



November Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 7, 2022 • 6:00 p.m.

Heritage Ballroom, Edward Schock Centre of Elgin, 100 Symphony Way, Elgin, IL 60120

A. Call to Order

1. The meeting of the Elgin Sustainability Commission was called to order at 6:06 p.m.
2. Roll Call:
 - i. Present: Chairperson Tom Armstrong, Commissioners David Jurina, Jeff Biss, Chris Flaherty, Katie Gronke. Council liaison Carol Rauschenberger. Staff liaison Mikala Larson.
 - ii. Absent: Commissioners Dekovia Livingston, Kevin Zaldivar.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. October 11, 2022
 - i. *A motion was made by Commissioner Biss to approve the October 11th, 2022 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brosier and passed unanimously.*

C. Recognize Persons Present

1. Sandy Kaptain
2. Erik Andersen

D. Discussion Items

Commissioner Flaherty joined at 6:08 p.m.

1. Start in Your Yard Under Our Feet Series Sponsorship Request: Start in Your Yard requested a \$500 sponsorship from the Sustainability Commission for their 2023 *Under Our Feet* series.
 - i. *A motion was made by Commissioner Biss to approve the October 11th, 2022 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brosier and passed unanimously.*
2. Approve 2023 Meeting Dates:
 - i. *A motion was made by Commissioner Biss to approve the 2023 Sustainability Commission meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gronke and passed unanimously.*
3. Discussion of Volunteer Recruitment Consultant: Commissioners shared the difficulty work groups have faced in finding volunteers over the past few months. The Sustainability Commission code of ordinances 3.87.050 item E was referenced, and the sentiment raised by commissioners that this has not been delivered on by the Sustainability Commission despite efforts at the Farmers Markets, events, and others to source volunteers. The Sustainability

Commission expressed interest in issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to retain professional services, to build the commission's volunteer base and give the commission structure in searching for volunteers. Staff liaison added to the discussion options for the commission to consider, including working with city staff member Fred Wimms and Elgin Allies, signing up for a volunteer management database, participating in a day-long volunteer recruitment skill-building workshop, or securing the services of a consultant. Commissioner Flaherty recommends exploring all avenues, including bringing in city staff, seeing how the City of Rockford's Future Search process is going, and see where else the Sustainability Commission can find funding. Overall, commissioners agree that putting out the drafted RFP will help the commission understand what services are out there and budget needs. Commissioners recommend taking time to review the drafted RFP and be prepared to make a decision at the Thursday, November 10th Special Budget meeting.

i. A motion was made by Commissioner Biss to put out the Request For Proposals for a volunteer recruiter consultant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jurina and passed with one abstention.

4. Green Shield Funding Request: The Green Shield certification, from Midwest Grows Green, recognizes organizations for using Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The program operates nationally. Urban Ecology, with Greg Hulke, discussed pursuing the Green Shield certification for all city parks that are currently pesticide-free. This initiative recognizes the city's work to date and keeps the city moving in the direction of reducing pesticides on city property, as well as creating the potential to help secure grants for similar projects. The certification would be good for 3 years, and the cost would be \$1,500.

i. A motion was made by Commissioner Flaherty to approve \$1,500 for Green Shield Certification for city parks that are pesticide-free. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Biss and passed unanimously.

5. Winter Native Overseed Funding Request: The Urban Ecology work group discussed the Project Overseed initiative at the October 27th meeting, including the purpose and benefits of overseeding native seeds in the winter. The initiative: in December, the commission, small community groups, neighborhood groups and participating residents would spread native seeds on identified sites in the community, such as the west and east side and downtown as informed by Land Management, as well as give away packets of native seeds to participants. The purpose of the initiative is to continue community outreach while promoting biodiversity.

i. A motion was made by Commissioner Biss to allocate \$800 to purchasing native seed for Project Overseed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gronke and passed.

6. 2022 Budget Review: Staff liaison shared an update on the 2022 budget.

7. Sustainability Commissioner Term Limits: All boards and commissions are subject to term limits per 3.03.010 in the city's Code of Ordinances. Sustainability Commission commissioner term limits are three years with the opportunity for serving two terms, creating the potential of

serving six years. Commissioners discussed the term limit and what it means for the community and commissioners. Commissioners talked about time that is wasted during transitions when there is commissioner turnover. A comment was made that there should be a system for rotating commissioners, but that reorganizing when it is unnecessary is an injustice to the community. Commissioner Biss recommended reviewing the general provisions in the code of ordinances, recommending an amendment to the term limits, then voting on it in December.

8. Work Group Updates:

Zero Waste: Pumpkin Smash event was well-received by community members and the community appreciated having the opportunity to drop off their pumpkins.

Urban Ecology: Greg Hulke attended the last meeting. Commissioners discussed continuing no-mow at Channing Park, and commissioners are continuing to look into the Fitchie Creek project.

Transportation & Mobility: The work group put together and submitted the budget proposal for the 2023 electric vehicle charging pilot program.

Renewable Energy: The work group has been drafting a residential revolving loan fund for solar based on the city's 2010 program. The work group will also be drafting a program for geo-exchange. The work group discussed an ordinance stipulating all-electric new construction in the city. Commissioner Biss makes the point of researching how 'green' all-electric homes are, as a producer of electricity is fossil fuel power plants.

Building Efficiency: The work group and a few volunteers have been meeting. Commissioners discussed doing an energy audit on the ROPE houses; audits were done on the ROPE houses around 2010 as part of the energy efficiency revolving loan fund. The work group's idea is for the City of Elgin to conduct energy audits on the ROPE houses to identify projects at the houses to reduce energy footprint. They are also interested in energy audits on every city building, to work towards making each building high-performing and energy efficient. Touched on establishing building performance standards and adopting stretch energy codes.

Outreach & Education: Work group wants to do a quarterly newsletter with events, think pieces from commissioners, and other information.

E. Staff Updates

F. Other Business

1. Reminder: November 10th 2023 Budget Meeting

G. Adjourn:

1. *A motion was made by Commissioner Jurina to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brosier and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.*