

DOWNERS GROVE
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMISSION

Minutes

June 8, 2017

I. Roll Call

There being no chair, a motion was made by Commissioner Marron to name Commissioner Getz as Acting Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ellis. The motion passed with a voice vote

Acting Chair Getz asked for a roll call.

Present: Commissioner Duda, Commissioner Ellis, Acting Chair Getz, Commissioner Marron

Absent: Chairman Pelloso, Commissioner McCann, Commissioner Salman

II. Visitor Welcome

All visitors were from the Green Grovers Committee of the DG Marchers and on the agenda for a presentation later in the meeting.

III. View and Approval of August 11, 2016 and February 9, 2017 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve both sets of minutes by Acting Chair Getz. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ellis. The motion passed with a voice vote.

IV. Staff update on ongoing projects

Ms. Miles introduced herself to the visitors. Ms. Miles noted the Public Works Open House was held recently and the native plant sales and rain barrel sales that were held in conjunction with the open house. These sales were held along with the Conservation Foundation. There were 50 rain barrels sold and 42 orders of native plants equaling 167 plants.

Ms. Miles said she followed up on a question from the commission about rain barrel instructions and usage. Ms. Miles said she spoke with Jim Kleinwachter of the Conservation Foundation and he noted that a representative from the Conservation Foundation is always at the open house to answer any questions and informational pamphlets are available as well.

Ms. Miles noted the DuPage River Sweep was moved to June 24 because of weather. The event is to be held south of Downers Grove South High School at Prentiss Creek.

Ms. Miles also noted that a Cub Scout group recently did a wetland area cleanup along Lemont Road removing 16 bags of trash. Both of these events are held along with the Conservation Foundation

V. New Business

Ms. Miles asked for a representative from the Green Grovers committee to begin their presentation.

Commissioner Marron asked if all commissioners could provide introductions prior to the presentation. All commissioners and Ms. Miles provided introductions.

Ms. Jyotsna Jagai of the DG Marchers began her presentation on composting. Ms. Jagai noted that the Green Grovers committee was part of the larger DG Marchers group. Currently the group has 325 members, most are residents of Downers Grove and others from neighboring communities. There are several committees in DG Marchers and the Green Grovers committee focuses on environmental issues. Ms. Jagai noted her presentation would focus on curbside composting as the contract for Republic Services was going to be negotiated soon and the committee would like to add curbside composting to the new contract.

Ms. Jagai reviewed an informal survey she conducted on Nextdoor to gauge interest in composting which found there was interest in the program. Then Ms. Jagai discussed statistics on household waste and how about 25% of that waste could be composted. Ms. Jagai said in Illinois a law was passed recently for commercial composting.

Ms. Jagai then discussed statistics surrounding the issues with not composting and its effects on the environment and its contributions to methane gas. Ms. Jagai also noted organizations and other nearby communities in DuPage County that do curbside composting including Glen Ellyn, Wheaton and Naperville. Glen Ellyn also uses Republic Services.

Ms. Jagai then described the program in Glen Ellyn as it seemed to be the best comparison for Downers Grove. She then noted other resources that the commission could use to learn more about curbside composting and said she could answer questions.

Ms. Jagai discussed a few points of interest – the location of facilities, the price structure of the program and a report put together by the Illinois Food Scrap Composting Coalition.

Ms. Jagai then concluded her presentation and asked for questions or comments.

Commissioner Duda said her family has been doing at-home composting and noted it had reduced their trash level and she was in support of the program.

Commissioner Ellis noted that Ms. Jagai did present at a previous Village Council meeting. Ms. Miles said that she had discussed composting with Mr. Mike Baker and the representative from Republic Services. Republic noted that Glen Ellyn's facility is too far for Downers Grove to use and the facility Downers Grove currently uses does not have the appropriate permit for composting but Republic is working towards getting those permits.

Ms. Miles noted that the commission could make a recommendation to Village Council on this item. Commissioner Marron asked for the status of the negotiations and Ms. Miles said they were ongoing. Commissioner Ellis asked when the current contract expired and Ms. Miles noted that it would be next spring.

Acting Chair Getz noted that she had been researching this idea as well. Acting Chair Getz said she supported the commission making a motion that they support curbside composting. Ms. Miles said the commission could make a general motion on the topic or make more specific suggestions. Ms. Miles also noted that commissioners could visit Village Council meetings to speak on the topic. Acting Chair Getz said she wanted to generate ideas on how to increase composting rates. Acting Chair Getz said she would like to use next April as a goal.

The commissioners and Ms. Jagai then discussed how payment works and how the program was rolled out in Glen Ellyn and how it could work in Downers Grove.

Ms. Jagai discussed ideas for canvassing and promoting in the community.

Motion:

Acting Chair Getz made a motion requesting the Village Council include a curbside composting program in the new contract with Republic Services that mirrors the curbside composting program of Glen Ellyn.

Commissioner Ellis seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously by a voice vote 4-0.

There was discussion about how to incentivize residents to do the composting program. The Green Grovers discussed how they could help with education if this was adopted.

Acting Chair Getz asked if Mr. Baker could attend a future meeting. Ms. Miles said she would discuss this with Mr. Baker.

Ms. Jagai asked how difficult it would be for Republic to obtain the previously mentioned permit. Ms. Miles said the conversation she had with the representative from Republic gave the impression that it would not be very difficult but did not have a specific timeframe. Ms. Miles said she would find out more details. Acting Chair Getz also asked who the permitting authority was. Ms. Miles said she would find out that answer as well for the group.

Commissioner Marron asked what Republic does with the end product. Ms. Jagai said they have a facility and residents could tour the facility and take compost to bring home. Ms. Jagai did not know what was done with the rest of the composting material and asked for more information. Ms. Miles said she would find out more information on that question. The group then discussed the organization SCARCE and its involvement in composting.

Acting Chair Getz asked how to keep communication open with Green Grovers and Commissioner Ellis said she attends meetings and could report back to the commission.

Acting Chair Getz discussed contacting Village Council on this item. Ms. Jagai did note that she and others in the Green Grovers used the rEmarks tool for comments on curbside composting.

Commissioner Marron asked about restaurants and Commissioner Ellis asked about schools. Ms. Jagai said she found in her research Republic offers services for most of incorporated Downers Grove.

The commission thanked Ms. Jagai and the committee for their presentation. Commissioner Ellis said the discussion on Green Community could wait until more information was ready.

Ms. Miles reminded the commission the next meeting was July 13th. Ms. Jagai asked how to get on the agenda and Ms. Miles said that could be done through Commissioner Ellis.

Commissioner Marron said he followed up with Frankfort on electric charging stations and found there was a grant called the Drive Clean Station Grant Program through the City of Chicago Department of Transportation. The deadline is in mid-July but the informational session was held already. Ms. Miles noted this idea has been broadly discussed in the past to add to the Community Investment Plan. Commissioner Marron asked for the name of the Public Works Director and Ms. Miles said she would provide the contact information.

Commissioner Ellis said she met with a school group to do community service and asked if there were any opportunities through the Village for students. Ms. Miles said there is an opportunity for a student member on a few boards including the ECC and that the application is a rolling application on the Village website and students could apply. Ms. Miles did note there would be one commissioner's term expiring at the end of August.

VI. Adjournment

Commissioner Marron made a motion to adjourn, Acting Chair Getz seconded the

motion. The motion was passed by a voice vote.

Meeting adjourned.