

MINUTES
Sustainability Committee
October 21, 2020
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at City Hall in Crystal Lake.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following committee members: Emilie Hoffman, Terry Dieckhoff, Jen Oliver, Lisa Janezic, Lara Smith, and Nicky Strahl. Sam Zurawski joined the meeting via Zoom. Members of the public in attendance were Assistant to the City Manager Nick Hammonds.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of the Minutes from September 16, 2020

Jen Oliver moved to approve the minutes from the September 16, 2020 meeting as amended. Lisa Janezic seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

5. 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

Nick Hammonds discussed a recent news shared by Sam Zurawski regarding the return of reusable bags at Mariano's. Emilie Hoffman stated that she recently saw people using their personal bags again at the store, and Terry Dieckhoff discussed how Trader Joe's has been allowing reusable bags again. The Committee discussed how grocery stores have not been advertising that reusable bags are safe to use, which may be an effort to ease back to normal processes.

Emilie Hoffman stated that she has not located more information regarding the McHenry County Green Business award program. The website does not have any new information since 2019, which could be a result of the pandemic in 2020. Emilie Hoffman stated that the County has been running the program since 2014. There may be useful information from the past few years to show the success of the program and the amount of businesses or organizations participating. Nick Hammonds stated that he will reach out to the County to get more information.

6. Sustainability Committee Web Page

The Committee discussed the Sustainability Committee web page and the improvements made this year. The Committee will continue to search for information to be included on the web page. The Green Initiatives section was discussed and Nick Hammonds will review of this can be moved to the Sustainability Committee's page.

7. 2021 Meeting Schedule

Nick Hammonds discussed the requirement for the Committee to agree on a meeting schedule for calendar year 2021. The Committee will agree upon the monthly meeting date and time at the December meeting.

8. Open Discussion

Bike Share Program

Terry Dieckhoff began a discussion of the bike share program. He stated that the original company, Zagster, has declared bankruptcy due to the pandemic. The bike share program began its first year of operation in 2019. Terry Dieckhoff discussed how the program was not widely advertised and may have had low ridership totals. He stated that a new company will be taking over the program going forward. The pricing for the bikes would be reduced, and there will be an option for locations to add single bikes instead of full racks of five bikes at a time. Terry Dieckhoff stated that he will continue to research the pricing for the program and the ridership details from 2019.

Terry Dieckhoff requested to have the bike share program discussed at the November meeting. He stated that he would like to gather the Committee's feedback and to show the Committee's support for Crystal Lake to participate in the bike share program. Jen Oliver discussed the benefits of having the bikes available for people to travel to McHenry County College or other destinations from the train. Lara Smith stated that it would make sense for the City to have multiple locations with bike share racks. Emilie Hoffman and Lisa Janezic discussed how they did know of the program and were unaware of the bike rack locations. Terry Dieckhoff agreed that this was likely due to the marketing efforts to promote the program.

Terry Dieckhoff stated that Scott Hennings with McHenry County has been working on the program and would like to see the bike share program grow in Crystal Lake. Lisa Janezic discussed how having a bike rack at Main Beach or Three Oaks would be beneficial. Jen Oliver discussed the proximity to the Prairie Path as another suitable location. She also stated that she had been riding her bike more in 2020, and many other people have as well due to the pandemic. Emilie Hoffman stated that the Crystal Lake Brewery drew more customers on bikes once they installed a bike rack, and that adding the bike racks could help local businesses and promote biking in the community.

Monarch Program

Nicky Strahl began a discussion of the Illinois Monarch Project. The Monarch Project focuses on supporting projects that protect natural habitats for monarch butterflies. Nicky Strahl discussed the Monarch Project objectives to get more participation from the public. A presentation will be held on October 28, 2020, and Nick Hammonds will share the meeting information with the Committee. Lisa Janezic inquired about the mission of the Monarch Project. Nicky Strahl stated that they are focused on planning for community projects in 2021 to plant new milkweed stems, which are crucial to the Monarch Butterfly habitat.

Jen Oliver began a discussion of composting in Crystal Lake. She stated that Prairieland offers composting and there are other companies that offer compost collection services. Jen Oliver discussed the possibility of including a composting area at the brush drop-off location ran by the City. Nicky Strahl discussed the potential downsides to having a compost area open to the public. She reported that public compost drop-off sites will need to be closely monitored to ensure that only compost

materials are dropped off. If trash and other debris is included in the compost, then it is not considered organic and could be hazardous.

Jen Oliver discussed the possibility of adding a compost drop-off at the brush drop-off, since an employee is on site to assist people already. Jen also discussed the benefits of sharing a newsletter article or social media post regarding the benefits of composting. Lara Smith stated that it would be beneficial for the Committee members or other residents to share their personal experiences with composting. Emilie Hoffman discussed a recent post she had seen called 'Leave the Leaves' which provides information regarding the benefits of mulching leaves to leave on your lawn throughout the winter. Nicky Strahl discussed the benefits of mulching leaves instead of raking and bagging them. She stated that leaves provide a natural habitat for many organisms, and they protect the lawn by providing insulation during the cold months.

Emilie Hoffman discussed a recent blog post from Duke's Alehouse regarding their experiences with food scrap composting and operating as a green business. She stated that the blog post was shared on the Illinois Food Scrap Coalition. Nick Hammonds stated that he would research this to possibly share on the City website.

Nick Hammonds provided an update to the Committee regarding the 2030 Comprehensive Plan utilized by the City. The Committee inquired about the enforcement tools that are available to the City to ensure that the guidelines from the Comprehensive Plan are carried out when used for land use. Nick Hammonds stated that he will follow up with the Community Development Department to gather more details and report back to the Committee.

Emilie Hoffman inquired about the City's interaction with the Park District on projects. She stated that the Park District is planning to improve Ladd Park and has asked for public input. Nick Hammonds stated that the City would most likely not be involved in their plans for the park, and that the Committee members are welcome to provide their input for the Park District.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, Nicky Strahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. Lisa Janezic seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.