

Minutes  
Environmental Concerns Commission

Meeting of October 27, 2004  
5101 Walnut Avenue, Downers Gove, Illinois  
6:30 p.m.

Meeting was call to order at 6:38 p.m. by Chairman Gilbert

Roll Call;

Members present were Brian Freeman, Bob Pawlak, Laura Feste, Jeff Lifka, Gordon Goodman and Chairman Gilbert. Also in attendance was Deputy Village Manager Dave Van Vooren.

Members Absent: Joe Sterner

Introduction; Chairman Gilbert thanked the members of the ECC for volunteering their time and talent to the Commission and looks forward to working with the members on issues either raised by the members or sent to the Commission from the Village Council from time to time. Chairman Gilbert thought the best way to start the meeting was to have the members do a brief self introduction. The Commissioners spent some time outlining their past experiences in both their personal and professional life.

Distribution of Commission Materials; Chairman Gilbert asked Mr. Van Vooren to review the Commission materials that were provided to all members. Mr. Van Vooren stated that the materials in the binder are layout for easy reference by the members. The first two tabs provide for the creation of the commission and the powers and duties of the commission. Chairman Gilbert added that the commission's duties are extremely broad in scope but at the same time the Commission should concentrate on those areas where they have expertise and will not duplicate the efforts of other standing committees. There will be times when the Commission will desire to weigh in on issues discussed at other committee's activities but we should be aware of the need to be responsive in order to efficiently address issues back to the Village Council. Mr. Van Vooren further stated that one of the areas that all members should be aware of is the open meetings act and what types of communication members can have on potential topics that the Commission could entertain outside of the regular meeting. In the handout there is a section regarding the open meetings act and members should review it and if they have any questions either contact the Chairman or Mr. Van Vooren for clarification. Mr. Van Vooren stated that with the use of the internet the open meetings act comes into play and is easy to inadvertently violate the act. The Village Attorney has stated that including all commission members into an e-mail conversation is a violation of the act and members should treat e-mails as the same as a conversation. One way to avoid that is for the members to e-mail the staff liaison Mr. Van Vooren, and in that he is not a member of the commission he could in turn contact all members. However, when the members respond they should only respond to Mr. Van Vooren and not to all. Mr. Goodman said that what Mr. Van Vooren stated as to contacting the staff liaison is a good way to communicate to members but he will also copy the Chairman which would not be a violation but would

keep the chairman apprised of the communication. Chairman Gilbert thought Mr. Goodman's suggestion was a good idea.

Review enabling powers and Duties; Chairman Gilbert stated that the powers and duties were in the Village packet and as mentioned were very broad as already discussed. Member Goodman asked Chairman Gilbert about the need for members to complete and file economic interest statements annually as required by statute to be a member of the commission. Mr. Van Vooren stated he would have to contact the Village Attorney regarding the question and would get back to the Chairman. Chairman Gilbert then stated that the Commission should follow these rules when discussing issues; members should maintain a fairness to all opinions, accept that your opinion may change during the discussion, the commission should try to maintain an informal relaxed environment to foster meaningful discussion, that the Commission will vote when it is required to vote on matters but will strive to work toward a consensus to present a unified commission position. The commission is not a forum for a personal agenda but an opportunity to share a personal opinion, work to establish a commission agenda inclusive of all items but to establish priorities and work to complete them and to stay true to the mission of the ECC.

Discuss potential areas of action; Chairman Gilbert asked all members to share their ideas as to what the Commission should be discussing in the coming months. Member Feste, stated she believes that everyone has a responsibility to take care of our planet and the Village should develop and use an environmental policy for public buildings that would look at energy efficient guidelines for buildings as well as environmentally friendly solutions to everyday issues. She also felt that ECC should assist in developing award programs for the community to participate in and that organic material is a resource and not a waste. Member Lifka stated he was hoping that the ECC could improve the quality of life for the residents of the Village by continuing to build upon the existing recycling program, that it address noise pollution and assist in improving railroad crossings in the Village. Member Goodman also wanted to work on an environmental policy for the Village similar to the policy developed by the County of DuPage. He also wanted to see if it was possible to expand recycling into the business and multi-family areas and to work toward strengthening water quality by use of silt fences and the demolition ordinance. Mr. Goodman also desired to look at ways to address air quality as well as maintaining trees and green space in the Village both public/private areas. Mr. Pawlak was interested in working on creek clean-up projects with the community and to work with the PW department to address trash pick-up throughout the Village. He would also like to see efforts made to reduce noise pollution and to work with Burlington Northern to reduce train staging and the PW to designate vehicles routes in town. Member Freeman wanted to do more hazardous wastes collection days and to work to complete a computer recycling day. He also felt that the continuation of the DG bus system should continue as a means to lessen pollution and that the public should be educated to reduce the use of fertilizer on their lawns. Chairman Gilbert desired to continue to pursue the reduction of coal fired power plants and that the Village should continue to advocate the use of alternative fuels for its fleet. He felt that on a local front we should address water shed run-off and the quality that the Village should provide some forestry advice to

residents thereby improving the trees and green space and that the fire department should restrict burn downs for training. Finally, that the ECC should work to educate and change habits of the Village residents and business and avoid the need to legislate resolutions to environmental issues.

Establish regular meeting dates; The commission after some discussion agreed that the regular meetings would be the second Thursday of each month starting on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10p.m.