



Minutes • Tuesday, September 8, 2015 • 6 PM
Robert Gilliam Municipal Complex, City Hall
Second Floor South Conference Room
150 Dexter Ct., Elgin, IL 60120

A. Call to order (chairperson)

B. Roll Call (staff liaison)

Chairwoman Knoerr and Commissioners Ageson, Frazier, Hernandez, Jacobs, Keare, Masterson, and Segel present.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

August 2015 minutes were approved.

D. Communications

- 1. Welcome recently appointed Commissioner Amber Keare.**

E. Discussion Items

- 1. Presentation, "New Stormwater Management Technologies and Funding Sources"**
Bryan Miko, Engineer with Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc., will present on new ideas and technologies being utilized across the country for dealing with the increased stormwater demands on municipalities. Both engineering practices and funding mechanisms will be the central focus of the presentation. Additionally, a short segment on how green infrastructure does not always have to be the color green will be included.
Bryan Miko introduced himself and his company, Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc. He's a regional engineer that works a lot with municipalities. Bryan is a new resident to Elgin and he wants to gauge where the city of Elgin is at with water projects, and what they may be looking to do regarding sustainability. ADS, Inc. is the largest recycler of HDPE. He described stream health and that the desired impervious cover is 10%. When you reach above 10%, there are negative effects for the entire ecosystem. They help provide technologies to mimic the water flow and water volume of areas prior to construction. Their strategy is to attack the problem at its source, and help provide funding for infrastructure upgrades. We could implement a green infrastructure incentive program based upon that. Native soils don't tend to let a lot of infiltration in. ADS, Inc. are experts in underground detention/retention systems, and there are a variety of surface and subsurface infiltration systems. He explained that subsurface infiltration systems have superior performance in cold weather, with less variability than surface systems. He also discussed rainwater harvesting, like rain barrels and gray water applications, which are use both above-ground and below-ground storage tanks. Commissioner Masterson asked what he would recommend for repairing watersheds with such bad erosion. Bryan explained that even with ordinances in place, you need infrastructure to help. There are several factors that affect each creek/stream. Commissioner Frazier said that while the city's efforts are minimal, more of the responsibility falls on the property owners. She suggested have been more reactive at this point, when we communicate our ordinances, so we that

are making more of an effort to educate people. Commissioner Hernandez asked since he moved here a year ago, if he had noticed anything in particular that needs work. Commissioner Frazier said he should definitely sit down with Kyla to talk about ways to help the Swan and eastern Elgin neighborhoods. Liaison agreed to send Byran Kyla Jacobson's contact information. Bryan described FlexStorm, a product collects all sediment from construction runoff. It sits under the grate and it has a bypass that allows water to flow over the sides with high flows, but sediment in first flush is still caught in the fabric. This may be a technology the city of Elgin would be interested in.

2. Solar Ordinance

Discussion on permits applied for and issued since the adoption of the solar ordinance, and how we can help market this option to residents.

Liaison introduced the discussion item and filled in commission on current ordinance standings. The city of Elgin has currently only had one application for solar, and given a permit to that company. Commissioner Jacobs brought this discussion item to the agenda as he finds the current ordinance to be extremely cumbersome, costly, and overall difficult for a homeowner to both obtain the permit and install the solar panels. In his experience, he had to hire an engineer to verify a brand new roof was in place could handle the weight of a solar panel on the roof. This seems to be counter-productive, as the city does not require a permit to get a new roof, which is much heavier in comparison. He suggests we need to adopt a more resident-friendly system, and he believes it needs to be fundamentally changed. There was no advertising to community groups, in monthly newsletters, etc. to educate residents on the ordinance. He suggests that how would one cope with trying to put solar panels on their building as well as rebates and tax incentives need to be understood. The state of Illinois has stopped grants for 2015, and future grants will depend upon how the state budget pans out. Federal income tax gives 30% credit on the cost, but that expires at the end of 2016. Commissioner Frazier asked how Commissioner Jacobs would like the ordinance to read and suggested we get all the key players involved in a discussion. Commissioner Jacobs suggested it should look similar to other nearby city's solar ordinances, like Aurora, Schaumburg, and Naperville. Commissioner Aageson commented that Aurora teams up with the EPA, where they put the city on their website and help promote city efforts. Their ordinances are less restrictive. The City of Chicago has "solar express," where you submit an application and receive a response within 24 hours. Commissioner Frazier asked if we go back to the drawing board and submit another amendment. Commissioner Masterson suggested we do our homework and find regional municipalities to compare their ordinances to ours. Chair Knoerr suggested we also talk to installation companies to see what issues they run into with solar legislation. Commissioner Keare suggested we ask the communities themselves what the benefits are, what they are getting from the solar ordinance, success rate, how many people are doing using solar, etc. Commissioner Jacobs said the Illinois Power Association could help advise, and maybe we should ask them to review our ordinance. Commissioner Masterson agreed to look into solar in Oak Park, Evanston, and Rockford. Commissioner Jacobs and Chair Knoerr agreed to research the City of Chicago, while Commissioner Aageson looks at Aurora and Commissioner Frazier at Naperville. Commissioner Keare will contact Illinois Power Association and inquire if they have a list of registered contractors, requirements, etc. Most cities have it set up their ordinance that if you have a licensed electrical contractor, that's all you need. Commissioner Aageson suggested we also ask people what they did to market it and let people know they have the option to use solar. It seems most of the issues faced with our ordinance have to do with safety, that being the weight of the solar panels. Commissioner Jacobs had panels

