



Minutes • Tuesday, July 10, 2018 • 6:00 p.m.  
Robert Gilliam Municipal Complex, City Hall  
First Floor South Conference Room  
150 Dexter Court, Elgin, IL 60120

**A. Call to order (chairperson)**

**B. Roll Call (staff liaison)**

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

**D. Other persons present**

Robin Migalla is present, as well as presenters

**E. Working Groups and Task-Related updates**

***Discuss goals related to Individual Commissioner Engagement Plan***

-Commissioner Miko had no updates since the last meeting.

-Commissioner Anderson has set up Basecamp online communities for projects including the Earth Day Planning Committee and a solar working group. He also put together a job description for recruitment. He wishes to get other community organizations planning and implementing Earth Day/Earth month events. Anderson has begun meeting with people interested in the two groups he has formed. He hopes to have the first solar work group meeting by the end of the month. Public education is his other project, and he developed a calendar of Facebook posts that are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the end of the year. While it's not feasible to boost each post, more can be reached if people share posts, like those in community groups such as Elgin Green Groups. The group is also considering creating an Elgin Sustainability Instagram account.

-Commissioner Aagesen asked the liaison to provide lists of multifamily housing to approach about recycling. Liaison suggested we could send a postcard that they can return. Aagesen asked to get a list of the largest unit owners. Chairperson Aagesen also provided an update on the national straw ban campaign. Two campaigns are called One Less Straw and Stop Sucking. The group needs to decide the best approach. Aagesen will reach out to the liaison to see how to move forward. It would be her preference to ban straws.

**F. Discussion Items**

**1. Presentation: Tiny Homes**

***Presentation by Kalee Hooghkirk, founder of the Illinois Tiny House Community Group***

Ms. Hooghkirk provided an informative presentation on tiny homes. She suggested that millennial home ownership is at an all time low and seniors want to remain homeowners, but often cannot. Elgin has over 50 homes under 900 square feet, referred to as "shotgun shacks." She suggested one option for the City would be to convert undeveloped city land and collect rental fees. It would increase density, providing a community benefit. Such a pocket neighborhood is not a trailer park, as homes would be secured on a foundation or permanently secured with a deck or pergola. Tiny homes promote community, sustainability and affordability. Chairperson Aagesen suggested this topic touches economic and social sustainability. Commissioner Anderson referred to International Residential Code (IRC) Appendix Q, which addresses tiny homes. He inquired if Elgin had adopted the most recent. Ms. Hooghkirk confirmed she wants the commission to recommend the City adopt Appendix Q, which provides for a combination of of RV, mobile home and single-family

home standards. Liaison will find out if Elgin has the current IRC, and find out if an Appendix can be adopted separately. This topic involves zoning, code, utility, taxes issues and a lot of cross silo work would need to happen. The Liaison explained a potential process. Anderson suggested that due to the complexity of the topic, the group would need to learn a lot more making a recommendation. Agesen wants to hear all the perceived negatives of tiny home communities and address them so the commission could make additional arguments in support of such an initiative. Ms. Hooghkirk said there are no cities in Illinois, which allow for tiny home communities. Agesen tasked her to find communities similar to Elgin from other states, in which the commission could compare and review ordinances/code. The commission agreed a new work group would need to take on this initiative. Commissioner Miko motioned holding off on creating a working group until more commissioners are appointed. The motion passed. A second motion was made to get further information compiled. That motion also passed.

