MINUTES
Sustainability Committee
November 15, 2023
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at Crystal Lake City Hall by Amy Olson, seconded by Carol Elkins.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following Committee Members: Steven Platt, Amy Olson, Emilie Hoffman, Carol Elkins, Lisa McLaughlin, and Cordell Crane. Members of the public in attendance: Management Analyst Josh Allain and Dean Farr.

3. Public Comment

Dean Farr spoke to the Committee regarding an article he had read on decreasing water levels in Aurora and areas around Crystal Lake. Dean spoke with the Committee about his want to see more conversations on the topics of pollinator gardens. Dean stated that he would also like the City to implement more special rain gardens for the public spaces in the City. Amy Olson, Steven Platt, and Dean had discussions around the topic of what the County can do for more rain water retention. Carol Elkins and Josh Allain reminded the Committee that they can work with the County, but they are limited in scope to Crystal Lake and County wide initiatives would be outside of this.

4. Approval of Minutes from the October 18, 2023 Meeting

Amy made a motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2023, seconded by Lisa McLaughlin. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

5. Community Litter Clean-Up Initiatives

Carol Elkins spoke to the Committee about how they could effectively use signage. The Committee spoke to the role they can play in connecting and supporting other groups. Members of the Committee agreed that they can connect groups and highlight what groups are doing to spread awareness and unite litter collection groups. More focus is believed to be needed on existing programs, such as “Adopt a Highway.” The idea of more Newsletter content was discussed for litter collection. Highlighting what groups are performing litter collections, where and when these are taking places, and highlighting past actions taken were all topics discussed for the Newsletter.

6. Mayors Monarch Pledge – End of Year Wrap Up

Josh Allain informed the Committee that the 2023 pledge is all wrapped-up and that he will be filling out the needed documentation on the National Wildlife Federation’s website. Carol spoke to the Committee and asked what can be done to engage the community more. Following the suggestion for having volunteers create their own Monarch Gardens, the idea of difficulty around

supporting volunteers and the difficulty of maintaining quality of work from volunteers was discussed. Steven applauded the community for the great efforts they currently are taking to support monarchs. Carol and Amy spoke to how we can educate the community on the topics of monarchs and pollinators.

7. Green Businesses Designation Program

Amy asked where the Committee was at with this initiative. She was informed that we are still reviewing the applications before sending out information to them. Window decals are also being made for businesses. Emilie Hoffman asked if we can share what the businesses did to earn their designation on social media. Josh informed Emilie that this would need approval from the businesses and would also need to be vetted by City staff prior to posting. Lisa McLaughlin asked if we would have the ability to work with the City of Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce on this project.

8. Open Discussion

The topic of parkway trees was brought up following discussions with Committee Member's at an event held by the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. The Committee would like to meet with the City's arborist to learn more about the program and to ask questions. Conversations were then held about the current invasive species list and recommendations were given for certain plants to be removed from the list. Steven would like the Committee to look into the IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) for funding right-of-way trees.

The Committee discussed the promotion of their initiatives at community events, such as "Green Drinks". Cordell Crane would like to see the Committee promoted at a wide range of events. The Committee also talked about developing a strategic plan and they would like to base it off of the Greenest Region Compact (GRC). The Committee will be working on developing goals and initiatives based off the GRC and then adapt them to best fit Crystal Lake. Steven said he would like to look into the implementation of solar panels under the Com Ed power lines in the City.

9. Next Meeting: December 20, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, Amy Olson moved to adjourn at 8:09 p.m., seconded by Carol Elkins.