



August Sustainability Commission Meeting  
Minutes • Tuesday, August 9, 2022 • 6:00 p.m.  
Heritage Ballroom, Edward Schock Centre of Elgin, 100 Symphony Way, Elgin, IL 60120

**A. Call to Order: 6:05pm**

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

**B. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

1. July 12, 2022
  - i. *Commissioner Biss motions to approve the July 12, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Livingston seconds. Motion passes.*

Commissioner Flaherty joined the meeting at 6:07pm.

**C. Recognize Persons Present**

1. Representatives from Elgin Area Climate Action Now shared that the group is in full support of a single use bag fee.
2. Vivienne Bailey had questions about the community solar program and requested an update on building code for electric vehicle charging stations.
3. Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford spoke in strong support of the single use bag fee and asked for an update on the community solar program, municipal aggregation, and climate action planning.
4. Robin Migalla spoke out about the pressures of climate change and expressed support for the single use bag fee.
5. Sandy Kaptain added to the discussion of increasing climate change-related messaging.
6. Mary Shesgren referred to the climate emergency that was passed by City Council and spoke in support of the single use bag fee.
7. Cynthia Kanner, Executive Director of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, shared insight from the work done with the Village of Woodstock to adopt their single use bag fee. Cynthia highlighted that change takes time, emphasizes how pragmatic and practical a single use bag fee is, and how the fee structure creates a choice for consumers. Cynthia listed off other communities in Illinois that have single use bag programs and encourages the City of Elgin to join them to be a great example for the area.

**D. Discussion Items**

1. Eco.Logic Camp: Rozina Kanchwala, founder of the non-profit Eco.Logic, shared about the organization. Camp Eco.Logic is about creating a fun space to inspire climate action and create opportunities, and bring arts programming to youth. Eco.Logic will be partnering with Elgin Parks and Recreation to do a program in 2023. The Sustainability Commission can support by sharing about the program. Those interested in learning more can contact Rozina Kanchwala at [info@ecologicprograms.org](mailto:info@ecologicprograms.org).
2. Discussion and vote of Single Use Bag Fee: Commissioner Brosier moves to accept the draft ordinance, and Commissioner Livingston seconds. Discussion follows. Chairperson Armstrong talks through a few key points of the ordinance, including currently drafted exceptions. Commissioner Biss recommends an amendment to the draft ordinance, to remove one situation when a single use bag may be used for free: *"A bag that a restaurant gives a customer to take prepared or leftover food or drink from the restaurant."* Commissioner Biss asks Cynthia Kanner what her experience has been from supporting Woodstock with implementing a single use bag fee. She shares that in Woodstock there was a 5,000 square foot rule included in the ordinance. Cynthia recommends defining a plastic bag and reusable bag in the ordinance. The current draft ordinance specifically defines a reusable bag as cloth, fiber, or machine washable fabric. Commissioner Jurina states that this is the first step to reduce single use products in

the environment and reiterates that the point of the ordinance is to change people's behavior. Commissioners provide clarity that this is not a ban, but rather a fee, intended as a disincentive of using single use bags. City Council would like to see a full-fledged program with outreach and engagement having been done.

