

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES

October 17, 2023

Board or Environmental
Commission:
Meeting: Regular
Quorum: Yes

Date: October 17, 2023
Called to 7:05 p.m.
Order:
Adjourned: 9:29 p.m.

MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

Present/Absent

Christie Truitt	Chairman	Present
Jeff D. Abeln	Commissioner	Present
Jacquelyn Casazza	Commissioner	Present
Karin Daly	Commissioner	Present
Mark Frigo	Commissioner	Absent
Barbara Kwiatkowski	Commissioner	Present
Vacant	Commissioner	
Vacant	Commissioner	
Vacant	Commissioner	
Vacant	Student Commissioner	
Also Present:		
John Hubsky	Assistant Public Works Director	
Gary Fasules	Village Trustee	
Chris Gutman	Glen Ellyn Park District	
PUBLIC		
Matilda McLaren	Prospective Student Commissioner	
Olivia Janninck	Prospective Student Commissioner	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The October 17, 2023 regular meeting of the Environmental Commission was called to order by Chairman Truitt at 7:05 PM at Glen Ellyn Civic Center.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –

Prospective student commissioners, to be approved at the Oct. 23 Village Board meeting
Matilda – GBS senior – curious about the field of environmental science and local govt. Done work with Stroll magazine.
Olivia – GBW senior – interested in environmental science/environmental law. Olivia attended a sustainable study program at Notre Dame.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS – None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM August 22, 2023 MEETING –

1. Proposed amendments to the draft minutes:

Commissioner Kwiatkowski recommends the following changes:

- Old business – cardboard recycling – change to “additionally, John Hubskey stated the necessity of constructing a fence.”
- Sustainability plan scoping session recap – Add “Barbara Kwiatkowski, Mark Franz”
- Re: Pale Blue Dot, that “they can take any existing “data”” (not date).

Commissioner Casazza recommends the following changes (in red):

- Commissioner Casazza reports **the event was well attended and** had 4,000 people in attendance **on Saturday alone**. To facilitate can recycling, there were seven totes and bins available, each clearly labeled for collecting cans. These signs were largely effective. In terms of results, 160 lbs. of cans were collected on Friday and 200 lbs. on Saturday, totaling 360 lbs. of cans, equivalent to approximately 11,500 cans. **This is over a time period of essentially 20 hours - 5 Thursday, 5 Friday, and 10 Saturday - so it was worth the effort for the short time period.**
- Proposed: Oaktober Fest – October 14 1:00-4:00 at Mary Knoll Park – Chairperson Truitt states **this is part of the overall Oaktober initiative started last year, sponsored by the EC, Go Green Glen Ellyn and the Village. Go Green Glen Ellyn are working with the Park District on the Oaktoberfest event. The EC is interested in having a tree walk. and various other activities. Commissioner Casazza states** there will be about 20 different organizations taking part in the event **with various other activities.**

2. Commissioner Casazza motions and Commissioner Kwiatkowski seconds the motion to approve the minutes from August 22, 2023.

MOVE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM 8/22/2023

RESULT: Motion unanimously carried

MOVER: Commissioner Casazza

SECONDER: Commissioner Kwiatkowski

AYES: # 6

V. TRUSTEE LIAISON REPORT –

Trustee Liaison Report – Trustee Fasules states that the board put a line item in the budget for an item up to \$20,000 that comes from the commission that it does not need Board approval; it can be approved by Village Manager Franz. This is to support the sustainability plan request. If there are other things that the commission wants to do, they should get it in to John now so it can be included in the budget.

VI. STAFF LIAISON REPORT –

Assistant Public Works Director Hubsy states that 138 trees were planted for the fall – 428 trees were planted between spring and fall. Village Forester Max Brown is going to do an evaluation to determine where there is additional space where plantings could take place. Leaf sweeping will take place soon that will help to keep all the leaf nutrients from inundating waterways. Downtown construction is wrapping up; benches and other things to make downtown look nice will be added soon. There have still been some materials shortages which is what caused the delays.

Discussion ensues regarding the downtown park; the EC has provided feedback already. Chairperson Truitt states that the combined meeting was the opportunity for the EC to provide feedback on the park. Commissioner Kwiatkowski and Casazza ask why the EC will not have a chance to provide feedback again during the process. Village Staff Hubsy states that the EC is not a step in any approval process for a project that goes before the board. Only the Historic Preservation Commission and Plan Commission are a part of that process. The process to approve a project like this is already time consuming and staff is unwilling to add an additional step at this time. Members of the EC are welcome to submit a staff request via Staff Liaison Hubsy for a further review opportunity, but the expectation is that the answer will be “no.”

