voting on the winning design. She acknowledged the timing challenge because the school year would be ending soon, but she believed teachers and students might still welcome the idea. Ms. Spring would head up the logo contest effort.

- Community Composting - Rubber City Reuse update

Ms. Spring reported that she had been working with Nick Wren, Service Director regarding Rubber City Reuse. She said the city already had one drop-off compost

site at Silver Springs Park near the community garden and that they were looking to establish a second drop-off location. Ms. Spring said she planned to meet with Mr. Wren the following Tuesday with other city staff to evaluate several proposed locations and choose the best spot. Ms. Spring explained that once a second site was selected, that would be the point when they needed to actively promote the program so residents would know it existed and how to use it. Andy Boateng asked for clarification, noting that the sites were really collection sites rather than full composting facilities. Ms. Spring explained that Rubber City Reuse operated a subscription service: residents paid about \$12.50 per month to have the privilege of using the drop-off bins, which were secured with locks. She said she had personally subscribed to support the program. She contrasted Rubber City Reuse with places like Summit Metro Parks locations, such as Wood Hollow Park in Hudson, Ohio where similar food-scrap drop-off options were available at no charge. Ms. Spring also mentioned that in the city of Kent, Metro Parks supported composting at several of their parks, again at no cost to users. She emphasized that Stow's model through Rubber City Reuse was fee-based and noted that no municipality yet was paying Rubber City Reuse directly to offer a free drop-off for residents. She added that having the city underwrite a site would cost roughly \$1,300 per year for one drop-off, plus additional costs. Mr. Boateng said that in some communities he had worked with, there were two sites that were free to residents because the city or another entity covered the cost. He described that as a good long-term goal for Stow and suggested that the commission could explore funding sources in the future so more residents could participate without a subscription fee. For now, he agreed that the priority was to get the two sites physically established and operating.

Ms. Kress, drawing on her waste management experience, stressed that similar composting collection programs were now common across Ohio and that there were many examples and "lessons learned" the commission could draw from. She said it would be important for the Environmental Commission to educate residents about what could and could not go into the compost bins and to manage expectations about issues like odors and contamination. Ms. Kress explained that composting was one of the most ideal forms of recycling, because food waste could be turned back into a useful soil amendment, but only if the material going in was relatively clean. Ms. Spring would highlight the climate impact through education material. She cited figures showing that around 25% of landfill volume was food waste and that roughly 50% of landfill methane came from decomposing organics. Commission members noted that diverting this material to composting therefore had significant benefits for both landfill space and greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Boateng asked how Rubber City Reuse swapped out full bins and tracked how many were collected, which allowed them to calculate environmental benefits over time. Ms. Kress asked how the operational side worked—specifically, whether the compost was processed in carts and how often it was swapped. Ms. Spring confirmed that Rubber City Reuse used locked bins that were regularly exchanged and that they kept records of each pickup. Ms. Spring then mentioned that in the city of Cuyahoga Falls had a "Backyard Composting" program, where the city or a related entity helped residents compost at home rather than just using drop-off bins. She suggested that Stow could eventually look at home composting support as a parallel track. Ms. Kress and Mr. Boateng both circled back to the theme of public education, reinforcing that the commission should help residents understand the difference between class II/industrial composting (with a broader list of acceptable materials) and backyard composting (with a more limited list). Ms. Kress pointed out that the state had recently completed a waste characterization study that showed what was in Ohio landfills and said that those results were available on the state website. She offered to share the study with the commission,

suggesting it would provide useful, current data to support the composting initiative and other waste-reduction work.

## **New Business**

- Commission Appreciation Dinner - April 21 from 6-7:30 PM at Stow Community & Senior Center

Mrs. Mottram shared City administration requested one spokesperson from each commission or board to share what goals and projects the commission was working on. Ms. Orris stated she would speak for the Environmental Commission.

- Environmental Commission Information

Ms. Oris stated that this item would be moved to the next meeting agenda on May 13th.

Ms. Spring inquired about the City's policy for photographing children. Mrs. Mottram suggested the Environmental Commission plan what information they would like to feature in the newsletter each month noting the more than one item could be featured the letter, but keep in mind that there are other Boards and Commissions that use the newsletter for information.

- Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

Mr. Boateng introduced the idea of pursuing an urban tree canopy assessment for the City of Stow with assistance from Power Clean Future Ohio (PCFO). He explained that the city's last comprehensive look at its urban forest dated back to the 2013 Urban Forestry Master Plan, which analyzed canopy coverage, preferred planting sites, and how tree cover compared to other land use types. He noted that 2013 was now quite dated, that much had changed since then, and that updated data would be extremely valuable. Mr. Boateng said PCFO had the technical capacity, GIS tools and expertise to perform a modern canopy assessment. The goal, he explained, would be to establish a baseline: how much canopy coverage Stow currently had, where preferred planting sites existed, which wards or census tracts had the most or least tree cover, and how realistic certain canopy targets would be. He emphasized that many communities declared goals like increasing canopy to a certain percentage without knowing if that was achievable given available planting space. An updated assessment would allow Stow to set realistic, data-driven targets and guide future resource allocation. In response to a question from Mr. Prunty about whether the city had followed through on the 2013 plan's recommended planting sites, Mr. Boateng said that, to the best of his knowledge, the city (the arborist and the Urban Forestry Commission) had been working on those goals, though funding constraints always played a role. He stressed that this new assessment would not replace their efforts but rather provide fresh data to coordinate work going forward. Ms. Orris raised the question of overlap with the Urban Forestry Commission, asking whether this kind of project should be housed there instead. Mr. Boateng replied that trees were a cross-cutting resource: they affected not only urban forestry but also environmental sustainability, including carbon sequestration and stormwater management. Because of that overlap, he felt it made sense for the Environmental Commission to help drive the assessment in partnership with the Urban Forestry Commission. He also pointed out that PCFO's involvement was expected to be no-cost to the city for the assessment work itself, based on his prior experience with them. Ms. Orris asked whether PCFO had explicitly said the canopy work would also be free. Mr. Boateng said that many of

PCFO's baseline assessments, including this one, were typically provided at no cost, though they would need to confirm details. Ms. Spring asked what "partnering" with the Urban Forestry Commission would look like in practice, specifically whether someone from this commission would attend their meetings. Mr. Boateng said they could simply inform the Urban Forestry Commission and the city arborist in writing, keep them updated, and share materials in a common workspace for everyone could review the data and provide input. He emphasized the importance of coordination and transparency rather than one commission acting in isolation. Mrs. Mottram offered two practical recommendations. First, she said they should talk directly with the city arborist to learn his goals and ensure he supported an updated canopy assessment; she said she could not imagine he would oppose it but felt it was important to bring him in early. Second, she asked whether any city legislation or council resolution would be needed to endorse the assessment or to support future grants that might rely on its findings. She said that sometimes grants required formal resolutions, and if that became necessary, they would need to plan for the extra time to move such legislation through council. She also suggested that if the Urban Forestry Commission wanted to "own" the project, the Environmental Commission could issue a letter of support to formalize collaboration. Mr. Boateng responded that in another community where he had helped with a canopy assessment, they had not needed legislation simply to partner with an organization like PCFO on data collection. He agreed, however, that if the city later sought grants such as an ODNR street?tree grant, a supporting resolution from council might be required at that stage. Ms. Orris then helped frame a motion. She restated what she heard Mr. Boateng proposing: that the Environmental Commission move forward with exploring an urban tree canopy assessment in cooperation with PCFO. Immediately following that, Cari asked whether Mr. Boateng wanted to propose a similar action on a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory. Mr. Boateng explaining earlier that such an inventory would provide a crucial baseline for emissions citywide and inform future planning and potential climate-related initiatives.

Motion made by Andy Boateng, seconded by Robert Misbrenner, to approve to explore the completion of an urban tree canopy assessment with Power Clean Future Ohio. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrenner. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory:1. Community-wide carbon emissions 2. Municipal Operations carbon emissions

Mr. Boateng explained his goal for greenhouse gas emissions along with the urban tree canopy discussion.

Motion made by Andy Boateng, seconded by Patty Spring, to approve to have a greenhouse gas emissions inventory completed by PCFO (Power Clean Future Ohio). Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrenner. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

- Stow Curbside Recycling - Enhanced Option

Mr. Misbrenner raised the issue of curbside recycling and the city's trash hauler contracts. He explained that he did not know when the city next planned to bid out its preferred waste hauler, but he was aware that different haulers in the region had very different capabilities for recycling. He questioned whether price was the only criterion used when selecting the preferred hauler, or whether the city could also

