

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

6 PM, Robert Gilliam Municipal Complex,

City Hall, Second Floor South Conference Room, 150 Dexter Ct.

A. Call to order (chairperson)

B. Roll Call (staff liaison)

Commissioners Anderson, Frazier, Hernandez, Jacobs, Knoerr, Masterson and Segel present.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

December 2014 minutes were approved.

D. Discussion Items

1. Partnership with Gail Borden Public Library and local governmental, educational and non-profit organizations

Chairman Masterson and Christie Chandler-Stahl, from the Gail Borden Public Library's (GBPL) Rakow Branch, discussed opportunities to team up and promote awareness of various sustainability-related issues through programming. The Rakow branch has offered prairie education, and would like to do more with the community. The idea would be to have different aged groups of children doing educational activities, perhaps even going out on field trips. It would be beneficial to have our youth be able to identify invasive plants, so that they could potentially help mitigate their expansion. Through a series of programming, the education could start with the big picture, and then narrow its focus to local issues over time. Some potential partners for these educational programs include Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Elgin Community Network, Kane County Forest Preserve, Friends of the Bluff Spring Fen, Friends of the Fox River, and Fox River Study Group. Christie has talked with Stacy from the main GBPL building, and they are on board with flushing out a big overarching plan where we can get several partners on board. The Rakow branch's property can be used for programs, and they could look into using Hawthorne Hill and Trout Park as well. The idea of doing "Book to action" projects is very appealing. They would like to engage local organizations, give them financial support, and move on with setting up some programs. An idea the group could start with is building a butterfly garden. We could reach out to Charlene, from Elgin Community College (ECC) and Wild Ones of Northern Kane County, to teach a program. Friends of the Fox, and students of Deb Perryman's class could help with water quality programs. Roots and Shoots is umbrella perspective, which describes how to start a community project. This resource could be very useful in getting this idea off the ground. While discussing the idea of seed libraries, it was brought to light that they are

illegal in the state of Illinois unless they are tested. The commission could be of value in writing a letter of opposition to the state. The library's March & April newsletter has a deadline of Friday, Jan. 16. The May & June newsletter has a deadline of March 15, which is a realistic date for the group to have something ready to go. Commissioner Knoerr made a motion to follow up with Christie to clarify projects that we can work together on to make the deadline of March 15, as well as write a letter of protest to the seed library illegality. The motion was passed 7-0.

2. Food Day 2015 update

Kathy Haerr filled in the commission on the event she hosted at the Art Space last fall, related to Food Day. She informed the commission that they did what they could with the time restraint they had last year, as paperwork much longer than anticipated. The most recent Food Day meeting, which included a couple of the commissioners, was held at the end of last summer. They discussed creating workshops for 2015 involving food and sustainability to support the efforts of Food Day. As they entered the New Year, they wanted to move forward to putting workshops together, thus they began the search for a venue. They (Kathy Haerr, Judi Brownfield & Commissioner Segel) met at Habitat for Humanity in downtown Elgin. After having a long discussion with Habitat for Humanity, they found that they have a similar mission and put forth comparable efforts within the community. This changed the direction of the conversation, as ideas developed into how the commission could utilize the space. It could give the Sustainability Commission a face, or a bigger presence in the community. There are venues around the community where we can bring together various aspects of sustainability. This venue would be great for showing sustainability in homes, and providing information and education on sustainable practices that can be brought home to families. Habitat for Humanity agreed to allow the commission to use their lobby space as a home, whether temporary or permanent. Kathy suggested the commission could put up big banners and/or signs. The commission can also use window space to put up a sign, to invite people in, and inside there could be a display, or potentially use a TV monitor that shows sustainability efforts of the city. There was some argument amongst commissioners over the intentions of the meeting at Habitat for Humanity and the ideas that were put forth by the presenter. Commissioner Jacobs motioned to have one or two of the commissioners set up a time to contact Habitat for Humanity to discuss the opportunity. The motion failed due to a lack of a second. The commission motioned to look at the materials provided by Kathy and further consider the opportunity. The commission was interested in the opportunities the space at Habitat for Humanity could offer, and the motion was passed.

3. Education & Outreach Opportunities for the city of Elgin related to Organic Waste

Commissioner Segel discussed the several ways that organic waste could help be beneficial to us as a community. The Food Scrap Coalition suggests the demand for food waste is growing. Commissioner Frazier mentioned that the difficulty will lie in there being an additional cost to consumers with Waste Management. While the current Waste Management agreement has organic waste included for the near future, Commissioner Knoerr suggested we would need to convince people to pay more for their waste collection. Commissioner Jacobs questioned who is ultimately in charge of making the decision to start collecting organic waste. He suggested that City Council is not responsible for telling Waste Management *how* organic materials are collected. Chairman Masterson motioned that the commission include the composting and Food Scrap Coalition efforts be part of the educational opportunities we are looking into with the formerly discussed partnerships.

4. STAR Community Membership

The commission agreed that they have the technical guide, and until there is time to focus more energy on the program, that it would not be wise to spend \$500 on the membership renewal this year. The money could be better spent on discussed educational opportunities within our focus. The commission motioned to discontinue the STAR Community membership. The motion passed 7-0.

E. Working Group Reports

F. Old Business

1. Sustainability Honor Roll

i. Decision regarding physical award

Liaison will go to Andersen's Engraving to look into options with a couple of commissioners. The commission agreed to present the quarterly award at a City Council meeting.

ii. Feature in Neighbor Newsletter

Commissioners who voted for the winner as their first or second choice should email liaison with a short 1st or 2nd can write up a blurb to accompany a picture in the newsletter.

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

For next meeting, commissioners would like to look at the budget.

Chairman Masterson would like to reach out to the Mighty Acorns and Friends of the Fox, and have them give us a presentation on what they are doing.

Commissioner Knoerr asked to get an update on the Fox River Country Day School.

Liaison announced that there were 14 applicants for backyard chickens so far, and the application deadline ends on Thursday, Jan. 15.

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.