



Minutes • Tuesday, July 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)

Chairperson Knoerr and Commissioners Frazier, Hajek, Hernandez, Keare, Masterson and Segel present.

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

June minutes were approved.

D. Discussion Items

No new discussion items.

E. Old Business

1. Partners for Places grant proposal

Continued discussion on project idea, requirements, and timeline.

The commission will combine this discussion item with the Old Business Item 2: Community Gardens.

2. Community Gardens

Continued discussion on ideas & logistics into expanding options in Elgin.

Community members present to join conversation include Bob and Anne Bedard of the Elgin Community Garden Network (ECGN) Board, Pat Hirsh of Advocate Sherman Hospital and the Master Gardeners Kane County Extension Office, John Bordsen Chair of ECGN Board. In addition, resident and U-46 teacher, Paige Fitton was in attendance. Mr. Bedard inquired if Elgin was a registered Sustainability Community with USDN. He stated there are 142 in the U.S. and it seems to be a favorable standing for grant recipients. He also mentioned the Partners for Places grant website suggests it be presented that our gardens target diversity and help with economic hardship. Community gardens could also address childhood obesity. Water source, soil remediation, and management are the main issues to look at with each plot of land considered. Mr. Bedard and his colleagues have identified 4-5 sites that target the parameters of this grant. The programs Advocate Sherman has available could help make this project very successful. Collaboration amongst different entities in the community is key. The group has identified already that the project would involve neighborhoods, the city, hospital(s), the extension office, and community networks. There's a one-year grant of which provides \$35,000-70,000 of funding, or a two-year grant of \$50,000-100,000, where the timeframe refers to when all funds must be spent. Mr. Bordsen said that ECGN has received many inquiries from people and groups in the community so there is definitely interest. In addition, education is a large part of the ECGN's mission. Commissioner Segel suggested we develop a working group to develop the plan and proposal. The sites ECGN has in mind include (1) the vacant lot near Food for

Greater Elgin, (2) AID Elgin land, (3) Kiwanis Club of Elgin, and the Eastside Recreation Center (ERC). Another site option is Printpack Illinois Inc., located near McLean Blvd. and Big Timber Rd. In recent years, ECGN purchased power tools for Abbott school students to build garden boxes. It's possible that they would be interested in doing this again since they no longer have shop class. This collaboration could be incorporated into the grant, teaching students skills, which they may not otherwise receive, as the class was removed with budget cuts in recent years. The group noted that Presence St. Joseph Hospital is starting gardens this year, with 41 beds. Advocate Sherman has ongoing classes that are free, and the community can attend them to learn about gardening. The extension office is very open to growing new projects, especially when it comes to neighborhoods in need. The major costs for such a project will come from the building supplies for the boxes, any remediation to the ground, and administrative costs (website, design work, signs, education). The group noted a few other considerations. It may be worthwhile to have a couple rain barrels at the ERC. At the Sherman gardens, some garden boxes are made of wood, and others are from composite. These two options should be considered. The group must also consider other enhancements and features like benches, picnic tables, butterfly gardens, native plants, storage (shed or box), fence, compost bins, signage, and interpretive signs. A plan must be developed to move forward with this project idea. One nice part of the sites selected is that they cover all areas of Elgin. Liaison will look into the USDN certification. The entire group will go through grant information in detail and visit sites recommended. At the August 2016 commission meeting, the group can begin building out the costs. In addition, the group will look at the criteria matrix and map out how to meet each requirement at the September meeting. Liaison will email meeting minutes to ECGN members in addition to commission.

3. ComEd's proposed demand charges policy discussion

Discuss additional information on SB1585 and potential for drafting a letter stating the commission's position on the issue.

Commissioner will discuss letter and position with legal. If permitted, she will mail to Illinois Senators Noland, Oberweis, McConnaughay, and Syverson.

4. Sustainability Honor Roll

Review any new nominations. Discuss advertising nominations. Commission to vote for next awardee at the August meeting.

Chairperson Knoerr will submit a nomination via the online form at cityofelgin.org/greenaward. Liaison will post to social media that nominations are encouraged by the public.

F. Commissioner comments/announcements

Liaison will provide an update on rain barrel sales

Liaison updated the commission that 15 rain barrels have been purchased through the program. The commission passed a motion to purchase a rain barrel to keep on hand for educational/demonstration purposes.

G. 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.