

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Agenda

Tuesday, January 8, 2012

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

A. Call to order (chairperson)

B. Roll Call (staff liaison)

Commissioner Anderson, Frazier, Jacobs, Jacox, Knoerr, Martin, Masterson, Segel present.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

Minutes approved.

D. Discussion Items

1. Review and revision of Neighborhood Improvement Grant program and scoring criteria for 2013 program year

City staff and the city's Sustainability Commission reviewed the existing program guidelines and propose several revisions:

Provide for replacement trees on private property

Staff administering the program has experienced an influx of requests from both private property owner and homeowners' association asking for funding to help mitigate the tree losses caused by the Emerald Ash Borer. As the grant program exists now, only projects located on public property are eligible for funding. This change would permit existing homeowners' associations to apply on behalf of its residents for private property tree replacement. Staff is recommending that only tree replacement applications be accepted from private property owners. The commission indicated concern about the amount of requests that would be received for this component of the grant as well as how many trees one property owner would be permitted to replace. Staff Liaison Aaron Cosentino indicated that this provision would be reviewed by the city's legal department to help develop safeguards against abuse. The commission unanimously approved this revision.

Removing requirement that 50% of match come from volunteer hours

Currently, program guidelines state that, "[f]or every dollar requested from the City, the applicant must provide at least a dollar of matching funds in the form of cash, donated professional services or materials, or volunteer labor. Of that match, at least 50% must be in the form of volunteer labor." The commission recommended striking the language "at least 50% must be in the form of volunteer labor." Removing this language allows applicants to contribute their entire match in the form of cash. Staff sees this as a ministerial change, as past practice has permitted cash only matching funds. The commission unanimously approved this revision.

Creation of standardized post-project report

The program guidelines require a final project report. To ensure consistency, staff will be developing a standardized report for all applicants that will help measure the effectiveness of each project. Commissioner Knoerr indicated she would draft a first draft of the reporting tool. The commission unanimously approved this revision.

Additional scoring criterion for specificity of project match

To better assess each project reviewed, staff and the Sustainability Commission are recommending an additional scoring criterion for the presence of matching funds. Doing so offers a redundancy in scoring to ensure projects comply with the requirements of the grant and can incentivize applicants to provide more clarity in matching fund proposals. For example projects that provide detailed match information such as specific dollar amounts or specific volunteer schedules would score higher than applicants that simply propose to match funds with “volunteers” but then provide no further detail. The commission unanimously approved this revision.

2. General discussion of goals and objectives for 2013

The commission discussed general objectives for 2013. Commissioner Anderson noted that she would like to see Elgin pursue a “dark sky” initiative, which relates to reducing unnecessary lighting, reducing light pollution. It was generally agreed upon that the commission should devote time to reinvigorating the working group members and devising projects that would garner interest from volunteers. It was suggested to have a set number of possible initiatives at the Green Expo in May, then using the event to solicit volunteers.

3. Neighborhood Improvement Grant Application for Lords Park Farm Animal/Sustainability Garden Pilot Project

The commission reviewed the proposal from the Friends of the Lords Park Zoo related to launching a non-petting, farm animal exhibit. Secondly, the proposal asked for support from the commission to allow for the donation of two elk from a local group to the large animal exhibit in the zoo. Staff liaison Aaron Cosentino indicated that both the city’s land management superintendent and the city manager have approved this donation. The commission’s support would take the form of the vaccines for the first year of the Elks’ life at the zoo. This was estimated at approximately \$600. While the commission felt that there were too many unanswered questions related to the first component of the proposal, it felt that moving forward with the Elk component was appropriate. The commission unanimously voted to approve just the Elk component of the grant.

E. Working Group Reports

No reports.

F. Old Business

1. Solar and Wind Energy ordinance creation

Staff Liaison Aaron Cosentino indicated that the ordinance review was complete on his end, and he had forwarded the draft to the community development department for final review and submittal to the city's legal department.

2. No Mow Conversion Proposal Status

No update.

3. WaterSense Toilet Rebate Program Proposal

No update.

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

Commissioner Todd Martin resigned from the Sustainability Commission as he was chosen to serve on the city's Strategic Planning Advisory Commission. Commissioner Martin indicated that he very much enjoyed his time on the Sustainability Commission.

H. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.

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