



February Sustainability Commission Meeting

Agenda • Tuesday, February 15, 2022 • 6:00 p.m.

Virtual option via Zoom: contact laron_m@cityofelgin.org for the link.

In-person option: West Conference Room, Edward Schock Centre of Elgin, 100 Symphony Way, Elgin, IL 60120

A. Call to Order: 6:01pm

1. Zoom Recording Disclaimer: Under Open Meetings Act, a verbatim recording must be taken of this virtual meeting.
2. Roll Call
 - i. Present: **In-Person:** Chairperson Tom Armstrong, Commissioner Flaherty, Student Representative Jordon Hill, Staff Liaison Mikala Larson. **Zoom:** Commissioners: Dan Brosier, David Jurina, Jeff Biss, Katie Gronke, Kevin Zaldivar, Dekovia Livingston, Council Liaison Carol Rauschenberger.
 - ii. Absent: Commissioner Curt Mette.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. January 11, 2022
 - i. *Commissioner Biss motioned to approve January 11th meeting minutes, Commissioner Brosier seconded. Motion passes.*

C. Recognize Persons Present

1. Former Chair Tia Aageson was present and shared about a new project: a sustainability podcast.
2. Nancy Lamia: Thursday night, February 17th: Lydia Scott from Chicago Region Trees Initiative speaking for the Over Our Heads series. Can join via Gail Borden library website.

D. Discussion Items

1. Sustainable Elgin Community Grant Program:
 - i. Elgin Township Property Detention Basin Storm Water Management Project: Jeannette Mihalec, representing Elgin Township, joined via Zoom to be present for the discussion. The project: Would be located at 729 S. McLean Boulevard, Elgin, IL 60123. Based on the location of the detention area at the site, there is a lot of opportunity for pollutants to get into the area, and they want to be responsible with the land behind them. The former board looked at this as a pollinator project, and are looking at this to manage stormwater runoff and water quality, and provide education, as this site drains into the watershed and is not too far from the Fox River. To increase accessibility of the program, they would educate about the project in English and Spanish and help people with mobility issues. They may consider other funding sources as well. Plan to use seed mix, have also discussed plugs. The location is about an acre in size.

Questions from the commission:

Q: Regarding glyphosate to remove the turf. A: Consultant advised them to use that, they were advised that it is aquatic approved. Could be flexible on using that.

Q: What types of plants will be installed? Request for seed and plant selection. A: Wet prairie and mesic prairie seed mix discussed to be planted. Plants, shrub(s) and tree(s) will be installed.

Q: The site isn't very visible, how will they inform and educate about the project? A: They would utilize social media outreach and signage.

Q: Accounting for CO2 reduction? A: Implementing this program would reduce carbon emissions, because mowing would be minimized.

Outcome: The project is the right idea, but is just currently underdeveloped. The commission would like to see additional information about execution of the project such as soil type, soil amendments, plant selection proposed. The project is not at a point where the commission will move forward with funding.

- ii. Jentli Zero Waste: Jaclyn Navarro, from Jentli Zero Waste, attended via Zoom. Jaclyn started Jentli Zero Waste over a year ago. She began marketing with the Farmer's Market. Jentli Zero Waste was started to help people understand their consumerism. Many daily products contain toxins, micro-plastics, etc. The mission is to eliminate plastic from daily routines. She would like to educate individuals to be in control and make their own products, especially for kids or those with sensitive skin. There is a similar program in Chicago and Evanston. Jaclyn currently does not have a facility; she is hoping something is available in Elgin to help host this event. There are no other funding partners, so the funding would be used for event space and for the products.

Questions from the commission:

Q: How would she contact minority communities? A: She is a minority herself, and use word of mouth, social media.

Q: What is the goal? What do you define success as? A: Something happening weekly, be part of the Farmers Market again this season. Communicating to her audience, making it fun and accessible.

Q: Do the products for the event, such as lotions, need to be approved for the public to make or use? A: Doesn't think so.

Comment: Asked to see a business plan, goals or definitions of success. Suggestion to rent a location. List of material costs would help the commission see how many people will be impacted by this initial funding.

Comment: This program supports commission's intent to mitigate plastic bags.

Outcome: The project is a great idea and consistent with direction commission wants to move in, but need the application to be fleshed out more, such as location for the event, cost of materials, how to measure success. The project is not at a point where the commission will move forward with funding.

Commissioner Dekovia Livingston joined the meeting via Zoom at 6:41pm.

Continued Discussion: Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region (CAP) & Elgin Sustainability Action Plan: Edith Makra, Director of Environmental Initiatives for the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) and co-author of the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region, joined the meeting via Zoom. Edith has been instrumental in maturing efforts towards climate action, and joined the meeting to offer resources and be part of the conversation.

The CAP launched in July after two years of work, and is now ready for the next step. The Elgin Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) was adopted in 2011, and much of that plan has been implemented, in progress, or needs updating as it relates to climate change. City Council endorsed the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region. Commission has been having the discussion of shifting from Elgin Sustainability Action Plan to climate action, such as focusing the discussion going forward, how to implement the regional CAP at the local municipality level, and how to get the community, stakeholders, and elected officials committed to taking action. Elgin's inquiry to implement the CAP at the local level is helping to push it to the next step.

