



Minutes • Tuesday, October 11, 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)

Amber, Tia, Toni gone

C. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

D. Communications

1. Sustainability Honor Roll

Mayor Kaptain presents award to Friends of the Fox River

E. Discussion Items

1. Shared Harvest letter of support

Evaluate Shared Harvest Food Co-op funding and suggested support

Thomas Lesiewicz of Shared Harvest was present to answer any questions. He explained the group has several banks lined up willing to support this investment, but for the economic model to work, they need city support for the build out part of the project. Banks can assist after build out is completed. Shared Harvest wishes for the community to be more vocal, and that means more groups on board. Liaison explained it would not be within our duties to suggest where the funds come from (like TIF). The commission could, however, write a letter support to city council describing the coop as a good investment of city funds. Chairperson Knoerr volunteered to draft the letter.

Funding must be lined up by the end of this year. Without said funding, all efforts and contracts must be renegotiated. Shared Harvest plans to go to City Council in November for the final ask. Commissioner Segel motioned for the commission to communicate a positive message in support of Shared Harvest Food Coop and encourage them to provide a sufficient amount of funding that identifies that the city is truly supporting the build out of this community project. The motion passed. Liaison will send Tom the DCEO grants Gary found.

F. Old Business

1. Partners for Places grant proposal & Community Gardens

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

The RFP for Partners for Places goes out in December, so USDN membership timing is perfect. The liaison will need to become a member in November. Patsy Hirsh went to Wisconsin and found a property that has the same type of project that the group is proposing for AID. She went to a Master Gardener conference and toured an aquaponics system that was solar powered and had a greenhouse. It's gravity-fed system had tilapia tanks up high, and water flows down and feeds crops, and they are able to harvest every day all year round. Water is recycled; waste product from tilapia provides nutrients to grow the plants. They have a grading system for nutrient content in food created in these processes. This project produces a level 6, meaning its extremely high in nutrients. Building edifices costs \$5000. The company Bob Bedard found will take 55% of profits off the cost as they want to help with such a project in Elgin. They ensure all is ADA compliant inside and outside with a 3D mapping system. Meat handling could be done in the building on the AID property. It meets the needs for the mandate to provide work for AID clients. The system Patsy Hirsh saw provides fresh vegetables to local restaurants, schools, coops, and grocery stores. For the footprint, it grows 5x the amount of produce as a regular growing season. The architect understands the grant process and would provide drawings prior to receiving any grant funds. Liaison explained her concerns about needing an RFP for such work. Liaison needs to confirm the grey area with legal, whether or not grant funds given to city for community project needs to work through the normal purchasing process. Bob Bedard also knows an architect LeAnn, who can help with the build out drawings the Food for Greater Elgin property. She is a minority local business. She needs to provide us with real costs to associate with this program.

Kiawannis Park would require about \$5000 for the water pipe, and rest of the build out is simple. Commissioner Segel wants to know how we can get more people from the community involved, other than just the group that would be there working. He wants to incorporate a bigger education component for students. Food for Greater Elgin site is intended to be a teaching site for urban farming. Patsy Hirsh said many schools like Elgin High School don't have appropriate places to teach such things. It would be nice to have smaller scale aquaponics at their schools in the future. Bob Bedard said these teaching gardens could provide a location for people to learn about it before they try to build their own garden. Grant should be written in away to allow for plenty of funds, and if there are funds unused for building the gardens initially outlined in the plans, they could be used for educational signage at the locations. With training people to eat healthy, the group could also get ECC's culinary department involved to provide recipes. Liaison will forward Illinois State grants to Bob Bedard to see if there are any backup option for some of these sites.

G. Commissioner comments/announcements

Liaison will provide an update on rain barrel sales

No sales since last meeting – liaison will not boost posts/spend for marketing as the weather is changing. She continue marketing efforts for rain barrels again in the spring.

Liaison will provide update to solar initiative

Liaison will be researching other communities who have put out RFPs for projects and develop an appropriate RFP.

Gary & Laura talked about Northern Illinois Renewable Energy Summit and Expo

The Sustainability Commission received an award for education and outreach, as being a model for municipalities. Commissioners will present the award to the Mayor and City Council at a future council meeting.

H. 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.