

MINUTES
Sustainability Committee
August 19, 2020
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. on Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at City Hall in Crystal Lake.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following committee members: Emilie Hoffman, Nicky Strahl, Terry Dieckhoff, and Jen Oliver. Proposed members of the Committee in attendance were Sam Zurawski, Lisa Janezic, and Cordell Crane. Members of the public in attendance were Steve Platt and Assistant to the City Manager Nick Hammonds. City Council guest in attendance was Haig Haleblian, Acting Mayor of the City of Crystal Lake.

The members of the Committee, along with the new proposed members, introduced themselves to Acting Mayor Haleblian. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that he has been in the Crystal Lake community for over 40 years and owns exceed Flooring in town. He reviewed his background from starting on the Economic Development Board to being appointed to the City Council. With the untimely passing of Mayor Shepley, Acting Mayor Haleblian was appointed to the Acting Mayor position in May this year. He discussed his passion for recycling and his efforts at his business to utilize recycling practices. Acting Mayor Haleblian expressed his appreciation for the Sustainability Committee's efforts.

3. Public Comment

Steve Platt discussed the progress that McHenry County has made regarding coal tar sealants. He discussed the negative effects on the environment and water resources due to the chemicals used in coal tar sealants for driveway paving. Steve Platt stated that the water resource plan developed by the County is a good start to addressing this issue.

4. Approval of the Minutes from July 15, 2020

Terry Dieckhoff moved to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2020 meeting as amended. Nicky Strahl seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

5. Guest: Haig Haleblian, Acting Mayor of the City of Crystal Lake

Nick Hammonds began the discussion by reviewing the Committee's past accomplishments and current objectives and initiatives. The Committee has refocused its efforts based on the Greenest Region Compact, which includes the reduction of plastic bag use, creating a Green Business Designation program to highlight businesses with sustainable practices, updating the Sustainability web page and growing the Committee's outreach through social media, and encouraging anti-idling in the City.

Acting Mayor Haleblian inquired about how the Committee is pursuing anti-idling, specifically a South Elementary. Nicky Strahl stated that the Committee has been in communication with the school district to post additional signs in numerous places to ensure more parents see the signs when picking

up their kids from school. Jen Oliver stated that the Committee has spoken with the school principal at South to help coordinate the additional signs to be posted. She stated that the Committee is also working with the school to promote the message in the school newsletter. The Committee discussed how the traffic from parked cars when school is getting out has caused complaints from homeowners near the school.

Acting Mayor Haleblian began a discussion regarding biking in the City. He stated that Mayor Shepley was an avid cyclist and the City Council is looking for a way to honor him, which may include renaming a bike trail in his honor. He also stated that he supports cycling in the City and would like to see more bike trails to connect people around town. Sam Zurawski stated that an important connection that many cyclists would like to see in the future is to have the Prairie Trail bike path make a connection between Veteran's Acres and Downtown.

Nick Hammonds provided an update regarding the future road reconstruction on Main Street and how the City's Engineering Department will be considering how to enhance the roadway with the bike trail connection in mind. Lisa Janezic stated that the Rakow Road bike lane is very dangerous, and it would be nice to see a connection between the south side of Crystal Lake and the Prairie Trail. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that he would like to see a contiguous bike trail throughout the town, and he will be inviting a young resident to provide a presentation at City Council proposing to install a flashing crossing light on Route 176. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that a priority of his is to make Crystal Lake a bike friendly community.

Acting Mayor Haleblian discussed an article he read regarding Greg Glover, a former Sustainability Committee member, and his Cycling Without Age program. He stated that the program helps seniors to relive the cycling experience. Acting Mayor Haleblian discussed his goals for the City to be an attractive destination.

Emilie Hoffman discussed the Committee's work towards developing a Green Business Designation program. Emilie Hoffman discussed the current program in place in Batavia. She stated other communities have a similar program, but Batavia's is more developed. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that having equitable goals and objective standards would be important for the program. He stated that the program ran by Batavia would be interesting to have in Crystal Lake, and that the City could start with a test or pilot program based on the Batavia model. Jen Oliver stated that businesses would get free marketing by achieving the designation through posts on the City social media and newsletter, as well as placards to be placed at the business' store front. Emilie Hoffman stated that she will further research the program by Batavia to cater it to Crystal Lake.