The CAP for the Chicago Region is only the third regional climate plan in the US, so the topic of implementing it at the local level is pioneering. A template for implementing it at the local level doesn't yet exist, so we are learning together. Edith has an idea on how to scale it for community action similar to the Greenest Region Compact (GRC2). The overarching goal is to empower municipalities to take action on climate, and the hope is that the CAP does the heavy lifting of climate action planning. Elgin can take what was written by the experts, and make it work for Elgin. The intent is to get busy taking action, and not take too much time for planning, though some refinement may be necessary. CAP is a voluntary plan, that sets out objectives and priorities, assesses science and what could and should be done. There is no 'enforcement' of the plan. Participation consists of any community that wants to step up and take part.

The plan breaks climate action into two approaches: mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation: reduce CO2 emissions in the atmosphere. Adaptation: Even with mitigation, we will have impacts from climate change for years to come, so how to help our communities adapt and be resilient. The plan is also rooted in equity: look for adaptation and protect those who are already the most vulnerable to climate change. This was informed by the U.S Climate Resilience Toolkit. Keeping these focus areas in mind, execution of the plan is tailored for municipal action, in ways municipalities can be influential. These following three actions make the plan effective for municipalities, and echo the GRC2 framework:

Lead: through municipal processes and action, lead by example.

Encourage: through awards, grants, partnerships, encourage collaboration across sectors. This is a powerful role for municipalities.

Enact: drive climate action as a local government, or support policy at other levels.

The plan looks at taking long term steps and applying solutions at a local level with local engagement, with the authority and tools we have to take action on climate. Kane County is also discussing implementing the regional plan locally. The CAP's vision: collaboration for

impact at a local level. What is lacking, is tracking and reporting. CAP checklist columns aren't fully set up yet and could use some input on it, but isn't too far off. The goal is to get the tools and spreadsheets aligned so it's easy to take the next step. How to report our successes, and compare it to goals. Elgin will be a pilot project, so MMC can provide additional support as able. Edith co-wrote the plan and knows how it could work generally, but to see how it could work in Elgin is up to us. Some things come down to funding, some things come down to policy. The CAP will help us articulate priorities, and be helpful in applying for funding.

2. Earth Day: Earth Day is April 22nd, but the entire month of April is a celebration. In past years, the Sustainability Commission has maintained an Earth Month Facebook page to promote resources and programs happening throughout the month to the community; the page is titled Elgin Earth Month on Facebook. The City is holding an Earth Day event on April 16th at Hawthorne Hill Nature Center. ESC will be present, and have info that could consist of recent actions, education about the commission and ways to get involved. Suggested to continue pursuing the Single Use Bag fee in April, in recognition of Earth Month. Could partner with other entities and promote Earth Month through ways that can be seen across the City, like banners on trees, billboard in the middle of Elgin, message board signs around town, partnering with the arts, and in such ways that are creative to get word out. Chairperson Armstrong volunteered to take a leadership role with Facebook page, and is open to collaborating with others as they are able. Additionally: April 29th is the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day.
3. Tree Program Education: The City is doubling its parkway tree planting program, from 250 to 500 trees available in 2022 for the program. In order to have a high request, and tree survival, rate, there is a pressing need to educate the community about the tree program. Urban Ecology work group has discussed outreach for the tree program, and settled on centering schools as an outreach avenue for the spring planting. Schools serve as a grassroots way to reach residents, and this creates the opportunity to educate students about the importance of trees. Handouts will be given to students in English and Spanish to bring home and will have simple information directing students and their parents to request a tree for their parkway. Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) is providing support for the program through sharing resources. If there are schools that commissioners or members of the public are connected with, please conduct outreach by communicating the program and/or sharing the handout. The spring tree request deadline is **April 15th**, the fall tree request deadline is **August 15th**. Another method of outreach could be door-to-door, and could serve as a way to focus information about the program in specific neighborhoods that lack parkway trees and may not be aware of the program. The purpose of outreach is to engage people who don't know about the program, or about the benefits that a tree could provide them in their parkway. www.treeequityscore.com could be utilized to target neighborhoods that have a low tree canopy, and can be utilized to see demographic information of Elgin to ensure the program is equitably accessed. Addressing the 'whys' of the program and sharing the importance, will help to overcome objections and increase tree requests.

4. Community Solar Outreach Campaign: City Council passed the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solutions (CS²) program at the February 9th meeting. The outreach program to notify and educate residents and small businesses will consist of, at a minimum: a dedicated City webpage, City press release, direct mailings sent in English and Spanish by mc², bilingual social media posts, City newsletter accessible in English and Spanish, a targeted, bilingual mailing to low- and moderate income Elgin residents based on census tracts, active community outreach, and bilingual call center representatives from the City's internal 311 department and official community solar call line hosted by mc² (can be accessed at 833-970-3552 or info@mc2energyservices.com). Residents and small businesses can sign up for the program on cityofelgin.org/communitysolar or by calling 833-970-3552.

E. Other Business

1. Discussion regarding the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Request for Proposals: the inventory will serve as a baseline, a snapshot in time, and will reflect the measures of Elgin's current emissions to guide future mitigation activities. Additionally, the data gathered can be promoted throughout the community, such as in schools, libraries, community groups, neighborhoods, and more to share the data and engage our community in greenhouse gas emissions education and mitigation work. The RFP will be posted by the end of the week at the earliest, or the following week at the latest.
2. Gail Borden Library and Wild Ones will be hosting Zoom meeting with Chicago Region Trees Initiative on Thursday, February 17th, topic: Oak Ecosystem Recovery Project. If interested in attending, register on Gail Borden Public Library page.

F. Adjourn: 9:15pm

1. *Commissioner Brosier moves to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Jurina seconds. Motion passes unanimously.*

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.