VII. PARK DISTRICT LIAISON’S REPORT –

Park District Liaison report from Chris Gutman – Gutman shares the park district has a new full time forester who got promoted – Peter Zibec. The park district is getting 81 new trees and shrubs that will be distributed throughout the Village. There are over 3,000 trees across the park district. Acorn harvesting is being done at Lake Ellyn because those are remnant oaks -red, white and burr oaks. Chinquapin oaks are being established at Ackerman. Seed collection being done to help bolster the natural areas. Prepping for a fish release on Saturday and pumpkin composting event on November 4th. Park district is also collaborating with an expert from University of Wisconsin on soil compaction to examine its impact on the health of oaks. Construction equipment and heavy foot traffic causes soil impaction and this causes harm to the trees. Gutman states that not allowing mowers or heavy equipment to get up close to the trees can help.

Chairperson Truitt states that the tree ordinance, if revised, should examine protections for trees during construction so they are not impacted by this.

Commissioner Daly asks if volunteers are needed for the pumpkin smash event. Gutman states volunteers are always welcomed.

VIII. CHAIR REPORT

Chairperson Truitt suggests an event at the Chicago Climate Action Museum with the EC, Village Board and Historic Preservation Commission and local builders. There is open space and seating for an event. Docents and event space are free. Possibility to sponsor a joint public event in Glen Ellyn in the spring that would provide information to residents on how to retrofit older homes.

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) had a 2-day online event regarding building a sustainability plan and that to have a plan will help municipalities access grants; also to include a scorecard. This is validation that we are on the right path with developing a sustainability plan.

The MMC also had a presentation regarding environmental justice and there is an area of Glen Ellyn. There is grant funding available that the Village could pursue. Staff Liaison Hubsy will pass on information related to the EJ tract and Chairperson Truitt is available for questions.

There are upcoming events with the Conservation Foundation. Wild Ones of Greater DuPage is hosting a night at the Glen Ellyn police department on October 19. There are other events on October 26 and 25.

IX. OLD BUSINESS TOPICS

1) Strategic Planning Priorities

- Land Stewardship - Cultivate Green Infrastructure and Resilient Landscapes

Sustainable landscapes – results of 2023 initiative and plan for 2024. Chairperson Truitt states between 2002-2022; there were 20 yards certified by the Conservation Foundation – essentially 1 per year. In 2023, there were 11 yards certified. He has also visited 55 yards in Glen Ellyn and has been contacted by 63 yards. This is a significant increase, and the commission should be pleased with this result.

Chairperson Truitt suggests a potential event for individuals who have already contacted the Conservation Foundation to recognize their efforts. This could be an after-hours networking event with the residents who have completed/are working on the certification, the Conservation Foundation, and other relevant partners.

Trustee Fasules suggests that these residents are recognized at a future board meeting. Trustee Fasules asks how does the Environmental Commission engage the other 6900 households in Glen Ellyn who have not certified their yard or know about native plants. Chairperson Truitt states that we have provided education through writing articles for Stroll, as well as several webinars with the library and park district, but that these were not well attended.

Commissioner Casazza states that the communication for many previous events was something that individuals had to go find, i.e., if you were already an environmentalist you knew where to look. The sustainable summer event had greater success because it was a “push out” communication that was sent to residents. Trustee Fasules recommends holding a meeting between Communications Manager Grant and a member of the EC (Commissioner Casazza or others) to discuss future marketing/communications in Village e-flyer. Grant can do a separate e-flyer that could communicate about sustainable yards.

Discuss Climate action museum event in the November meeting. Sustainable garden social event – Chairperson Truitt states that she would like to try to schedule this event now.