factor in how effectively each company actually recycled materials. He said he wanted to start a conversation with the appropriate city staff person to ensure that recyclability and end markets were considered, not just cost. Ms. Orris agreed that it was an important issue and said she would like the commission involved whenever the bidding cycle came up again. Ms. Kress added context about Stow's refuse collection structure, noting that the city had a preferred hauler but still allowed an open market for other haulers, which made Stow somewhat unique in Summit County. She said that at the county level, their solid waste district helped cities design contracts and that communities with exclusive haulers tended to receive more favorable funding scores because their programs were more clearly defined. Ms. Kress explained that her agency often supported the creation of those contracts and could offer guidance on evaluating bids. She emphasized that hauler selection should be based on where the material actually goes and what the receiving materials recovery facility (MRF) was able to sort and sell, rather than on what anyone simply wished could be recycled. She said having the Environmental Commission act as a strong, informed voice in that evaluation process would be helpful, but that they also needed to respect that contracts involved many factors such as route logistics, road impacts, service levels, and cost. Mrs. Mottram noted from prior experience that price was a huge factor for residents and council, and that efforts to move to a single exclusive hauler had met resistance in other communities because people valued "free choice." She suggested that they should find out from the service director what the current contract timeline and bid cycle were so the commission would know when and how to plug into the process. Ms. Kress offered to help identify the relevant dates and suggested starting by contacting the mayor or service department, since the city's contract expiration date and bid schedule would determine when any commission input on recycling criteria would be most useful.

- Community Solar Resolution

Ms. Orris moved this item to the next meeting scheduled for May 13th.

- Lead Emissions - Kent State Airport

Andrew Rome Letter.docx 

Ms. Orris said that the community solar resolution she had been working on was not ready in time to be included with the current meeting materials, so she planned to bring it back for discussion at the next meeting in May. She then introduced the topic of lead emissions from fuel used at the Kent State Airport, explaining that when the commission was first formed, resident Andrew Rome had written a letter to the local Spotlight newsletter expressing concerns about lead from aviation fuel affecting nearby neighborhoods. Ms. Orris told the commission she had assured the resident that they would look into the issue and that, given time constraints that evening, a more in-depth discussion and follow-up on both the letter and potential soil testing.

This item was moved to the May meeting agenda.

- School Renewable Energy Kits

Mr. Misbrener reported on his outreach to bring renewable energy education into Stow schools. He said he had contacted two organizations: Ohio Energy Project (with its E3 SMART program) and Shared Power Network. He went on to say both indicated they could potentially support Stow-Munroe Falls schools with

instructional materials or programming, though they typically worked directly with teaching staff. Mr. Misbrenner explained that he had emailed three staff members at Stow High School and was waiting for replies. He continued to say if nothing came together for the 2026–27 school year at the high school, he planned to approach the middle school.

- Amend Environmental Commission 2026 meeting schedule.

Motion made by Cari Orris, seconded by Brian Prunty, to amend the 2026 meeting schedule from twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesdays to once a month on the second Wednesday. Vote – Yeas: Andy Boateng, Cari Orris, Brian Prunty, Marcie Kress, Patty Spring, Robert Misbrenner. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Becca Zak, 3817 Highland Ave., shared she was a Summit Metro Parks employee and served as current Greater Akron Audubon Society president, and an aspiring small-business owner focused on native landscape consulting. She said native plants were her “bread and butter” and that when she hiked in Stow’s parks she constantly saw invasive species. As a naturalist, she said it was hard not to start pulling invasives, but she knew she could not do that on city property the way she did in her own yard. She urged the commission to develop a strategy for invasive plant management on city-owned land, including identifying non-native invasive trees and shrubs, creating a removal and replacement plan, and ensuring replacements were native species. She suggested looking at Medina County’s example and mentioned “buy?back”?style programs where residents who removed invasives on their property could receive a free native tree from the city. Ms. Zak also raised concerns about mowing and property-maintenance ordinances. She explained that her own native yard in Stow did not always look like a neatly mowed lawn, even though it supported wildlife, and that it had been difficult to balance restoration with code requirements and neighbor expectations. She asked the commission to review and possibly revise ordinances so native, naturalized yards would be clearly permitted and protected from being treated as violations. In response, Mr. Prunty said the commission had already started looking at these issues. He explained that at a previous meeting he had proposed ordinance changes to allow and encourage native landscaping, including adjustments to zoning and the landscape code so it specified or favored native species instead of invasives and problematic ornamentals. He said this work was on his project list. Ms. Spring added that she was active in the Twinsburg Natural Habitat Association, so she shared Ms. Zak’s interests in native habitat and invasive control. Ms. Orris said she was very glad Ms. Zak had come, noting that her suggestions aligned closely with topics the commission wanted to work on. She encouraged Ms. Zak, Mr. Prunty, and Ms. Spring to connect and to review and propose an invasive?removal/native?replacement program and ordinance for review by the Environmental Commission. Ms. Zak agreed to share her email address, explaining that her schedule was tight but she was willing to consult and provide input.

### **Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Danya Muttu  
Clerk

Caro  
Chairman