



Minutes • Tuesday, May 10, 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)**

Chairperson Knoerr and Commissioners Agesen, Frazier, Jacobs, Keare, Masterson and Segel present.

**C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes**

April 2016 minutes were approved.

**D. Discussion Items**

**1. Community Gardens discussion**

***Patsy Hirsh, volunteer at Advocate Sherman Hospital, will discuss community gardening at Sherman & open the discussion for opportunities to expand community gardening in the city***

Patsy provided the commission with a presentation on the community gardens at Sherman hospital and expressed her desire for community gardening to expand in Elgin. Commissioner Masterson inquired as to the necessary items needed to garden in raised beds on old industrial, or "brown" sites. Patsy suggested it is complicated, but perhaps possible with some sort of barrier. The group would need to do some research. She suggested it's crucial to have a core group "bought in" and invested in making it work. She also suggested the city do a survey to look for interest. Throughout research, Sherman volunteers found raised beds were preferred to tilled areas, mostly to avoid weed issues. It may be worthwhile to develop a "starter" package to set groups up for success – what is needed to start and to sustain it. There are gardening and seed grants, usually available in the fall. Liaison will share Patsy's email address and phone number. Patsy suggested that another great resource is the "Idea garden" in St Charles, where all the Master Gardener interns work. The Extension Office is a huge resource as well.

**2. Debrief recently sponsored events**

***Discuss & provide feedback on ECC and Earth Day events***

Commissioner Segel went to ECC's debriefing of the Sustainability Expo. He reported that the problem mentioned was that they worked with a short time frame. They also suggested the date was conflicting. Commissioners that were present felt the event was poorly attended, especially by students. Those students that attended, or worked, the event did not know what to do, and they did not appear to be running the event, unlike the previous year. Ultimately, it was not well organized. Commissioner Keare felt it was a good networking event, but really only met people that were representing other tables. The commission agreed students need to be more involved in the event. Commissioner Frazier inquired about the process of sponsored events and whether they required to

report back to us. She suggested better event plans need to be provided much earlier on, as well as proof that there is a marketing plan in place. Liaison will ask them to attend next meeting, as well as councilmember to address concerns. Liaison will see if there is a post-event scoring sheet used for city-sponsored events or if that is something to be considered. Commissioners requested to see ECC's accounting reports for the event. We need groups to provide accountability. Commissioner Jacobs motioned any future expenditure be accompanied by an accountability, evaluation, and report of spending and that any sponsorships should require a city agreement with reimbursements on paid receipts, as well as a follow-up evaluation and report on spending at meeting following the event passed. The motion was passed. The commission suggested that ECC plan and present next year's event much earlier, like January when students return for the semester. The commission was unsure of who was in charge and running the event. It should be a college wide project, not just the sustainability classes. Liaison will reach out to the organizers and try to get them to the next meeting to discuss the event. Earth Day was successful. Keep the balloons tied up, so kids can't bring them outside.

### **3. Kane County Food Hub Feasibility Study**

***Commissioner Aagesen will provide the commission with information on this local study***

Commissioner Aagesen discussed the food hub, as a local food distribution center idea that's about two years out from being reality. The county is looking to create a food hub to connect groups and communities. Where a local farmer may have a certification in processing food, they could bring their items to the hub to be processed, packaged and sold. Farmers would get paid from the hub. It allows them to reach a much larger market than a CSA or Farmer's Market, and at a much larger scale. The hub would have all safety certifications. At this point, they are looking primarily at produce. Commissioner Aagesen suggested we should keep this item on the radar and see what they come up with. The research and conversations have all been overwhelmingly positive.

## **E. Old Business**

### **1. Solar ordinance**

***Liaison will provide an update on staff's review suggested Solar Ordinance amendments, and allow for additional feedback on marketing ideas***

Liaison shared feedback from city planners regarding suggested modifications. They modifications are not feasible, as response suggested that regardless of the home's age, the city requires engineer or architect to reassure roof can support the panels and mounting is adequate. Liaison will send email from city planner and attachments. The commission motioned to table this item.

### **2. Partners for Places grant proposal**

***Continued discussion on project idea, requirements, and timeline.***

Commissioner Knoerr asked for a report on all the projects funded by the commission, and organizations that have asked for grants. Some that came to mind include rain gardens and water retention, gardens off of Shales. butterfly garden in NENA, Friends of the Fox, and Mighty Acorns. She suggested we find success stories and look for other grants to help fund good ideas.

## **F. Commissioner comments/announcements**

***Fox Valley Sustainability Network – June 8, 3-5 p.m. forum at Two Brothers Roundhouse in Aurora***

Liaison announced two events: NENA Butterfly Gala and Green Building Forum.

## **G. Adjourn**

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