that were 5x5 feet, each weighing 4 pounds. If you have a tree blocking solar panel area (Item 8, page 6), you are required to have a tree survey to see what trees will be removed. The ordinance also says utility companies must be notified. The main topics of research and improvement to the City of Elgin's current ordinance include response time, utility companies, tree issues, solar panel weight & available hookups, marketing of opportunity, number permits of permits issued, and whether or not they allow leased solar panels. Commissioner Keare asked if we should survey residents to see how they feel about solar and their related interest levels. There was a suggestion made that Commissioners send Liaison ideas for questions to ask other localities about their solar power ordinances. Liaison was to incorporate all suggestions into a data base/spreadsheet, which would be used by each Commissioner when gathering information from other cities. Commissioner Masterson motioned for everyone to do his or her research and we would discuss the item further at our October meeting. The motion was passed.

3. 2016 Sustainability Commission Budget Review

Review proposed budget for the Sustainability Commission funds

Liaison provided a breakdown of the commission's 2016 budget into 4 categories (Friends of the Fox, Mighty Acorns, Event Sponsorship, Education & Outreach). The commission has a budget of \$24,000 for the 2016 year, with agreements to pay \$5000 to Friends of the Fox and roughly \$4000 to the Conservation Foundation for Mighty Acorns programming at Hillcrest Elementary. The commission passed the budget with seven in favor, and one abstention (Commissioner Segel). Chair Knoerr suggested we need a project that people can see, feel, touch, etc. and we need to focus on that project. Chair Knoerr has looked into projects done in the name of sustainability and transit is one idea. She thinks we need to focus on a big community project, and maybe we need to look at grants for funding, than relying on our budget that can be spent otherwise.

F. Old Business

1. Plastic Bag Ordinance

Continued discussion on the research and possibility of developing a plastic bag ordinance for the city of Elgin.

Commissioner Masterson discussed his research and that many things suggested engaging with big retail stores and entice them to give away bags, or sell that at a very reasonable cost. He thinks this would be a better alternative than the thick plastic option, like Chicago is using. Commissioner Keare said having an incentive, like 5 cents off for each bag you don't use is an option. She went somewhere and they let her put her name in a raffle for bringing her own bag, and liked that idea as well. Commissioner Jacobs had contacted the Meijer environmental compliance and sustainability contact, and Meijer is not currently affected by a plastic bag ordinance, but he'd be willing to work with us on a local policy. Commissioner Masterson said, "why not go back to paper bags?" Commissioner Ageson, who works for Aldi Corporate, said either big box stores need to come around to the idea or we will need to impose an ordinance. She suggested it could be beneficial to have on a survey to the public as well. Money talks, and maybe we approach companies with the Aldi business model of efficiency to show them how much money both they and customers could save, and the environment would win too. She also said Ireland enacted such an ordinance and their plastic bag use went down 94%. It's working in other places, it could work here. Commissioner Keare suggested it's like smoking in restaurants, there's an uproar at first, but over time, it's embraced and becomes the norm. Commissioner Jacobs suggested we work with Waste Management to help with the effort, as they could also

provide insight and statistics. Commissioner Jacobs said that he would contact Waste Management to learn about the problems associated with plastic bags in the garbage. Chair Knoerr motioned to keep this item on Old Business for next meeting, and that the group continue to research this topic and have conversations. The motion was approved.

2. Partners for Places grant proposal

Continued discussion on project idea, requirements, and timeline.

Chair Knoerr made a motion to table this item until next meeting. The motion was approved.

3. Freedom Field trip

Discuss marketing plan for September 26 visit to Freedom Field.

Liaison will post and boost post for trip on City of Elgin social media pages. Commissioner Masterson made a motion for the commission to pay up \$150 for promotion of the event. The motion was approved.

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

Liaison stated there was still no driver arranged for the Freedom Field trip, but she would update on the status via email as soon as available.

H. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was passed.

— 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. —