



## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 9, 2018 – 4:00pm

Regional Design Center – 315 N. Main St.

**ATTENDEES:** Dan Woestman, Belvidere School District; Hilary Rottmann, Boone County; Dan Kane, Boone County Conservation District; Amanda Mehl, Boone County Health Department; Mark Stockman, Scott Capovilla, City of Rockford; Joel Zirkle, Fehr Graham; Judy Barnard and Tom Hartley, Forest Preserves of Winnebago County; Ashley Sarver, Gary W. Anderson Architects; Harlan Johnson, HAACP; George Bellovics, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Beverly Broyles, Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful; Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute; David Pietryla, Nicor Gas; Rebecca Olson, Olson Ecological Solutions; Jamie Johannsen, Rebecca Quirk, and LouAnn Johnson, Rockford Coalition for a Sustainable Future; Tim Bragg, Rockford Park District; James Marshall, Rockford University; Todd Schmidt, RPS 205; Russ Johansson, Specialty Screw; Devin Saunders and Max LaBarbera, SRES/RVC; Brad Roos and Chet Kolodziej, Sustainability Working Group; Julia Halsted, Winnebago County; Todd Marshall, Winnebago County Health Department; Don Krizan and Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Department; Dennis Anthony Winnebago County SWCD; Colin Belle, Ben Rohr, and Sydney Turner, Region 1 Planning Council

**CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chair Ashley Sarver called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

### I. INTRODUCTION

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

b) **Previous Meeting's Minutes:** Mr. Rohr briefly recapped the November 30, 2017 meeting.

c) **First RPC Board Meeting Recap:** Mr. Rohr discussed the inaugural meeting of the Region 1 Planning Council held on December 14<sup>th</sup> at the Regional Design Center. The meeting was attended by twenty local leaders from around the region, as well as an additional 20+ interested parties. The meeting included the adoption of the bylaws, the appointment of the Chair (Mayor Mike Chamberlain, City of Belvidere) and Vice Chair (Chairman Frank Haney, Winnebago County), an outline of the 2018 RPC meeting schedule, and a brief explanation of each of the divisions of the RPC. The initial action items for the RPC includes establishing a new fiscal agency, preparing a budget, and creating a Council of Governments. Committee updates will be given at each of the RPC meetings.

d) **2018 Meeting Schedule:** Ms. Sarver discussed that the Environmental committee-of-the-whole will be meeting bimonthly moving forward, following the schedule of the RPC Board meetings. She strongly encouraged working groups to communicate regularly between committee-of-the-whole meetings.

e) **Report Templates:** Mr. Rohr explained the need for the new report template. Each working group leader is encouraged to use the template to document each meeting that takes place. This will allow for both efficient record keeping and a continuous information exchange. Additionally, a google drive account and folder structure for the committee-of-the-whole and each of the working groups has been created. Google Drive is a cloud-based data sharing platform that will allow members to share/edit working documents or other materials. A link to the folders will be emailed out to the committee.

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. **WORKING GROUP REPORTS:** Each working group presented the goals and strategies they discussed during the working sessions to the committee-of-the-whole.
  - a) **Energy Conservation:** The group identified two goals. The first goal is to conduct a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory in order to establish baselines by which to measure progress. The second goal is to raise awareness of energy efficiency tools and practices among local residents in the Rockford Region.
  - b) **Land Use & Growth Management:** The working group would like to focus on two main goals. The first goal is to collaboratively plan for the highest and best use of properties, specifically focused on infill development. The second goal of the group is the protection and conservation of natural resources, as well as limiting the consumption of land.
  - c) **Water Resources:** The working group narrowed their working group goals from previous meetings as well as from Vital Signs: The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD). The first goal/project of this group is to develop a short policy paper by collecting information and data, host a water resource summit, development of partnerships with local governments and agencies, and several additional elements.
  - d) **Education & Culture:** This working group has two project ideas. The first project is to create an interactive map of the environmentally sustainable practices currently being accomplished in the region. The second project is to reach out to the local elementary and secondary schools in the region and create a packet of environmental sustainability education curriculum that can be used by those schools. The group's goal was to increase environmental education within the region.
  - e) **Infrastructure:** The group utilized goals that had been identified in RPSD. These included: (1) improve the walkability of the region by increasing connectivity of sidewalks, walkways, and bikeways; (2) Develop a database of deficient infrastructure and target transportation corridors with quality design improvements where a high return on investment can be demonstrated; (3) Increase natural landscaping to reduce stormwater runoff and increase natural habitat; bring waterways to a natural state with greenway paths where possible.

**f) Biodiversity:** Refined several topics that had been previously discussed into three goals. The first goal focuses on the sustainability of the urban tree canopy through working with local agencies to identify tree inventories and the health issues of certain tree species. The second goal is to develop a lunch and learn program, which focuses and creates more awareness among residents on the various issues related to biodiversity. The third goal is to address the pollinator issues in the region. Potential projects include creating a school program to plant rain gardens at local schools.

**g) Health:** The working group discussed distributing the members of the health working group into the other working groups. Since health is impacted by all of the environmental sustainability topics, the health working group members could provide a different lens on the priorities and goals of those topic areas/working groups.

**4. CONCLUSION:**

**a) Next Steps:** Continue to meet within the working groups and documenting the goals and projects of the working group in order to report to the committee.

**b) Next Environmental Committee Meeting:** The next Environmental Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 22, 2018 4:00 – 6:00 PM in the Regional Design Center.

**4. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.