

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Minutes

Tuesday, August 13, 2013

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

A. Call to order (chairperson)

B. Roll Call (staff liaison)

Commissioners Anderson, Bell, Jacox, Knoerr, Masterson, Segel and Wolf present

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

Minutes were approved

D. Discussion Items

1. Neighborhood Improvement Grant Application – Friends of the Fox Educator Proposal

Dave Rigby from Friends of the Fox presented this application. The proposal sought funding for an education and outreach coordinator for the area generally extending from Algonquin to Oswego, of which Elgin is a large part. The educator would provide science-based water quality testing trips to local school children. The current educator serves the northern areas of Illinois and operated from April - July. To date the program has served 23,000 kids over 4 years. The current educator is consistently booked and the program has seen a great deal of success. The total cost for the startup of the educator is approximately \$20,000. \$14,500 of that budget goes towards staffing costs for the educator and interns. Mr. Rigby reported that Friends of the Fox was seeking as much funding as the commission was willing to provide.

The commission expressed concerns that the city was being asked to fund the lion's share of cost with no guarantee that the city of Elgin would receive direct benefits. It was suggested that Friends of Fox approach Elgin schools first to determine interest levels, or solicit other funding partners to disperse the cost amongst benefitting communities. The commission did support the program and offered to draft a letter in support of Friends of the Fox to seek other funding partners. The commission was unwilling at this time to commit to recommending funding for this initiative. It was motioned to support the proposal in general by appointing Staff Liaison Cosentino, Commissioners Masterson and Wolf to meet with the Friends of the Fox to hone and sharpen proposal with end goal to get support for city council.

The commission voted unanimously to approve this motion.

2. Budget Update and 2014 Focus/Goals

Aaron Cosentino reported that the commission's budget stands at \$36,700. This amount consists of unspent funds in 2012 and the 2013 funding. The commission discussed priorities and a potential work plan for 2014. Items include:

- Implement STAR Communities Index - \$500 - \$5,000
- Water Day Sponsorship - \$1,000
- Green Expo Sponsorship - \$2,500
- Hosting a Harvest event - \$1,000 – 2,000
- Convert “No Mow Zones” to native landscapes - \$47,860
- Conservation@Home - Unknown cost
- Electric vehicle charging stations, split the cost with Fox Valley – Unknown cost
- Friends of the Fox \$3,000 - \$20,000
- Education Initiatives - Unknown cost

Aaron Cosentino noted that this work plan might need to be finalized before the commission's September meeting. The commission indicated that a special meeting could be scheduled if need be. Aaron Cosentino will follow up with the commission on that subject.

3. Shales and Bode Road Detention Basin Native Conversion Proposal

Aaron Cosentino presented a proposal from Hampton, Lenzini and Renwick for professional services to convert a detention basin to one of native landscaping. The project would take approximately 4 years to establish the plants to a point where they could be turned over to the city with little maintenance needs. The cost for the entire project is \$16,690. Commissioner Bell indicated this would eliminate approximately one acre of mowing from the city's mowing contract. The commission voted unanimously to pursue the project per city procurement procedures.

E. Working Group Reports

F. Old Business

1. Solar and Wind Energy ordinance creation – The item remains in the Planning Department, awaiting review by the Planning and Zoning Board.
2. Food Scrap composting – No Update

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

1. Might Acorns Update from Aaron Cosentino

The first year of the Mighty Acorns program was completed earlier this year. One classroom participated. The program went well and in addition to the program activities the children built and decorated Swallow bird houses which are now installed throughout the nature center. The fall program will have two classrooms.

2. IGIG Update from Aaron Cosentino

Aaron Cosentino reported that nineteen rain gardens will be built in 2013 and planted in 2014. Three of which will be at Lowrie Elementary School. He also noted that permeable paver alleyways would be bid in 2013 and constructed in 2014.

3. Chairman Masterson reported that Freedom Field would be willing to host an Elgin contingent sometime in September or October. He would like to invite the Mayor and members of the city council, Strategic Planning Advisory Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce and other community stakeholders.

H. Adjourn

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