



Minutes • Tuesday, September 13, 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, Hajek, Hernandez, Keare, Masterson and Segel present.

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

August 2016 meeting minutes were approved.

**D. Discussion Items**

**1. Mighty Acorns 2015-2016 School Year Wrap-up**

Maura Neuffer, City of Elgin Naturalist, presented a wrap-up report for the past school year of Mighty Acorn programming. Mighty Acorns now has six classes of 3-6<sup>th</sup> graders at Hillcrest Elementary School in Elgin. The stewardship component is what is unique to this environmental program. The classes take three field trips to Hawthorne Hill Nature Center on top of all the in-class sessions. The goal is to create environmentally literate students who also enjoy time outside in nature. Hillcrest Elementary is the perfect partner for this program, as the students can walk over to the nature center through the park. The principal is interested in expanding the program to more 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers.

**2. Simple Recycling**

***Discuss Simple Recycling program for free curbside pickup of clothing, shoes, toys, etc.***

Liaison will send all supporting materials to the commission. Liaison checked with Waste Management and they were supportive of such a program. The commission would want collections tracked to see how much is getting picked up; it would be an interesting statistic. Commissioner Segel motioned to pursue this program to completion and move forward to City Council.

**E. Old Business**

**1. Partners for Places grant proposal & Community Gardens**

***Continued discussion on community gardens projects in Elgin & meeting grant requirements.***

Liaison will email STAR Technical manual via WeTransfer to the commission. Commissioner Hajek suggested the cost may not be worth the amount of staff time needed as it requires a lot of detailed research to become a certified community. The certification is based on self-reported information that requires a lot of calculations. It would take a big, dedicated group of people to accomplish this with lots of time and research.

Liaison spoke with a representative of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) and it sounded hopeful she could be a member. The basic membership costs \$400 a year, which would need to come from the Sustainability Commission's budget. It also requires liaison participation in several discussions, which could be useful in bringing ideas and strategies to the commission. Commissioner Segel made a motion to approve USDN membership fees. A second motion was made to put STAR Communities on the January 2017 agenda to revisit the idea once we know the status of Community Gardens and if there is time to move forward.

**F. Commissioner comments/announcements**

***Liaison will provide an update on rain barrel sales***

The program has sold 43 rain barrels total, 39 of which have been to Elgin residents.

***Liaison will provide update to solar initiative***

Liaison will put together a RFP for solar projects with a Purchase of Power Agreement (PPA) so interested companies can provide options.

***2016 Northern Illinois Renewable Energy Summit reminder***

***Waste at City Events***

The commission discussed opportunities to reduce waste at events, particularly sorting options, so that waste could be separated into a trash, compost and recycling. For this to be successful, many volunteers would be required to stand by bins and make sure the right items are getting placed in the right place. The commission would like to reach out to local high school green organizations and ask them to be involved and volunteer. It would be best to try this out in the spring at the Fox Trot.

***Liaison to look for Pumpkin composting info and send out to all***

**G. Adjourn**

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