# MINUTES
## Sustainability Committee
## February 16, 2022
## 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, February 16, 2022 at City Hall in Crystal Lake.

**2. Roll Call/Attendance**

Present were the following committee members: Emilie Hoffman, Lisa Janezic, Terry Dieckhoff, Jen Oliver, Lisa McLaughlin, and Nicky Strahl telephonically. Members of the public in attendance were Carol Elkins, Brandie Dunn, Stephen Platt, Dean Farr, City Engineer Abby Wilgreen, Administrative Intern Ryan Oates, and Assistant to the City Manager Nick Hammonds.

**3. Public Comment**

Carol Elkins, Brandie Dunn, Dean Farr, and Stephen Platt were in attendance for the meeting.

**4. Approval of the Minutes from January 19, 2022**

Lisa McLaughlin moved to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2022 meeting. Lisa Janezic seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

**5. City Staff Presentation of the NPDES Program**

Abby Wilgreen, City Engineer, gave a presentation about rain garden projects that the City is completing to provide clean water to Crystal Lake and to address storm water drainage. She provided information on the City's actions regarding storm water and what home owners can do to help. The City is building five rain gardens in various areas around the City to help naturally filter water as it heads into Crystal Lake and to help limit flooding in high risk areas. Abby Wilgreen also stated that they are working with environmental consultants to ensure that the rain gardens are being installed and monitored until they are fully established.

Dean Farr inquired about how the homeowners around the area felt about the development of rain gardens in these subdivisions. Abby Wilgreen stated that the City has been meeting with the residents periodically to show them the benefits that the rain gardens would have. Nicky Stahl stated that she lives near where the rain gardens were being constructed and that she has been an advocate for the rain gardens. She thanked Abby Wilgreen for meeting with residents to address concerns.

Jen Oliver asked if we would be able to use the handouts that were shown in the presentation at the tables we set up for events. Abby Wilgreen confirmed the group would be able to use them. Stephen Platt asked about what the City is doing about coal tar sealant. Abby Wilgreen stated that she is responsible for storm water and not sealant specifically. Nick Hammonds stated that because the City does not require a permit for driveway sealing companies, it is hard to identify what type of sealant these companies are using and to monitor the products they use.

Carol Elkins asked if the City still offers battery drop-off to the public. Abby Wilgreen stated that this was available to residents in the past. Nick Hammonds stated that he will check with the waste hauler to verify if public battery drop-off can be accommodated at City Hall. Lisa Janezic stated that Lowe's will accept batteries at their lobby.

Emilie Hoffman discussed the possibility of adding the City's rain gardens to the walking tours being conducted by the Wildflower Preservation and Propagation Committee (WPPC). Nicky Strahl mentioned the private entities that offer walking tours such as in Bull Valley. Abby Wilgreen stated that the rain gardens were installed at different times and are in various stages of development, which would be beneficial for the public to compare the progression. Jen Oliver discussed City maps and providing map handouts highlighting where the rain gardens are located. Jen also stated that the nature walks could be self-led, and the maps would help direct people to the locations to view at their own leisure.

Lisa McLaughlin stated that self-led nature walks would be great since most of the community may not know about the rain garden projects. Lisa then discussed her role with the Chamber of Commerce and how the Chamber can help promote information from the City to their members. Lisa McLaughlin discussed the Earth Day clean up hosted by the Chamber and the Park District scheduled for April 23, 2022. She reviewed the process for participants to help in the event. The Committee could also attend and provide information handouts to the public at the event.

Abby Wilgreen thanked the Committee for their time and concluded the presentation.

**6. Guest: Brandie Dunn, Midwest Native Bee Alliance**

Brandie Dunn from the Midwest Native Bee Alliance joined the Sustainability Committee to give an overview of her organization. The Midwest Native Bee Alliance takes a 'boots on the ground' education and advocacy approach on behalf of native bees. Brandie Dunn discussed how native bee apiaries are on the rise around the world and in McHenry County. Brandie Dunn discussed two different types of bees that she was studying, the honeybee and bumble bee. She also discussed the impacts that bees have on the environment, society, and the economy, even though the number of bees are in decline.

