

CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

Approved with changes 4/18/18

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

March 21, 2018, 7:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum.

Chairman Beebe called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. Roll call found Commissioners Dan Beebe, Kris Zimmermann, Bob Blaus, and John Symowicz present, Commissioner Bethany Brown arrived at 7:10 P.M.

Also in attendance was Assistant Director of Public Works, Tim Wilcox, Kay McKeen, SCARCE Founder and Executive Director, and Dave Barclay from District 33.

2. Approval of Minutes.

- A. **Environmental Commission Minutes of February 21, 2018. Commissioner Zimmermann made a motion to approve the minutes of February 21, 2018 seconded by Commissioner Blaus.**

Voting Yea: Commissioners Beebe, Symowicz, Blaus, and Zimmermann. Voting Nay: 0.

3. Public Participation/Presentations.

A. Kay McKeen, SCARCE Founder and Executive Director

Ms. McKeen talked about numerous programs and grants available for improving the environment in DuPage County. Using money from a grant from DuPage Foundation SCARCE is providing some communities up to 300 plastic 3 colored (graphic of fish) curb inlet markers warning “No Dumping! Drains to River” in English and Spanish and epoxy adhesive to install. She said the ideal groups would be middle and high school students. The goal is to educate people that storm drains are for rain water only and not to put anything else in those inlets. The activity can also be reported in the community’s municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) annual report for education and public involvement credit. Commissioner Blaus indicated he could be the point person for the event. Chairman Beebe asked if we have the curb style inlets in West Chicago. Mr. Wilcox indicated most but not all areas in the City have that style. Ms. McKeen is also working on getting “Sharps” containers using the foundations grant money.

“#Pickup 5” initiative is a new program with the basic idea to just pick up five pieces of litter every time you go on a walk, are at the park, or at a soccer or other game. Then to spread the word by taking a photo of yourself flashing your five fingers and the five pieces of litter you picked up and email it to info@scarce.org or share it with SCARCE on Facebook or twitter and tag it with #PickUp5. Ms. McKeen said there are 405 trillion cigarette butts on the ground nationwide. She mentioned a proposed proclamation from the Forest Preserve for the program and is hoping for a big effort to try to get a lot of

people involved, working with coaches, teachers and churches to have participants do week long events and picking up litter whenever outside. She said the ~~prairie path~~ *Illinois Prairie Path* has their cleanup efforts but it is always a lot of the same faces she sees at the events, she would like to see others get involved.

She mentioned Chad Pregracke and all of the great work and progress he has made to clean up trash in and along the Mississippi River, who also does speaking engagements, as well as Jessi DeMartini who is a streams ecologist and coordinator of the Urban Stream Research Center for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. The research center is currently working on re-introducing mussels into the DuPage River. The mussels help the river by filtering and cleaning the water. In 2030-2050 Ms. McKeen said it is predicted DuPage County will be in water stress. Lake, Kane, and McCook will be worse so water conservation is also a priority.

Other subjects presented and discussed include composting food scraps, which Ms. McKeen said she wrote the Illinois state law for, and is gaining popularity with residents and acceptance from the waste and recycling industry. Naperville, Glen Ellyn, Lombard, and Elmhurst now have composting programs where people collect food scraps and then mix the scraps with yard waste in a bag or container that they put out on the curb to be collected along with garbage and other recyclables. Most food except meat, grease and tea bags can be included. Reducing food waste saves the water, energy, labor, and cuts methane produced by rotting food in landfills. The discussion included information about food scrapping at schools and "share tables" where kid can place food from their lunches they don't want or will not eat for others to take and eat. This further reduces the volume of food waste and methane production at landfills and provides food for hungry children. She informed the group about household garbage disposals, discussed the problems they create with clogged plumbing and added volume of solids at waste water treatment plants. Ms. McKeen said Australia has banned the use of them.

Ms. McKeen passed out recycling information flyers for upcoming events and the dos and don'ts of what to put in and not put in recycling bins. Plastic shopping bags were mentioned as an item not to include in the bin. Commissioner Symowicz asked Ms. McKeen if she knew anything about a program for school children where they are competing against other schools to collect the most plastic bags. She is aware of it. Apparently the schools are competing for a chance to win a park bench made from recycled shopping bags.

