

MINUTES
Sustainability Committee
December 18, 2019
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at the Municipal Complex in Crystal Lake.

II. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following committee members: Chair John Kavalunas, Lara Smith, Terry Dieckhoff, Joe Babiarz, and Nicky Strahl. Members of the public in attendance were Dean Farr and Nick Hammonds, Management Analyst.

III. Public Comment

Dean Farr introduced himself as a frequent guest of the Sustainability Committee's meetings.

IV. Approval of the Minutes from November 20, 2019

Joe Babiarz moved to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2019 meeting as amended. John Kavalunas seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

V. Greenest Region Compact (GRC): Review Priority Objectives, Plastic Bag Objective Discussion, and Complete Streets Discussion

John Kavalunas began the discussion of the GRC by reviewing each priority objective:

-Complete Streets Policy: Greg Glover

-Energy Star certification for Municipal Properties: John Kavalunas and Terry Dieckhoff

-Communication of Sustainability Committee initiatives, actions and goals: Lara Smith

-Promote and support local businesses that practice sustainability: Emilie Hoffman

-Plastic bag bans: Nicky Strahl and Joe Babiarz

John Kavalunas reviewed each of the five GRC priority items. The Committee discussed the positive actions being taken regarding Complete Streets. Although having the policy in place is a positive development, the Committee discussed how to be involved going forward with developing the policy further. Joe Babiarz asked if the Complete Streets policy is available online. Nick Hammonds stated that the link to the policy will be shared with the Committee. Joe Babiarz discussed the possibility of assigning one Committee member to review projects identified in the policy and draft suggestions for the Committee to review. Lara Smith stated that the Committee should review and identify any questions to discuss at the January meeting.

The Committee discussed the Huntley Road bike path improvements. The improvements have made the crossing safer and improvements to other paths in town will be welcomed by those who frequently use the paths. The Committee discussed the new bike lane created along Rakow Road. The high speeds allowed on the roadway may make use of the bike lane dangerous, and the Committee discussed contacting Scott Hennings for an update on the bike lane and other improvements in Crystal Lake.

John Kavalunas stated that since Lara Smith's and Emilie Hoffman's objectives overlap, they could work together on both of their goals. Lara Smith discussed how the Committee should begin contacting businesses and gathering information to promote to the community. Nick Hammonds discussed the process for identifying messages for the community and which businesses the Committee would target for information gathering. The Committee discussed the possibility of contacting the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce, which Nick Hammonds mentioned that they host the Earth Day trash collection event each year. John Kavalunas stated that the Committee could be involved with the Chamber of Commerce for the Earth Day event and also establish the green business program proposed by Emilie Hoffman.

John Kavalunas began the discussion of the plastic bag objective. Nick Hammonds provided an update regarding the City's approach regarding possible single-use bag fees. Joe Babiarz and Nicky Strahl stated that they will gather information regarding plastic bag fees or bans before the next meeting. John Kavalunas discussed how there are still questions regarding the plastic bag fee approved by Woodstock and how the fee will be collected back to the City.

Nicky Strahl discussed the vital importance of educating the public regarding single-use bags. Terry Dieckhoff added that educating businesses to train employees to use less single-use bags is also an important factor to consider. Nicky Strahl stated that there are possible public health concerns that may need consideration, specifically regarding foods that may need plastic bag wrapping to ensure there are no public health concerns. Joe Babiarz stated that Chicago and other towns or states that have implemented single-use bag taxes or bans can be used as a guiding point. John Kavalunas agreed, stating that public health concerns, and the full scope of implementation and potential negative aspects of single-use bag fees, will need to be considered to ensure that a fee or tax program is implemented properly.

VI. Bicycle Friendly Community/Bike Shop Application Discussion

John Kavalunas discussed the bicycle friendly initiative and the Committee's previous discussion about establishing a 'bicycle friendly triangle' between certain businesses near the downtown area. Nick Hammonds stated that he will share the proposal offered by Joe Scherb with the Committee. Joe Babiarz discussed the possibility of targeting certain aspects of the Bicycle Friendly Community/Business application to implement features that promote and enhance bicycling in the City. John Kavalunas discussed his attempts to contact Wheel Werks. Joe Babiarz stated that contacting the businesses at the right time could be an important factor in gaining momentum. John Kavalunas and Joe Babiarz will work together to contact Wheel Werks and the downtown businesses in January.

Nicky Strahl began the discussion of the interconnectivity of bike paths within the City. Nicky Strahl also discussed state funding available, and that there are bike racks that allow riders to fill up tires and conduct maintenance on the go. Joe Babiarz stated that the biggest improvement would be to connect the Prairie Trail through the downtown area. Currently, the bike path ends and then restarts near Veteran's Acres without a clear connection. Joe stated that there are plenty of bike racks available downtown. However, having a clear connection through downtown would be beneficial for biking in the City. Dean Farr discussed the possible issues regarding infrastructure and right-of-way access that could pose an impediment to connecting the paths.

VII. Anti-Idling for South Elementary

Nicky Strahl discussed the importance of gaining input from school district administrators to strengthening the impact of anti-idling messages. The Committee discussed the issues surrounding elementary schools in the City, including the emissions from idling cars and dangerous interactions between pedestrians and vehicles when parents are picking up their children. Dean Farr stated that the impact of anti-idling signs may not change the behaviors of many motorists.

Lara Smith stated that the lines for picking up children after school are often very long, causing long wait times. Additionally, posting anti-idling signs near sporting fields would also help to address idling vehicles. Nicky Strahl discussed the possibility of utilizing moveable signs to promote the anti-idling message to more people. Stationary signs may lose their impact over time, and moving the signs may help to spread the message to more motorists. The Committee discussed point people to contact with the schools to promote anti-idling. Tina Serra, the creator of the Husmann Environmental Night, would be a good point person. Dean Farr agreed and stated that going to the administrators of the district would create a top-down model for promoting anti-idling and other green initiatives.

John Kavalunas stated that starting with anti-idling and expanding on the existing program would be an efficient place to start. Lara Smith will contact Tina Serra at Husmann Elementary. Nicky Strahl stated that she can provide input regarding temporary, A-frame signs for the schools.

VIII. Bike With Your Neighbor Scheduling and Rain Date Scheduling

John Kavalunas stated that the Committee has historically avoided Father’s Day in an attempt to attract more families to the event. The Committee discussed the expanded outreach efforts being taken by the Committee over the past year. The Committee agreed that coordinating the Bike With Your Neighbor event with another Park District event would not be favorable, since the Park District events do not share the biking theme.

Due to the Fourth of July festivities at Main Beach, the Committee agreed to hold the Bike With Your Neighbor event on June 7, 2020. The Committee will ask Kim Buscemi with the Park District to attend the January meeting to begin coordinating the event and establishing a rain date. The Committee agreed to hold June 28, 2020 as a tentative rain date.

IX. Open Discussion

No items were presented for open discussion.

X. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

XI. Adjourn

There being no further business, Terry Dieckhoff moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. Nicky Strahl seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.