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

Below are the current priority objectives:

- Communication of Sustainability Committee initiatives, actions and goals: Lara Smith
- Promote and support local businesses that practice sustainability: Emilie Hoffman
- Single Use Bag Ordinance: Nicky Strahl and Joe Babiarz

7. Sustainability Committee Web Page

Sam Zurawski began a discussion of the City's Sustainability Committee website. She stated that the goal is to make the website more useful by having relevant links to resources, timely updates, and a portal for the community to submit questions or provide input. She also stated that breaking the pages to more defined sub-pages would be beneficial. The current pages show the Committee's goals and then a page for resources. Sam Zurawski advised that if each member of the Committee researched one resource to post on the page, this would help to jumpstart the development of the new web page. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that having links to short 'simple solutions' would help to show the public easy steps they can take to protect the environment. Overall, the goal would be to keep people more informed.

Nicky Strahl stated that posting photos with a slideshow would lighten up the web page. Sam Zurawski stated that creating a Sustainability Facebook page would be helpful. Nick Hammonds stated that the City is focused on promoting more posts from the Crystal Lake page to keep information centralized. Sam Zurawski stated that posting Sustainability Committee information on the Crystal Lake Facebook would reach a wider audience. Terry Dieckhoff stated that he has contact with McHenry County College for their Green Guide, which can be posted on the website or Facebook pages. He also discussed the Styrofoam drop-off available at Algonquin Township and how posting this information would be a helpful resource for the community.

Acting Mayor Haleblian discussed the recent electronics collection event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce. He stated that there was a large amount of electronics from residents. Nicky Strahl stated that she participated and the document shredding portion of the event had to be stopped early due to the large volume of documents disposed of by residents.

Lisa Janezic stated that Prairieland Disposal offers composting, which is not widely known in the City. Posting this information would help reduce food waste going to the landfill. Acting Mayor Haleblian discussed his composting efforts and how there are simple ways for residents to partake in composting. He also discussed the Prairieland Disposal trucks and how some residents were unsure if recycling was being performed. Nick Hammonds discussed how the new trucks created hesitancy by residents at first, but that dumping trash is more costly than recycling, which creates an economic incentive for Prairieland to recycle as much as possible. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that the video created by Prairieland that is on the City website provides a detailed look into how the truck separates trash from recycling effectively.

8. Anti-Idling for South Elementary

The Committee agreed to keep the anti-idling discussion point on the agenda for the September meeting. Schools are currently dealing with reopening plans and e-learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

9. Open Discussion

Nicky Strahl discussed electric vehicle charging stations and the efforts by Cynthia Kanner to implement a charging station in Crystal Lake. Nicky Strahl stated that Cynthia Kanner may have grant funding available to help the project. Acting Mayor Haleblian asked if the grant funds were from the State or Federal government. Nicky Strahl stated that the grant is from the County, and the project would need buy-in from the City to get it completed. Sam Zurawski discussed the Metra station as a

primary location for electric charging. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated Metra would need to be involved, which would create additional steps to implement the charging stations.

Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that he wanted to retouch on the plastic bag/single-use bag fee initiative. He stated that his concern is that Crystal Lake businesses have enough challenges to face already, due to the pandemic and other economic factors, and that adding plastic bag taxes or fees would create more hardship for the businesses in town. He stated that Woodstock was met with resistance when they passed their bag fee. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that an outright ban of plastic bags may be an option instead of taxing them.

Nicky Strahl stated that research has shown there was more backlash from an outright ban of plastic bags, most recently in Chicago, than the implementation of a fee or tax. She discussed the importance of educating businesses and the public regarding single-use bags. Cordell Crane stated that the plastic bag recycling bins at stores such as Jewel are always full. He also stated that the State of Illinois is considering options for a fee or tax throughout the state on single-use bags. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that proposing a ban versus fees or taxes on single-use bags would be a prudent way to approach the Council.

Steve Platt inquired if plastic bags are more costly to produce than paper bags. Nicky Strahl stated that paper bags costs multiple cents more per bag to produce than plastic bags. Steve Platt stated that the higher cost in producing the bags may discourage use on its own. Jen Oliver stated mentioned a recent study regarding large corporations that are trying to find the best replacement for single-use bags. Acting Mayor Haleblian stated that finding the benefit to the cost to replacing plastic bags would help drive the movement. Cordell Crane stated that smaller businesses would need assistance in implementing the bag replacement, one available, since larger corporations have the ability to implement the changes on their own.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

11. Adjourn

There being no further business, Sam Zurawski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Nicky Strahl seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.