MINUTES
Sustainability Committee
September 15, 2021
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at City Hall in Crystal Lake.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following committee members: Lisa Janezic, Terry Dieckhoff, Emily Conti, Nicky Strahl, Lisa McLaughlin, and Cordell Crane. Members of the public in attendance were Dean Farr, Crystal Lake Park District Director of Park Development Ann Viger, McHenry County Water Resources Specialist Scott Kuykendall, and Assistant to the City Manager Nick Hammonds.

3. Public Comment

Dean Farr and Scott Kuykendall discussed solar farms within McHenry County.

4. Approval of the Minutes from August 18, 2021

Terry Dieckhoff moved to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2021 meeting as amended. Nicky Strahl seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

5. Guest: Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County Planning and Development Water Resources Specialist

Scott Kuykendall provided a presentation of the McHenry County Water Resources Action Plan (WRAP), which was officially published by the County last week. Scott discussed the region's natural hydrology, water aquifers, threats and risks to the underground water supply, and solutions for preserving and maintaining the water supply. He stated that cover crops provide a great benefit to preserving a clean water supply, although the up-front costs for farmers will be an obstacle to securing buy-in for this practice. Cordell Crane discussed how to make cover crops palatable to farmers to obtain the long term benefits of cover crops.

Scott stated that he intends to promote the WRAP to help show the needs for preserving the region's water supply. The impacts of exponential expansion and new developments further draws from the limited water resources available. He stated that economic development cannot occur without a secure water supply. Scott further discussed the importance of zoning laws to protect the water supply. The annual water forum will also be held online again in 2021, with new videos and an interactive experience to help viewers see the WRAP.

Scott stated that he is looking to present the WRAP to municipal city councils and local groups to spread awareness and promote the Plan. Nick Hammonds stated that he will contact the City's Public Works Department to inquire about possible presentations that can be made to the City Council. Scott stated that he would like to provide a short presentation and to provide the hard copy of the published Plan.

6. Guest: Ann Viger, Crystal Lake Park District Director of Park Development

Ann Viger provided an overview of the Crystal Lake Park District, the amount of land owned and maintained by the Park District, and the municipalities covered within their jurisdiction. The Park District owns 1,400 acres of land, which is substantially larger than most Park Districts. Most of the land is natural and does not need to be mowed. She also stated that the Park District owns two nature preserves.

Ann Viger discussed her role with the Park District and the processes for maintaining the land. The Park District relies upon volunteers and contracting out services to maintain their properties. The Park District also manages the ecological health of Crystal Lake. Controlling invasive species and managing the lake pose challenges each year.

Ann discussed the recent work being completed around the pond at Veteran Acres. Nicky Strahl inquired about the willow trees which were cut down in this area. Ann Viger stated that a beautification project in the 1970s included the planting of willow trees to provide an aesthetically pleasing experience at the pond. Over time, the trees grew too large and became a hazard, in addition to invasive species that were taking over the pond. The Park District mobilized to remove all of the willow trees since most were dying and becoming a hazard. The future plan includes wetland seeding to bring back the native plants to help the ecology of the pond.

7. Johnny Appleseed Festival: September 25, 2021

The Committee discussed the upcoming Johnny Appleseed Festival on September 25th. The festival occurs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Dean Farr stated that he can assist with the table at the festival from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Terry Dieckhoff indicated his availability to staff the table from noon to 2:00 p.m. Lisa McLaughlin and Cordell Crane stated that they are available for the 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. time frame. Nick Hammonds stated that he will inquire with Jen Oliver and Emilie Hoffman regarding their availability for the event. Sam Zurawski will be out of town.

Lisa Janezic inquired if the Committee can provide informational materials regarding the composting program with GFL Environmental. Nick Hammonds stated that he will provide print-outs as well as a QR code linking to the composting program information. GFL confirmed they will provide larger organics composting totes. Nick will inquire if smaller compost bins can be provided to help promote the composting program.

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

Nick Hammonds stated that the Committee's Green Business program has been posted on the City's website and businesses can now apply for the designation. Lisa McLaughlin stated that she will contact the marketing manager for the Chamber of Commerce to share the link to the application. The Chamber's outreach will include social media outreach and their community calendar. The Committee will develop a logo for the program, which will assist outreach efforts.

9. Mayors Monarch Pledge Review

Nick Hammonds discussed the ongoing efforts by the City and the Committee regarding the Mayors Monarch Pledge program. The City will be removing milkweed from the list of prohibited weeds in the City Code. This will occur during the next City Code update.

10. Open Discussion

Cordell Crane discussed options for recycling plastics that GFL Environmental will not take. He will share the listing of acceptable plastics that can recycled. Lisa stated that a business close to City Hall has been taking plastics from a job site to a recycling center. She will conduct research to gather more information.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

12. Adjourn

There being no further business, Cordell Crane moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. Nicky Strahl seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.