- Canopy

Refer to the email sent from Chairperson Truitt earlier tonight. Truitt states that rather than pursue an updated tree ordinance to be conscious of property rights, there are other avenues which can be pursued. CRTI recommends looking at an inventory of trees which needs to be updated. With this information, the commission can review areas where oaks/heritage trees used to be connected, and then work with the Village to do some restoration of these oak/heritage tree corridors. Morton Arboretum is working to identify the original oak corridors. There are none that exist in Glen Ellyn anymore! Chairperson Truitt states that the Historic Preservation Commission has a survey of historic homes, and it is likely that older trees would be on these properties, so that could be a starting point for a heritage tree inventory. Trustee Fasules states that he believes that Janice Waters has all heritage trees identified in the Village. Staff Liaison Hubsby states that we definitely have this for parkway trees; Trustee Fasules states he will follow up with Janice. A heritage tree must first be defined – CRTI has some ideas which could help us. Discussion ensues; overall the commission is supportive of this initiative. Chairperson Truitt will share next steps once information is received from Trustee Fasules regarding the heritage trees.

- Waste Stewardship - Reduce Landfill Waste

- o Website updates - status report – Commissioner Casazza states that she is working on it and hopes to have an update in November.
- o Cardboard recycling – tabled to future meeting.
- o Others? – none

- Engage - Educate and Motivate

- o Fall updates and future events

- Recycling mini – Go Green Glen Ellyn has scheduled this for November 4th; Junkluggers, Flat Can and Dart will be there to collect. This is in collaboration with the Park District’s pumpkin smash composting event.
- One Earth film festival – there is support on the commission to potentially host a screening at the Glen theater, depending on the film and the cost. Chairperson Truitt to look into more detail.
- Recycling extravaganza – proposed dates for April 27 or May 4. Commissioner Kwiatkowsky to look into the dates and let the group know. Commission discusses NOT having paper shredding; adding textiles. Commissioner Casazza will review information on possible textile vendors and provide this information to Commissioner Kwiatkowsky.

o Village awards - proposal and action item – there is a possibility to do awards through the village board meeting or the chamber awards process. Chairperson Truitt discussed with the Chamber, and they indicated they would be happy to add an award to the village awards on sustainability.

Possible awards suggested by Chairperson Truitt:

- Sustainable Landscape of the Year - celebrating residents who invest in transforming their home landscapes to support human, wildlife, and environmental health, to naturally adapt to climate impacts, or to rebuild our vibrant tree canopy. Possibly evaluated in partnership with [The Conservation Foundation](#).
- Sustainable Development of the Year - celebrating residential or commercial building projects that leverage the latest in biomimicry for sustainable material use, in energy innovation, or in materials recycling. Possibly evaluated in partnership with an associate of the [Climate Action Museum](#).
- Sustainable Business of the Year - local business that either invests in a shift toward sustainable operations or makes a sustainable change to their product line or building infrastructure. Possibly evaluated in partnership with the [Illinois Green Business Association](#).

Discussion ensues on the sustainable landscape awards. One consideration is to recognize all “certified gardens,” and this could be done either at the Chamber awards or at a Village board meeting, like the historic preservation awards. Commissioner Casazza supports doing the sustainable yards recognition in front of the village board. Chairperson Truitt states we can ask the conservation foundation who has been to the yard for photos. Both options are discussed by the commission; if the board recognition option is to be pursued, we would need approval from the Board.

Commissioner Casazza states that evaluating a sustainable development could be challenging as there is the potential for “greenwashing,” where an organization is saying its practices are more environmentally friendly than is actually the case. Commission agrees to revisit the Sustainable Development of the Year during a future meeting. For Sustainable Business of the year; it is recommended that another group takes that forward with the chamber.

This award would be evaluated by the Chamber, with nominees submitted and voted upon by the public, which means that the EC would not have much control or say over which business would be awarded.

Chairperson Truitt says she will discuss the sustainable yards recognition event with John and the conservation foundation.

- o Publications - Stroll (date and topic?) – not discussed

- o Plans and publications - 2024 scorecard – teasing up what the categories should be to do reporting. The Commission should consider this for the November meeting. Prepare for Jan/Feb so it is ready for the Village Enviro News in the spring print newsletter.

X. NEW BUSINESS TOPICS

Commissioner Casazza brings up the compost language discrepancy; will bring recommendations to the November meeting. Discrepancies should be aligned between the sections on this in the property maintenance section of the municipal code and zoning code.

XI. Next Meeting & Adjournment

- A. The next EC meeting – cancel regular meeting on November 21, 2023 and special meeting scheduled for November 28, 2023
- B. Commissioner Abeln motions and Commissioner Kwiatkowski seconds the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:29 pm.

Submitted by Jacquelyn Casazza, Commissioner

Reviewed by John Hubsy, Staff Liaison