



Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 9, 2023 • 6:00 p.m.

West Conference Room, 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 6:03 p.m.

B. Roll Call

1. Present: Chairperson Tom Armstrong, Commissioners Chris Flaherty, Dan Brosier, David Jurina, Jeff Biss, Katie Gronke. Council liaison Carol Rauschenberger. Student Representative Isabella Cheung. Staff liaison Mikala Larson.
2. Absent: Commissioners Dekovia Livingston and Sharene Gould Dulabaum.

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. April 11, 2023
 - i. *A motion was made by Commissioner Biss to approve the April 11, 2023 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Flaherty and passed unanimously.*

D. Public Comment

1. Plastic Waste Presentation by Mrs. Smith's Students: 4th grade students in U46's Ignite program attended the meeting. The students' last focus topic was Throw Away Society, so they wanted to present their projects to the Sustainability Commission and public in attendance. Three student groups presented on the topics of banning single-use bags, Styrofoam, and plastic straws. Students were encouraged by the Sustainability Commission to write a letter to City Council encouraging adoption of the Single Use Bag Fee ordinance.

E. Unfinished Business

1. None.

F. New Business

Commissioner Jurina joined the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

1. Review of Sustainable Elgin Community Grant Proposal: East Side Neighborhood Garden: The East Side Neighborhood Garden is celebrating its 5th garden season. They see increased gardener interest and needs for the program every year. The organization applied for a \$1,500 grant

through the Sustainable Elgin Community Grant program to support the continued growth of the program. The grant money would be used to build 3, 4 x 20-foot beds, allowing three additional gardeners to participate in the community garden in 2023. Sarah Hunt attended the meeting to present about the grant application and respond to questions from commissioners. Sustainability Commissioners reviewed and scored the application. Staff liaison will follow up with the applicant within 10 days on the status of their application.

2. Discussion of Elgin Native Roots 2023 Program: The Sustainability Commission has held the Elgin Native Roots program yearly since 2021 during five Farmers Market Fridays; in 2023, the commission will offer the program each Friday in June. The commission budgeted \$2,500 for the program in the 2023 budget. The commission decided on details of the program, such as types of plants and quantity of plants to purchase. In the past there have been leftover plants, and it was likely due to the dates and timing that the commission was at the Farmers Market. The Urban Resilience work group recommends using the same plants and quantity as last year, as well as the same brochures. Commissioners recommend if there are leftover plants, that they get planted into the native garden demonstration beds. There is enough money budgeted to do both the native plant giveaway and a tree or shrub giveaway. The commission also budgeted \$800 in the 2023 budget to purchase giveaway items at the Farmers Market and decided to purchase zero-waste kitchen kits and zero-waste laundry kits. Staff liaison shared that per commissioner request, the commission will be tabling at the August 11th Farmers Market as a Community Partner.

Commissioner Flaherty left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

3. Scheduling June Special Budget Meeting: Sustainability Commissioners would like to hold a special budget meeting to plan the 2024 commission budget and do a mid-year budget review. The commission scheduled a special budget meeting for Tuesday, July 11 from 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. The regular Sustainability Commission meeting begins at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11.
 - i. *A motion was made by Commissioner Jurina to schedule a special budget meeting on Tuesday, July 11 from 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Biss and passed unanimously.*
4. GrowSolar Chicagoland 2023 Program: The city of Elgin and Sustainability Commission have participated in previous years of the GrowSolar Chicagoland program to promote residents' participation in a solar group buy option. This year, Elgin will be partnering with Kane County to hold a GrowSolar session on Wednesday, June 7th from 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. at Kane County offices. Elgin's role is to help promote the event and encourage attendance at the GrowSolar event.
5. paleBLUEdot Community Survey Input Session: In preparation for the end of the city's current waste hauler contract at the end of 2024, the city is beginning the community engagement process that will inform the Request for Proposals. One engagement approach will be an online bilingual community survey. The city is working with consultant paleBLUEdot to lead the

community survey process. paleBLUEdot attended the Sustainability Commission meeting to receive direct input from the Sustainability Commission on what survey questions would help guide the commission's work. The survey will open in June 2023 and close August 2023.

Student Representative Isabella Chung left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

G. Chair and Work Group Reports

1. Chair Report: The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus continues to support programs for municipalities, the latest is to support communities to adopt a benchmarking code or building performance standard as well as stretch codes. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus EV Readiness Program second cohort begins in the summer.
2. Carbon Reduction Work Group: The group expressed a desire to move the ROPE house project forward. The group shared their research on other municipalities' Active Mobility plans and called out Fort Collins' plan as an exceptional example. The group is interested in funding several projects but noted lack of financial capital as a barrier.
3. Sustainable Communications Work Group: The group created a post-event report summary of the Elgin Earth Summit. Commissioner Gronke shared highlights from the event as well as notes for next time. The group would like to start planning the 2024 event in October 2023 and is interested in booking the Heritage Ballroom and surrounding meeting rooms for the event.
4. Urban Resiliency Work Group: No report.

H. Staff Report

1. Rain Barrel Sale: The city of Elgin 2023 rain barrel and compost bin sale closes on Thursday, May 18th. The pick-up event will be on Tuesday, May 23rd from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. at Public Works. Commissioners will be attending the pick-up event to converse with residents.
2. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory: The city of Elgin 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory report is nearly complete. The initial findings demonstrate that Elgin has significant emissions reductions to undertake by 2030, specifically in on-road transportation and residential and commercial building energy usage.
3. Staff Transition: Sustainability Analyst and Sustainability Commission Staff Liaison Mikala Larson is transitioning out of the role. The city will be hiring a new staff member to continue sustainability work.

I. Announcements

1. International Compost Awareness Week: ICAW 2023 is May 8-13 and is a week to promote and celebrate the benefits of compost. Resources can be found from the Illinois Food Scrap Coalition.

2. Elgin Public Museum Tree-mendous!: The Trees of Lords Park: The Elgin Public Museum had a new exhibit to share education and information about Elgin trees and trees in Lords Park.

J. Adjourn

1. *A motion was made by Commissioner Brosier to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jurina and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.*