- i. Commissioner Biss motions to amend the draft single use bag fee to remove the third instance of when a single use bag may be used for free. Commissioner Zaldivar seconds. Motion passes 7-1.*
  - ii. Commissioner Flaherty makes a motion to approve the amended single use bag fee draft ordinance. Commissioner Jurina seconds. Motion passes unanimously.*
3. Elgin Native Roots: The Urban Ecology work group gave out free Butterfly garden kits at the July 29<sup>th</sup> Farmers Market; the plants were wildly successful and all the plants were given away. Commissioners collected contact information to use for future outreach. In response to comments for more trees in the community, and following up on an idea from 2022, the commission discussed giving away free native trees and shrub species as an extension of the Elgin Native Roots program. These trees and shrubs could not be planted on the parkway; they would need to be planted on private property which would need to be clearly communicated. The commission will have a sign-up sheet and educational material available at the upcoming Farmers Market tables to gather interest for native trees and shrubs. The commission will give the free trees and shrubs to those who request one at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Farmers Market. Native garden plant kits will also be given out at the upcoming Farmers Markets.
  - i. Commissioner Flaherty motions to purchase native garden kits for next three Farmers Market Fridays not to exceed \$999 per plant kit. Commissioner Brosier seconds. Motion passes.*
  - ii. Commissioner Biss motions to allocate funds to purchase bags and brochures to facilitate the giveaway for the next three Farmers Market not to exceed \$500. Commissioner Gronke seconds. Motion passes.*
4. Farmers Market Dates: The Sustainability Commission has four more Farmers Market dates. The Outreach & Education workgroup will be at the August 12<sup>th</sup> date, Zero Waste and Renewable Energy work groups will be at the August 19<sup>th</sup> date, Building Efficiency will be at the September 2<sup>nd</sup> date, and Transportation & Mobility will be at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> date.
5. 2022 Budget: There is approximately \$21,000 remaining in the Sustainability Commission budget for 2022. Staff liaison recommends work groups confirm which projects they will pursue and bring idea back to the commission to allocate funding. The outstanding Green Guerrilla invoice is \$2,609.65 for the native plants at the native garden demonstration site. The procurement policy must be followed before any payment can be made.
  - i. Commissioner Jurina moves to approve a retroactive payment to Green Guerrilla for the outstanding amount once the procurement policy is satisfied, Commissioner Brosier seconds. Motion passes with Commissioner Flaherty abstaining.*
6. Work Group Updates:

Zero waste: Shared out points of discussion from the last meeting. Touched briefly on the topic of the upcoming waste hauler contract and that work on that will need to begin soon. City staff submitted a decision package to assist with preparations for the upcoming waste hauler contract.

Urban Ecology: Discussed organizing for the Farmers Market on Friday, how important community outreach is, and will begin prioritizing projects to start tackling. A native garden workday will be on August 17<sup>th</sup> and led by Green Guerrilla. Commissioner Jurina recommends taking an updated inventory at the gardens to understand what has and has not survived at the gardens. Commissioner Flaherty mentions that the native garden plants will not have a 100% survival rate due to various reasons, such as weather and pests. September is Hispanic Heritage Month, so discussion is underway of an end-of-year bilingual event at the native gardens.

Renewable Energy: The work group will start ranking and prioritizing projects at the next meeting. The Virtual Solar Power Hour is on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Jurina bought a solar panel to use for educational purposes, and is working with staff liaison to create educational signage and partner with different locations to display the panel.

Commissioner Livingston left the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

**Building Efficiency:** The work group's focus is three-pronged: existing residential buildings, existing commercial building stock, and new construction codes and ordinances. The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) gives communities the opportunity to adopt stretch codes, which would go beyond the minimum requirements of the Energy Conservation Code. City of Elgin operates under the 2018 Illinois Building Conservation Code.

Commissioner Zaldivar left the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

**Transportation & Mobility:** The work group had previously ranked 3 top priority projects and decided to start with the EV rebate program. They are interested in modeling a program after those that already exist in the area. The next work group meeting is September 7th at 5pm in Gail Borden Library Study Room A. City staff submitted a decision package for an EV charging and vehicle pilot program.

**Outreach & Education:** Talked about how to reach more people, be engaging on social media, and the desire to create a newsletter. Each work group needs to think about outreach and education.

**E. Staff Updates**

**F. Other Business**

1. Fall Parkway Tree Planting Deadline: August 15: The commission will promote the program at the Farmers Market.
2. Virtual Solar Power Hour: September 1: The commission will promote the event at the Farmers Markets.

**G. Adjourn: 9:15**

1. *Commissioner Brosier moves to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Biss seconds. Motion passes.*