



May Sustainability Commission Meeting  
Minutes • Tuesday, May 10, 2022 • 6:00 p.m.  
Heritage Ballroom, Edward Schock Centre of Elgin,  
100 Symphony Way, Elgin, IL 60120

**A. Call to Order: 6:01pm**

1. Roll Call: Present: Chairperson Tom Armstrong, Commissioners David Jurina, Jeff Biss, Chris Flaherty, Katie Gronke, Dan Brosier, Kevin Zaldivar; Student Representative Jordon Hill; Council Liaison Carol Rauschenberger; Staff Liaison Mikala Larson. Absent: Commissioner Dekovia Livingston.

**B. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

1. April 12, 2022
  - i. *Commissioner Biss motions to approve the minutes. Commissioner Jurina seconds. Motion passes.*

Commissioners Brosier and Zaldivar joined at 6:04pm.

**C. Recognize Persons Present**

1. Lords Park Update: Ryan Anderson from Midwest Grows Green (MGG) presents about a Pesticide Free project in Lords Park. The project was done through MGG's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) at no cost to the City. Learn more about the project: <https://midwestgrowsgreen.org/mgg-technical-assistance-in-action-city-of-elgin/>
2. Fred Haas: Fred Haas and neighbors, residents of Old Century Oaks subdivision, attended the meeting to share about a recent change in their neighborhood relating to the removal of a stand of trees by Nicor on Nicor property. The trees were removed by Nicor due to the fact that a pipeline is buried there. The neighbors are looking for ideas and help to lessen the many impacts of this action. They will be connected with the Urban Ecology work group.

**D. Discussion Items**

1. Single Use Bag Fee: Discussion of the current draft ordinance, including: current status, comments, goals, exemptions, outreach strategy, educational campaign, model ordinances in Illinois, next steps. Zero Waste work group continuing work on this.
2. Commission Work Groups: The six commission work groups will begin meeting again, and share out updates at monthly commission meetings. Discussed expectations, Open Meetings Act, community engagement, developing vision statements for the work groups, and processes to ease efficiency and promote productivity.
3. Recycle Right Pilot Program: Staff liaison shared a presentation regarding a new pilot program taking place in the City. WM and The Recycling Partnership have partnered to pilot a new recycling program in the City of Elgin, one of three municipalities chosen for the project. The pilot is intended to increase the amount of recycling collected and decrease contamination. It will be a multi-month pilot with findings shared upon completion.
  - i. *Commissioner Biss motions to support this program with the request for quantified recycling data. Commissioner Jurina seconds. Motion passes.*
4. Farmers Market Partnership: The commission has two options for supporting the Elgin Farmers Market, as a Community Partner or Market Sponsor. Market Sponsor at the Bronze level is what the commission did in 2021, and allows the commission to have a booth at 5 Market days throughout the season.
  - i. *Commissioner Flaherty moves to sponsor the Elgin Farmers Market at the Bronze level. Commissioner Brosier seconds. Motion passes.*

5. Bike Repair Stations: The commission will hold a ribbon cutting event for the new bike repair stations on May 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - i. *Commissioner Flaherty motions to approve \$150 to create informational signage for the bike repair stations. Commissioner Biss seconds. Motion passes.*
  
6. Native Garden Demonstration Project: The commission will be hosting a planting workday to kick off the summer. Commissioner Flaherty is coordinating with local organizations to host summer workdays at the site, so each month there will be direction from various groups to provide education and support throughout the growing season. More details will be shared as they are available. Ongoing maintenance and care of the beds is the biggest concern; community members are signing up to be caretakers of the gardens which will help address this. Chairperson Armstrong presented at an Eastside Neighborhood Garden committee meeting, and got a number of caretakers signed up for the beds. Contact [laron\\_m@cityofelgin.org](mailto:laron_m@cityofelgin.org) to volunteer as a caretaker. The main project sign has been ordered. The stone borders are done, but two beds have been double layered to account for the hill; this required stone to be purchased in addition to the stone that was donated by LaFarge Fox Valley Stone.
  - i. *Commissioner Biss moves to allocate \$280 for the additional stone that was purchased. Commissioner Gronke seconds. Motion passes with one abstention.*
  
7. Solar Power Hour: Grow Solar Chicagoland, previously named Solarize Chicagoland, is offering Solar Power Hours again in 2022. The Elgin Sustainability Commission hosted the Solar Power Hour program previously at the library and promoted on social media. Solar Power Hours are free to the public, and during the event, a Citizen's Utility Board (CUB) staff member will educate attendees about the basics of solar, financials, the property's solar readiness, and how to participate in the program.
  - i. *Commissioner Flaherty motions to commit to two dates, one virtual and an in-person, for the commission to host a Solar Power Hour. Commissioner Biss seconds. Motion passes.*
  
8. No Mow May: An initiative called 'No Mow May,' which originated in the UK, has gained national attention and was discussed by commissioners. Commissioners discussed the benefits and pain points of the initiative, and discussed the main takeaway being encouraging ecologically-friendly lawn care practices. Notes from the discussion: Intended to educate the community, get people to start thinking about alternative lawn care practices, and support pollinator habitats and populations by allowing pollinator-friendly foliage to grow. Another variation: 'No Mow until Mother's Day'. The City ordinance currently stipulates grass may not be taller than 8 inches. Sharing advice and options: if someone does mow, raising their mower deck up to no shorter than 3. Reconsider the use of pesticides. Leave the leaves or mulch them with a mower during fall. Replacing turf grass with eco-lawn mixes like clover or other.

Commissioner Brosier left at 8:54pm.

#### **E. Staff Updates**

1. Solar: Updates shared regarding the continued promotion and monitoring of the community solar program. At the May 11<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, approval of a solar farm to be located at Bowes and Nolan Road will be considered.

#### **F. Other Business**

1. Previous program at Gail Borden Library called Elgin Alive could be something to look into again.
2. Spring trees for the City's Parkway Tree Program have been planted.

#### **G. Adjourn: 9:07pm**

1. *Commissioner Biss motions to adjourn. Commissioner Flaherty seconds. Motion passes unanimously.*