

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, April 2, 2013

6 PM, Centre of Elgin, East Conference Room, 100 Symphony Way

A. Call to order (chairperson)

B. Roll Call (staff liaison)

Commissioners Frazier, Jacobs, Jacox, Knoerr, Masterson and Segel present. Commissioner Jim Bell attended the meeting in an unofficial capacity as he has not been officially appointed by the city council.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

Minutes were approved.

D. Discussion Items

1. Elgin Water Day participation – Judi Brownfield

Judi Brownfield, coordinator of Elgin Water Day spoke about the event. The event is a collaboration between local Elgin businesses, U46, the city and Elgin Artspace Lofts. The event is primarily student conceived and student driven. Ms. Brownfield noted that holding the event is indeed the goal, but the process for the students is equally as important. Ms. Brownfield noted Elgin High School students are learning how to put on an event, network and connect to the community in ways not typical for students in their positions. The event will be a synthesis of arts and sustainability, focused around water. The event entails a reception at the Elgin Artspace Lofts featuring local water themed artwork. There will also be what Ms. Brownfield referred to as a “wow factor” of a 30-foot tall fabric-fall, mimicking a waterfall. Underneath the fabric-fall an interpretive dancer has volunteered her time to dance in between the “falls.” The next day, visitors will be encouraged to walk along the Fox River, visiting various educational exhibits created by Elgin High School students. These exhibits will discuss water conservation and other water related topics. The event will end with a guided tour of Elgin’s Riverside Treatment Plant. Councilwoman Tish Powell, in attendance, mentioned that efforts to market this event outside of Elgin’s borders should be made, as Elgin does and should continue to act as a regional center for culture, arts and sustainability. Ms. Brownfield asked for the commission’s sponsorship of the event for marketing, printing of marketing materials, reception incidental costs and the fabric-falls exhibit. The total amount requested was \$1,000. The commission reviewed and scored Ms. Brownfield’s proposal as follows:

- Project integrates with the goals and objectives of Elgin's Sustainability Action Plan (0 to 20 points) **20 points**
- Project results in outcomes that address a community need (0 to 20 points) **20 points**

- Project includes a communication element that either educates the community or raises public awareness of Elgin's Sustainability Action Plan or sustainability in general (0 to 20 points) **20 points**
- Project promotes opportunities to include and form partnerships with other groups or organizations (0 to 10 points) **10 points**
- The proposal demonstrates excellence in design, planning, and execution of the proposed project or activity (0 to 10 points) **9 points**
- Budget reliably represents the projects expenses and revenue (0 to 10 points) **10 points**
- Project funding is spent efficiently and leverages volunteer labor or outside funding (0 to 10 points) **10 points**

The commission voted unanimously to sponsor the Elgin Water Day event.

2. Food Scrap composting

The commission discussed generally the idea of food scrap composting in Elgin. Staff Liaison Aaron Cosentino spoke about three types of food scrap composting, residential, commercial and neighborhood composting. Each has advantages and barriers. Advantages arise from reducing the amount of waste going to landfills and creating nutrient rich compost. Barriers arise from both the haulers and customers. A common barrier for haulers is generating route density (i.e. sufficient food scrap volume) to make a route economical. Barriers for customers can involve the expense of food scrap composting (although it is suggested by industry proponents that food scrap composting can reduce regular trash pickup costs). Compost facilities face regulatory and permitting challenges as well. The food scrap industry in general suffers from a lack of facilities that can accept food scraps. The facilities are limited in part by these regulatory barriers. Interest groups have formed to lessen these barriers at the state level. Liaison Cosentino mentioned that residential and commercial food scrap composting has been successfully implemented in different areas of the country. San Francisco, California and Boulder County, Colorado are notable examples. Locally, Oak Park has recently completed a successful residential food scrap composting pilot and DuPage County has actively encouraged commercial composting. Councilwoman Powell, chair of the Recycling and Waste Management working group, noted that composting was something her group had a specific interest in, and included a recommendation to launch a residential composting pilot in the Sustainability Action Plan. It was envisioned by the working group that a pilot would be completed prior to a new solid waste contract being finalized so that if successful, composting services could be added to Elgin's solid waste program. Councilwoman Powell also noted that commercial composting is an appropriate area to focus on to raise awareness about composting. She also added, that it may be a good idea to brand the initiative so that participating businesses could be recognized for their contribution to green initiatives.

3. Education and outreach proposal – Commissioner Dave Segel

Commissioner Dave Segel presented on his views of how the commission should go about outreach and engagement. He recommended the commission provide materials for others to

teach sustainability to a particular audience. He used a sustainability toolkit developed by the Field Museum and distributed by the Gail Borden Library as an example. Commissioner Knoerr suggested that the commission develop a pool of volunteers that could go out into the community and teach certain topics, targeted to certain audiences. The commission voted unanimously to utilize upcoming sustainability events to develop a volunteer base that would be provided sustainability teaching materials. Commissioner Masterson also used this time to discuss the commission's plans for the Green Expo. The commission will use its existing educational banners, a table for Energy Impact Illinois, run the recently created Judson University Architecture program video on a loop in the racquet ball courts, and have a table for signing volunteers up for teaching sustainability. Commissioner Masterson also spoke about Freedom Field, an alternative energy resource center in Rockford, Illinois. He indicated that he would like to organize a community trip to the center to learn more about alternative energies.

E. Working Group Reports

None.

F. Old Business

These items were not discussed due to time limitations.

1. Solar and Wind Energy ordinance creation
2. WaterSense Toilet Rebate Program Proposal
3. Farm Animal Exhibit at Lords Park
4. 2012 Neighborhood Improvement Grant Application for Elgin Shared Harvest Food Co-op feasibility study

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

None.

H. Adjourn

The City of Elgin is subject to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities, are requested to contact ADA coordinator, at (847) 931-6076, or TTY/TDD (847) 931-5616 promptly to allow the City of Elgin to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.