



Minutes • Tuesday, January 12, 2016 • 6:15 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)

C. Chairperson Knoerr and Commissioners Ageson, Hajek, Hernandez, Jacobs, Keare, Masterson, and Segel are all present.

D. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

The November 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

E. Communications

Welcome newly appointed Commissioner Scott Hajek

F. Discussion Items

Chairperson Knoerr stated that she will read a section of Roberts Rules of Order at the beginning of each meeting for the next few months to help serve as a refresher. Today, she read Part 1- How business is conducted.

G. Old Business

1. Solar ordinance

Continued discussion on potential modifications to the City of Elgin's current solar ordinance.

Commissioner Jacobs updated the commission that the federal tax rebates have been extended for installation of solar in residential and commercial facilities for another 4 years. The rebate will be for 30% until 2020, after which it will go down to 20% and then another year following, to 10%. The State of Illinois is still without a budget, and thus has no ability to provide any rebates. Commissioner Masterson said at the Wanxiang open house, ComEd suggested a smart grid would come to Elgin prior to 2018, potentially in 2016. Commissioner Jacobs mentioned that the first residential solar permit has been issued in Elgin. He stopped by the Community Development office and asked the cost of a permit, and was told it depends, but typically is \$140-150. People have the option of selling power back to ComEd. If one does not sell kilowatts back to ComEd, it is necessary to have a converter and storage unit, which would cost an additional \$6,000-7,000. Liaison inquired as to the residential permit holder's total cost for solar. Commissioner Jacobs informed that the resident installed 15 panels with an initial investment was \$17,800 total. She received a \$5336 tax incentive, \$5000 solar equipment incentive, leaving \$7,300 as the cumulative total. The Code Department informed Commissioner Jacobs that solar panels' estimated weight is 64 pounds per square foot. He has found in research panels to weigh closer to 4 pounds each. Commissioner Jacob's goal throughout the solar ordinance whole process is to generate more panels being installed within the city of Elgin. He fears

those with old homes trying to get solar could lead to more roadblocks. It's important to learn more about newly built homes, with good structural integrity, and the potential to make the permit process easier on those homeowners. Commissioner Jacob's other concern is how we reach out to homeowners. There is a "residential owners guide to permits" in the Community Development Department that could and should include solar. The commission could create and distribute a flyer new home builders to tell them about solar, and what the steps are, how much it will cost, how much they could save. Developers and project manager could speak with the Code Department and have them look at building plans and find out the weight limits of the trust on the home prior to residential homeowner interest. Commissioner Keare said ECC's lab has a solar panel, and 2-4 pounds per square foot is the average weight. When installing new panels on an older roof, one must consider push points. Commissioner Aageson suggested we need to solidify what questions we want to ask Sarosh, of the Community Development Department. She suggested we bring in a few experts to discuss the ordinance, like an engineer that installs solar. Gary suggested Brent from Wanxiang or Chet from Freedom Field would be two options. She suggested Commissioner Jacobs come up with five points of interest. Commissioner Keare spoke to Andy Urbach from ECC, and he would be happy to join a discussion too. Chairperson Knoerr said we need a copy of Geneseo's ordinance, which Wanxiang suggested has been very successful. The ultimate goal is to create a brochure to market solar installation. Melissa said our research and questions should be sent out in advance to guests being brought into the conversation. Commissioner Hajek suggested having an architect would be a better person to invite relative to discussion on weight limits. He suggested talking to Raoul Johnston in building and finding out what the current restrictions are in the building code to allow for installation. Chairperson Knoerr said Judson has a very advanced architectural program with a sustainable component and she will make some phone calls or reach out to Aaron for contacts there. Bruce Dalquist is an architect which may be a logical person to reach out to, and Commissioner Segel will call him. Ideally, we want to have this prepared for the February meeting. Commissioner Hajek suggested that Sarosh would not need to come to our meeting if we can come up with the recommended changes with these folks. Commissioner Jacobs agreed to write up changes in a manner that shows changes directly on the ordinance. He will then send it to the liaison to distribute to the commission any additions/revisions. After that, it can be sent to suggested experts. Commissioner Hajek agreed to discuss the issues with Sarosh and Raoul in Community Development. Liaison agreed to find the Geneseo ordinance to distribute to the commission. Commissioner Hernandez mentioned looking into grants opportunities with the Solar Foundation. Chairperson Knoerr suggested asking the experts for ideas on getting schools or Habitat for Humanity to be interested in solar.

2. Partners for Places grant proposal

Continued discussion on project idea, requirements, and timeline.

Commissioner Masterson mentioned an idea of installing solar panels on the Gail Borden Public Library Rakow Branch building. It's already a Gold LEED building. Commissioner Hajek mentioned that we need to get a copy of the building plans to determine the feasibility of such a project. If it was designed for LEED, there could be potential for land use around the building, too. Based on the design, panels would only be visible on the residential side, and not from the road. Commissioner Masterson motioned the commission further explore a partnership with Gail Borden Public Library district to help them install solar on their Rakow branch building. All were in favor. The following are necessary to move forward: Liaison contact the Grand Victoria Foundation to see if match funding still exists & if Rachel can attend our next meeting; Then the Commission will

contact library board to see if there's interest and then conduct a feasibility study. Liaison will send commissioners the Partner for Places FAQs for reference. Commissioner Segel noted that 30% of the decision for the Partners for Places grant is based on the STAR Community program.

H. Commissioner comments/announcements

Liaison to announce change to Kane County Recycling events

Designation of commissioner to call City of Geneseo regarding their grants and solar panel installations

ECC Sustainability event for 2016

Liaison will find a person of contact for the event and ask for an event budget and detailed plan to distribute to commission prior to February meeting.

Backyard Chickens Pilot Program presentation at Wednesday's Council meeting

Liaison announced that Senior Management Analyst, Aaron Cosentino, will be presenting a report at Wednesday's (tomorrow's) Committee of the Whole meeting at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall. Liaison will send out a copy of the presentation to all commissioners after it has been presented to council.

Commissioner Masterson announced his findings on the Solar Star Foundation and suggested we can help out local schools.

The next Sustainability Honor Roll presentation is this April. Thus, the Commission would be best to vote in February, so that award can be ordered in time. Liaison will send out the Honor Roll nomination template, as well as all previous nominee write-ups to all commissioners for consideration at the February meeting. Commissioners can bring any new nominations then.

I. 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.