

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Agenda

Tuesday, September 11, 2012

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

A. Call to order (chairperson)

B. Roll Call (staff liaison)

Commissioners Anderson, Frazier, Jacobs, Jacox, Martin, Masterson and Segel present.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

Minutes were approved.

D. Discussion Items

1. Energy Impact Illinois Presentation

Megan Butler, Field Organizer from Energy Impact Illinois presented to the commission regarding a recent federal stimulus funded program, Energy Impact Illinois. Energy Impact Illinois is an alliance between the United States Department of Energy, local utility companies and non-for-profits (such as CNT-Energy). It is a stimulus project designed to create jobs and promote environmental and economic sustainability in local communities. Through this program, homeowners receive financial assistance to increase the energy efficiency of their households by at least 15% with simple repairs related to air sealing and insulation. To date the average household that goes through this program saves about \$500 per year in energy costs.

Working with Utility Companies, Energy Impact Illinois offers reduced cost energy audits, but audits will be offered for free if homeowners are willing to host an energy impact "house party" where they allow a group of 5-10 friends, family and neighbors to meet with an auditor while he demonstrates, using high tech technology, where the household is losing energy. If a homeowner is interested in going through with the changes suggested by the auditor, Energy Impact Illinois is offering an instant rebate of 70% up to 1,750 per household. We are also offering 0% interest loans up to a year to homeowners who are making bigger changes costing 2,500 or more.

The idea behind this program is that it helps homeowners make their homes more sustainable and comfortable, save money, and increase the value of their households. Megan asked the commission to assist her in spreading program awareness.

Megan also explained that property owners that lower their energy consumption by 15% receive an Illinois Home Performance Certification. This designation is applied to real estate listings, documenting that homes are energy efficient. The commission wondered if past Home

Energy Savings program participants could get this certificate as well.

Chairman Masterson also asked if contractors and assessors working for the program are Resnet certified in addition to Building Performance Institute certified. Ms. Butler indicated she would follow up on that request.

2. Review of Proposal from Conservation Foundation for Educational Services at Hawthorne Hill Nature Center

The commission reviewed the proposal from the Conservation Foundation. Chairman Masterson noted that this program would allow for expanded use of Hawthorne Hill Nature Center. Commissioner Segel noted that he was glad to see the commission begin educational efforts and that its efforts should focus on all ages, not just elementary school children. Commissioner Anderson, who worked on the proposal, noted that she felt the Conservation Foundation staff did a thorough job putting the proposal together.

The commission scored the proposal:

- Municipal Compatibility
 - Project integrates with the goals and objectives of Elgin's Sustainability Action Plan (0 to 20 points). 20 points.
- Community Benefit
 - 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.
- Participation
 - Project promotes opportunities to include and form partnerships with other groups or organizations (0 to 10 points) 10 points.
- Project Feasibility
 - The proposal demonstrates excellence in design, planning, and execution of the proposed project or activity (0 to 10 points) 10 points.
 - Budget reliably represents the projects expenses and revenue (0 to 10 points) 10 points.
- Cost Effectiveness
 - Project funding is spent efficiently and leverages volunteer labor or outside funding (0 to 10 points) 10 points.

3. Review of WaterSense Toilet Rebate Program Proposal

Commissioner Todd Martin presented his proposal for a high efficiency toilet rebate program for restaurants and rental properties. His proposal focused on this demographic for the following reasons:

The program is narrowly tailored to rental properties with old (1994 or earlier) toilets for the

The program can accommodate around 100 toilets. Expanding the program to the entire community would exceed the requested \$10,000 in funding.

- Effectiveness. Rental properties are less likely to upgrade to a WaterSense toilet on their own since the owner of the property does not generally pay the water bill.
- Marketing. The city has a listing of rental properties in Elgin from our Rental licenses & Business licenses.
- Compliance. We already inspect rental property and businesses in Elgin. We can easily verify installation with regularly scheduled inspections that take place anyway.
- Trips to the bathroom. Bars and restaurants have toilets with higher usage rates than a typical home. Targeting rental properties cover many bars and restaurants in Elgin.
- Replacing only older toilets maximizes the water savings from the rebate.

Rebates would be limited to rental properties and restaurants; up to two rebates per residential address and 5 per apartment building or non-residential address. The program was loosely modeled after Batavia, Illinois' toilet rebate program. According to Chairman Masterson suggested the program also include rebates for urinals. He also asked that a buy-local provision be inserted, modeled after Batavia, Illinois' program.

The commission raised several concerns with the proposal.

- Administration – The current program would have credits be issued on participants water bills. Commissioner Frazier raised concerns with this approach, noting the staffing levels in the utility billing department. Water Resources working group chairperson and city water director Kyla Jacobsen spoke, noting that her working group, which developed the recommendation for such a program in the Sustainability Action Plan envisioned that local hardware retailers would simply provide a \$100 rebate to Elgin residents (verified by presenting a water bill). This approach relieves city staff from administering the program.
- Disposal – The commission asked how old toilets would be disposed. According to Commissioner Martin, toilets are made of porcelain, a type of clay, which can be thrown away in the trash. A disposal sticker would be required.
- Verification – The commission also questioned how the toilet installation would be verified. Commissioner Martin responded noting that regularly occurring business and rental inspections could verify toilet installations. Staff members present at the meeting indicated that these inspections do not occur on a frequent enough basis to ensure verification. The commission conceived that participants could simply purchase the toilet, receive the rebate, then install it at their private residence. Participants could also purchase the toilet, receive the rebate, then return the toilet. The commission requested additional information be gathered from other communities with similar programs to

determine how verification occurs.

Based on the need for more information, the commission motioned that the item be tabled. The motion passed six to one, with Commissioner Martin voting against.

E. Working Group Reports

F. Old Business

1. Complete Streets Policy

The commission decided to present the current draft to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee at its October meeting.

2. Solar and Wind Energy ordinance creation

Staff Liaison Aaron Cosentino noted that this item is currently awaiting a staff review, after which point it will be submitted to the city council for consideration.

3. ITEP Grant Application

Application is under review by IDOT.

4. No Mow Conversion Proposal Status

Staff Liaison Aaron Cosentino noted that he and Commissioner Anderson have requested proposals from other landscaping firms, and the item would be discussed at the next commission meeting.

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

Commissioner Martin raised a question about the upcoming stormwater utility proposed in the city's 2012 budget. He asked that a staff member present to the Northeast Neighborhood Association about the utility. He has found that the item has caused apprehension among neighbors.

Commissioner Segel noted that a group with the Gifford Park Association would like to pursue a community garden at the old YMCA site. Aaron Cosentino noted that the city now has a land-lease program that allows neighborhood groups to rent vacant city property and create a community garden. Aaron noted that he would follow up with staff member Cherie Murphy to get more information.

Commissioner Jacobs complimented Parks Superintendent Jim Bell. Commissioner Jacobs was impressed at Mr. Bell's responsiveness in providing him wood chips. Commissioner Jacobs

asked for wood chips on two occasions and had a response from Mr. Bell within one day for each request.

Aaron Cosentino announced a volunteer planting day occurring Saturday, September 15 at 34 Perry Street, from 8 am – 12 pm. The planting day is to install native plants at the city's first parkway rain garden. The garden was constructed in front of Ms. Stacey Reynolds' home, who passed away before the garden could be built.

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.