Commissioner Zimmermann thought this might send the wrong message about plastic shopping bags (encouraging people to use them more) and thought promoting reusable bags a better approach. Ms. McKeen agreed there are different ways, she mentioned charging 7 cents extra for each bag like in Chicago is an effective method to curb plastic bag use. Ideas are welcome so contact her anytime. Commissioner Zimmermann also asked if there was information available for all of the topics she covered tonight. Ms. McKeen said they will have copies on the SCARCE website and will be promoting the information at the Blooming Fest event as well. She needs help getting the word out for her programs so any mention in the City's newsletter or other news would be appreciated. She also mentioned there is a good recycling video on the Groot.com website.

Commissioner Blaus asked her about Wheaton's curbside electronics recycling program (Ms. McKeen is also a member of Wheaton's Environmental Improvement Commission). She said to have your electronics collected at the curb on your garbage day, you must call at least one day before your garbage day then place items at the curb with the appropriate sticker on your pickup day. The number of stickers depends on the type of electronics being recycled. There is also a free monthly electronics drop off option for most items, televisions and monitors are collected for a fee. She recommends not placing anything memory based (like computers) at the curb. Ms. McKeen mentioned that residents can also drop off fluorescent light bulbs at the monthly collection. Wheaton owns a Bulb Eater® which crushes the various sized tubes (no CFLs). It has filters to safely capture the mercury vapor contained inside the bulbs. The Bulb Eater® is a product of Air Cycle Corporation in Lisle, Illinois. She suggested we view the video they have on their website at <https://www.aircycle.com/> and she thinks West Chicago should consider purchasing one. Ms. McKeen was asked about the Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission's budget; she responded they have a \$2,500 annual budget. Discussion with Ms. McKeen concluded at 8:03 P.M.

4. Items For Consent

None

5. Review and discuss Commission Priority List.

A. Review current priority list

Monarch Butterfly Pledge

This topic was only briefly discussed.

Blooming Fest

Commissioner Blaus said the Solar House is not available for Blooming Fest this year he said he still has marigold seeds so he can have the planting project again this year, he also mentioned possibly doing something with Kahoot a game based learning platform. There are still the Groot magnetic chip clips and all of the handouts, as well as storm water management handouts left from last year. Chairman Beebe said he has a miniature container that looks like the rain barrels from Upcycle that he could bring. Commissioner Zimmermann said she still has the butterfly project she can do. Commissioner Blaus asked about showing Groot's recycling video. He could look into a better source of power to run the player if interested in trying to show it to people. He also said he can pick up the tent from Chairman Beebe early so he doesn't have to deal with it that morning.

Street Light Request Policy

This item was not discussed.

Cool DuPage Program

There was no new information, item was not discussed.

Item was discussed briefly during discussion with Kay McKeen. The organizers are discussing the possibility of having 2 day events and/or locations hosting the event on different dates. This year Halloween is on a Wednesday so the first Saturday follows 3 days later. Some people have indicated they like to use their pumpkins for fall decorations after Halloween so a later date to recycle them would work better for them.

Lighting Ordinance

Commissioner Zimmermann indicated there will be a "Starry Sky" display from Sustain DuPage at the Gallery 200 during Blooming Fest. They are looking for volunteers, Spanish speaking would be helpful. She said Sara Phalen and the Arts Commission are all in. She was also asked to get the number of street lights in West Chicago. Mr. Wilcox said he can get her that information. Chairman Beebe said he spoke to the Horsley's about a hosting a possible speaking engagement with Drew Carhart at the church. They said they would need to know potential dates as soon as possible.

Adopt A Highway

Item was discussed briefly to mention the dates for cleanup. April 28 and October 6, 2018 are the tentative dates.

Rain Barrel Sale

The rain barrel sales link is on the City website. So far only one sale has been made. Chairman Beebe said he will make a pitch for rain barrels at the next Garden Club meeting.

B. Discuss new additions to priority list

None.

6. Other Business

Commissioner Symowicz said he was at Garfield Park Conservatory recently. He said they allow honey bees to fly around inside the indoor conservatory. It may be related to growing concern for pollinators.

Commissioner Symowicz also mentioned he watched a special on a Japanese cable channel about a growing trend in Japan, the increased use of adult diapers there and how the country is handling the process of disposal by recycling.

7. Adjournment

At 8:36 P.M. Commissioner Blaus made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Symowicz seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Wilcox, Assistant Director of Public Works