



**Environmental Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 30, 2017  
Regional Design Center, 315 N. Main St., Rockford

**ATTENDEES:** Committee Chair Ian Linnabary, Reno and Zahm; Hilary Rottmann, Boone County; Scott Capovilla and Wayne Dust, City of Rockford; Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute; Nathan Hill, Tom Lind, and Tim Bragg, Rockford Park District; Tom Hartley and Judy Bernard, Forest Preserves of Winnebago County; Brad Roos and Chet Kolodziej, Sustainability Working Group; Steve Ernst, Rockford Mass Transit District; Dan Kane, Boone County Conservation District; Russ Johansson, Specialty Sewer; Martha Strawser, Community Action Group of Rockford; James Marshall, Rockford University; Rebecca Olson, Olson Ecological Solutions; Julia Halsted, Winnebago County; Amanda Mehl, Boone County Health Department; Ben Rohr, Sydney Turner, Colin Belle, and Michael Dunn, Region 1 Planning Council.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Ian Linnabary called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

**I. INTRODUCTION:**

a) **Attendees:** Attendees introduced themselves.

b) **Approval of the October 26, 2017 Meeting Minutes:** Mr. Linnabary briefly recapped the October 26, 2017 meeting. Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion to adopt the October 26, 2017 meeting minutes. First motion carried by Judy Bernard, seconded by Chet Kolodziej. The Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

c) **Region Planning Council Introduction:** Michael Dunn explained that the concept of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) was first introduced with Vital Signs: Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. Regional Planning Councils are customizable and unique to every community. The majority of RPCs are formed around Metropolitan Planning Organizations, which are federally required for urbanized areas with populations over 200,000. The goal of the RPC is cross-collaboration between RMAP, the Rockford Region's MPO, the Economic Development District, and WinGIS, through shared resources, co-location, and governance structure. The territory of the RPC will include Winnebago and Boone Counties, as well as several other interested surrounding counties and communities. The first RPC governing board meeting will be held on December 14, 2017 at 1:30 PM. Mr. Dunn opened the conservation for questions.

The Environmental Committee will be reporting to the RPC governing boards as the committee sees fit. Similarly, the sub-entities of the organization (RMAP, EDDNI, and WinGIS) will remain their own entities that set particular policy for their respected entities/subject areas. The goal of the Environmental Committee, served by subject-matter experts, is to set priorities and projects that can be presented to the implementing agencies in the region through the RPC governing board.

**d) Environmental Committee Reporting & Meeting Structure:** Ben Rohr presented a diagram of the reporting structure and a draft meeting timeline of Environmental Committee, including the RPC governing board, the Committee-of-the-Whole, and the topic-specific working groups. The Committee-of-the-Whole is tentatively scheduled to meet quarterly and the topic-specific working groups will have the flexibility to schedule meetings based on the group member's preferences.

2. **WORKING SESSION:** Attendees broke into smaller working groups based on topic areas to discuss the goals and benchmarks for the Environmental Committee and review topic-specific goals, strategies, and benchmarks.

3. **CONCLUSION:**

**a) Working Group Reports:** Each working group presented the goals and strategies they discussed during the working sessions to the committee-of-the-whole.

**i) Energy Conservation:** Potential projects that will be examined by this committee focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy. Projects could include improving access/knowledge of energy efficiency programs to local residents, working with local entrepreneurs to increase the number of certified trade allies; increase information related to solar incentives, and mapping community gardens and geothermal systems.

**ii) Land Use:** Overarching themes for the Environmental Committee includes significant impact the projects chosen would have, a focus on implementation, forward-thinking, and collaboration. The group determined that many of the Vital Signs: Regional Plan for Sustainable Development goals related to Land Use were still relevant including the preservation of prime farmland, growth management, increasing land for open space and recreation, reducing underutilized properties, and improving property values. The group also came up with new goals related to Land Use including unifying and creating better connection between land uses, as well as the education and awareness of future planning efforts among both developers and residents.

**iii) Health:** The working group focused on finding the connections between the strategic plans of the various health departments, hospitals, and clinics, as well as Vital Signs. Six priorities were found that crossed all of the strategic plans examined. These priorities included access to care, chronic disease, mental/behavioral health, maternal/child health, and domestic/family violence.

**iv) Water:** The group believes that the first project for water would be to create a short policy paper to examine what the group's focus is, who their audience would be, and what they hope to accomplish. Some of the projects would include educating the region on water resources and the issues on the forefront, as well as looking into conducting 3-D ground water modeling. Additionally, the idea of developing a watershed management committee is one of the group's goals.

**v) Education/Culture:** This group has two areas they would like to explore. The first area would be to create a series of presentation and tours focused on sustainability. The second area they would like to look into further is talking to local schools about environmental studies curriculum as well as examining the resources and constraints they may have related to environmental studies.

vi) **Infrastructure:** The group's main focus is improving the multi-modal connectivity in the region through examining existing gaps in bicycle facilities and sidewalks, particularly along bus routes. The group would like to pick three top strategies to focus on per year.

vii) **Biodiversity:** The biodiversity group discussed several areas they would like to examine closer, including: trees/urban canopy; connectivity of linear greenways; the promotion of rural tourism through natural/cultural tours or maps; the pollinator issues in the region; natural landscape ordinances; and advertisement related to best environmentally friendly practices for residents.

b) **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 9, 2018 4:00-6:00 PM at the Regional Design Center.

4. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.