## **2. Presentation: Mighty Acorns 2017-2018 school year recap of programming**

### ***Presentation by Maura Neuffer, City of Elgin Naturalist and Educator with The Conservation Foundation***

Carolyn Wagner of The Conservation Foundation (TCF) assisted Maura Neuffer in a presentation about the Mighty Acorns programming, both regionally and in Elgin. The curriculum was recently updated to include the next generation science standards and STEM. Hillcrest Elementary began as a pilot six years ago with one classroom, to mentor the naturalist. It was then handed over to the naturalist to be the lead. As the number of classrooms increased, the program needed additional educators, which TCF provides. Now up to seven classrooms, the program has been so well received that more grade levels want to participate. The most important part of the program is it is stewardship based, and kids are actually having meaningful interactions with nature. Commissioner Miko explained that the commission is learning a lot about its budget and programs funded by the commission. He explained that from a planning perspective, the commission is looking at how it can be more sustainable as well. Funding the Mighty Acorns programming is difficult with the commission operating on a calendar year and TCF on a school year. To sustain the seven classrooms, the cost is a minimum of \$6800. If a class has 30 students, TCF prefers three educators. Commissioner Miko asked what other options the TCF has if the commission could not provide the funding for the next year. Ms. Wagner said that some schools have dropped the program. Ms. Neuffer suggested there could possibly be some options with parks and recreation department. In DuPage County, the program is funded through DuPage Stormwater. TCF tries to get different sponsors for different groups. A significant TCF donor's monies will no longer be available in three years. TCF tries to get sponsorships within each community where programs are active. Chairperson Agesen asked how Mighty Acorns defines and measure environmental literacy. Ms. Neuffer and Ms. Wagner reported that they do not test the children, but they get feedback from teachers, and most measurements are anecdotal. Agesen explained that while the commission has funded it historically, that shouldn't suggest the commission is committed to fund it to perpetuity, as that may not be fair to other programs that may need funding. Commissioner Anderson has several technical questions, inquiring of the costs to run the program overall in Elgin, TCF's donors, and in kind contributions. TCF focuses educators on the counties they are located in. TCF has a Fox River Initiative that gets some donations from the Hamil Foundation, which helps with this program but also others in the Fox River area. Anderson is going to explore with the parks and recreation director if the commission could submit grants through the Elgin Parks and Recreation Foundation to fund this program. Anderson requested a written proposal from TCF with a professional program and list of outcomes. Anderson is more interested in what they would want to measure/track to provide success rates, measuring what they find valuable to show the investment paid off. Commissioner Miko suggested that finding measurables is not necessarily realistic for a \$6800 program for 145 students in seven classes. Knowing that we have made a difference in making students care about the environment is important. Anderson encouraged TCF to come up with a list of some measurables and how the Mighty Acorns programming helps implement the City's Sustainability Action Plan. Commissioner Anderson motioned that we allocate the \$1295.50 dollars remaining in the 2018 line item be allocated to the Mighty Acorns 2018-2019

fall programming. Anderson is willing to donate his services to help write a grant to seek the remaining amount of the money. He would also like to sit down with the TCF staff and develop a strategy to sustain the program without commission funding. Miko noted that this year's budget was not developed in the same process so the money allocated to line items is not necessarily binding. Miko suggested moving enough money from this year's budget into a Purchase Order (PO) to be paid for the school year. Aagesen said that if the commission tries to use this year's money for all of next year's programming, it might end up in the same position next year. Anderson said that if partnership cannot secure enough funds to cover the winter programming, he would personally cover that bill. As an individual donor, however, he needs more information. Aagesen suggested that in the corporate world, documentation is all you have to go on. She also suggested that there's money available in the Aldi Smart Kids grant, which could be applied for.

### **3. Budget Discussion**

#### ***Begin formalizing needs/requests for Fiscal Year 2019.***

Commissioner Miko outlined a summary of regular expenditures, suggesting the commission has had missed opportunities to use its full budget. This meeting, however, would help finalize the commission's process for budgeting and start planning for 2019. The commission agreed to finalize proposals in July and adopt final budgets for the next year in August. Commissioner Miko would create a document with this timeline. Commissioner Anderson read his budget ideas and projects, suggesting commission money should be seed money and initiatives should sustain themselves or be defunded. For events, any revenues would likely need to be run through the Parks and Recreation Foundation. Liaison needs to look at history of the funding for Friends of the Fox. She will send the commission a Doodle invite to set up a special meeting at which the commission can continue the budget discussion.

## **G. Old Business**

### **1. Commission Recruitment & Ordinance**

#### ***Update from liaison.***

Commissioners would like to know what the applicant pool is. They would like people that have background knowledge, expertise, etc. Anderson: We need a diverse commission to allow us to move all nine sections of our sustainability plan together. Work groups don't need to be voted on. It can be like a minor league, if they are exposed and active, they may want to join. We have nine different areas of our plan, and we need enough experience to cover all areas. We don't need each to be an expert in one, but that's important to us.

### **2. Sustainability Survey**

#### ***Update from liaison.***

Liaison can push on the Mobile app, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and water bill. Liaison will also see if the press might pick up the survey.

### **3. EV Charging Stations**

#### ***Update from liaison.***

Liaison look into the background of the Centre parking deck charging station.

## **H. Commissioner comments/announcements**

### **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.