

MINUTES
Sustainability Committee
October 20, 2021
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at City Hall in Crystal Lake.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following committee members: Lisa Janezic, Terry Dieckhoff, Emilie Hoffman, Sam Zurawski, and Cordell Crane. Members of the public in attendance were Dean Farr, Stephen Platt, and Assistant to the City Manager Nick Hammonds.

3. Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

4. Approval of the Minutes from September 15, 2021

Sam Zurawski moved to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2021 meeting, with one clarification regarding the date of the next month's meeting. Cordell Crane seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

5. Johnny Appleseed Festival Review

The Committee discussed the Johnny Appleseed Festival held on September 25th. 50 seed packets were handed out for the Mayor's Monarch Pledge program. Cordell Crane stated that the Committee ran out of seeds and handouts quickly at the event and additional handouts will be needed next year. Cordell Crane also stated that coordinating with the Park District for a bike exchange event would provide a child friendly aspect of the Committee's outreach.

Emilie Hoffman stated that information was gathered from some interested attendees. One person provided her contact information and discussed an organization that will provide guidance to homeowners for planting native plants in their yard. The guidance includes what plants to use, where to plant them, and general maintenance. Emilie Hoffman suggested that the Committee could invite the interested person to provide a presentation at the next Committee meeting. The organization that provided the guidance is the Wildflower Preservation and Propagation Committee (WPPC). Emilie Hoffman stated that the WPPC appears to be free to get information.

Terry Dieckhoff discussed an individual who approached the Committee's booth at the festival regarding the preservation of top soil. The person discussed commercial and residential practices that affect top soil. Mainly the removal of top soil for commercial and residential development. The person who approached the booth indicated that he was involved with new technology which would improve construction practices to preserve top soil. Cordell Crane discussed how new technology would need to show how the costs outweigh the benefits. Emilie Hoffman stated that the person wanted to spread awareness of the issue and to help educate people about this issue. The Committee did not receive the person's name or the new technology he was working on as it may have been proprietary work at this time.

Stephen Platt began a discussion of coal tar sealants used for driveway and parking lot resealing. Lisa Janezic stated that there must be a safer alternative than the use of coal tar for driveway sealing. It would be important to know the alternatives available. Cordell Crane agreed and stated that bringing awareness to the issue and providing alternatives for people to use would help reduce the use of coal tar sealants. Terry Dieckhoff stated that there is a current House Bill in the Illinois Senate that would ban the use of coal tar based sealants. He stated that the bill passed on May 1, 2020.

6. Greenest Region Compact (GRC): Green Business Designation Program

Nick Hammonds stated that the GRC application is now open and businesses are able to submit applications. The open period runs through the end of January and the Committee will review applications as they come in. Sam Zurawski inquired if the program will be posted in the City newsletter. Nick Hammonds stated that there is an article proposed for an upcoming newsletter.

7. Mayors Monarch Pledge Review

Nick Hammonds discussed the ongoing efforts by the City and the Committee regarding the Mayors Monarch Pledge program. The Committee discussed the future plans to remove milkweed from the City Code's list of prohibited noxious weeds. Nick Hammonds stated that this will be presented for consideration at an upcoming City Council meeting.

Emilie Hoffman discussed the possibility of hosting nature walks and identifying native plants in the area. This could be added as a component of the Monarch Pledge program to bring awareness of pollinator plants and their importance to the environment. Emilie Hoffman then stated that the Committee should have taped the information flyers to the seed packets when handing them out at the festival. Emilie also discussed a photo she saw of the Mayor highlighting a rain garden that was planted at a local business in town.

8. Open Discussion

Dean Farr discussed the sanitary district in Lake in the Hills recently participating in an energy audit through ComEd that will save the village on electric costs. The Committee discussed the possibility of having a section of the Green Business Program for businesses to show that they have participated in an energy audit. However, it was noted that at a previous meeting the Committee found that businesses must own their building to engage in an energy audit, which would leave out small businesses who rent their property.

Sam Zurawski stated that businesses, such as hers, with multiple tenants in one building may also experience difficulties with performing energy audits. Emilie Hoffman stated that large companies would be more able to handle expensive audits where many changes are needed to improve the company's electric use.

Dean Farr then discussed efforts by McHenry County College to engage in green practices and reduce energy use.

Terry Dieckhoff stated that Pace Bus will be holding an open forum at the Crystal Lake City Hall on Monday, October 25, 2021. The public will be allowed to provide feedback about the Pace budget. Terry encouraged the Committee to send in feedback urging Pace to switch to electric buses in the future.

Emilie Hoffman stated that she was walking in the downtown area recently and tree care has improved for the City's trees. Emilie stated that mounding mulch on top of tree roots is unhealthy for the tree, which many areas practice this.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, Sam Zurawski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Lisa Janezic seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.