Lisa McLaughlin asked if Brandie Dunn can explain more about the honeybee waggle dance. Brandie Dunn explained that it was a dance that the bees do to alert other bees of the direction of pollen. Nicky Strahl stated that it is like bee sign language, and she thanked Brandie for her efforts. Jen Oliver discussed the important benefits of these efforts, although many people need to be convinced to participate in helping the bee habitat. Carol Elkins discussed the importance of bumble bees for the native habitat in our region.

Nick Hammonds asked if she would give permission to allow the committee to post the presentation on the City website. Brandie Dunn agreed.

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

Nick Hammonds stated that the committee received four GBD applications from companies around Crystal Lake. Another article appeared in the January newsletter to help promote the program.

Jen Oliver and Lisa McLaughlin asked how designees will be honored. They discussed the possibility of using a sustainable sticker to place in the window of the awarded businesses. Nicky Strahl stated that she has a sustainable sticker in her truck and that she would look into the different types of stickers that the committee can use to give to the designees. Lisa McLaughlin confirmed she would reach out as well to see what types of sustainable stickers she can find.

The Committee discussed the applications from the Green Business Program. Jen Oliver discussed the application from Building Energy Experts. Jen Oliver stated that she will reach out to the business to confirm their green energy practices and to gather more information.

Nick Hammonds asked Ryan Oates about AMS Store and Shred's application. Ryan Oates said that information on their website states that they're working out of Crystal Lake but their main building is in Lake in the Hills. The committee discussed the possibility of giving AMS an honorable mention award.

**8. Mayors' Monarch Pledge Review**

Nick Hammonds stated that the Mayors Monarch Pledge was passed for 2022. The City will start working toward achieving the 2022 goals in the spring. Nick Hammonds confirmed the City Code will be discussed soon at a City Council meeting to clarify that Milkweed is no longer prohibited.

**9. Bike With Your Neighbor Event: June 12, 2022**

Nick Hammonds stated that the City is planning on having the Bike With Your Neighbor Event on June 12, 2022. He also stated that a makeup date will be requested if the event cannot proceed due to weather.

**10. Open Discussion**

Jen Oliver stated that she went to a conference in which she learned about fungus mycelium growth being used to make Styrofoam-like containers. The products made from mycelium are biodegradable and are still in testing.

Jen Oliver discussed a conference she attended that addressed oak tree decline. Nicky Strahl said that because of the changing climate, more oak trees are becoming susceptible to different diseases and insects.

Lisa McLaughlin stated that the Chamber of Commerce along with the Crystal Lake Park District are having their cleanup event on April 23, 2022. To participate, volunteers must sign up with the Crystal Lake Park District. Free food will be provided by the Chamber of Commerce after the event.

Nick Hammonds stated that Lakeshore Recycling will have a free electronic pick up from March 7 to 11, 2022. Residents are allowed to leave up to five electronic items out for Prairieland to pick up and recycle.

Emilie Hoffman asked how to find the right landscaper to install native plants at residential areas. Nicky Strahl replied that individuals should do some research about native plants in our area. After doing the research the individuals should ask the landscapers which plant they should be using in the native plant garden. She also stated that you can look for a restoration ecologist who can help guide

individuals and landscapers on which plants to install. Carol Elkins stated that when looking for native plants people should look at nurseries as they may have some plants in stock. She mentioned Countryside can order native plants, and she has ordered through Countryside nursery in the past.

Carol Elkins stated that when planting native plants or trees, the plants or trees that are planted closer together become more stable because their roots support each other. Carol Elkins stated that she met with the Mayor at his business to spread out seeds. Jen Oliver stated that she also met with the mayor and gave him seeds to plant.

Carol Elkins asked Nick Hammonds if the committee has purchased seed packets to hand out at different events. Nick said that seeds have not been purchased yet this year, but the City will be looking into it. Carol Elkins stated to look into Prairie Moon to purchase seed packets.

**11. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

**12. Adjourn**

There being no further business, Lisa McLaughlin moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. Nicky Strahl seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.