



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 24, 2018 – 4:00pm

Regional Design Center – 315 N. Main St.

ATTENDEES: Colin Belle, Ben Rohr & Jon Paul Diipla, Region I Planning Council; Mark Stockman and Scott Capovilla, City of Rockford; Tom Hartley, Forest Preserves of Winnebago County; Ashley Sarver, Gary W. Anderson Architects; Rebecca Quirk and Karol Rosman, Rockford Coalition for a Sustainable Future; Tim Bragg, and Ian Linnabary, Rockford Park District; Brad Roos and Chet Kolodziej, Sustainability Working Group; Todd Marshall, Cynthia Hall, and Sandra Martell, Winnebago County Health Department; Don Krizan, Winnebago County Highway Department; Dan Kane, Boone County Conservation District; Ken Terrinoni, Boone County Administrator; Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute; Sherry Branson, Boone County Board Member; Sonia Eichstaedt, Boone County Health Department; T.J. Nee; Stateline Area Transportation Study.

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) **Meeting Agenda:** Ashley addressed the group and briefly discussed the meeting's agenda.

c) **Previous Meeting's Minutes:** Ms. Sarver briefly recapped the March 22, 2018 meeting.

d) **RPC Board Meeting Recap:** Mr. Rohr recapped the Regional Planning Council (RPC) Board meeting that took place on March 3rd in the Regional Design Center. Roughly 25 people were attendance for the meeting. A brief update on the Regional Work Study was given by Rock Valley College. The study is underway and will be finished by November 2018. Another presentation was given by Mr. Brauns on local government trends in community health. The proposed RPC fiscal budget was discussed and will be voted on at the next meeting. Additional items to note in the next meeting is a presentation from a ComEd Representative on their initiatives that help public organizations save/reduce the use of energy and save money on residential and commercial applications, and a presentation on the Great Plains Institute's potential regional work with the RPC and Environmental Committee. The next RPC Board meeting is June 28th in the Regional Design Center from 1:30-2:30pm.

e) **Relevant News & Updates:**

- a. **Volkswagen Settlement** – IEPA is holding a public meeting to get feedback on its draft Beneficiary Mitigation Plan. The plan is for how to use the \$100+ Million dollars that the state will receive from the VW Settlement. This meeting will explain the settlement

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and present the draft plan. The Meeting is on Wednesday May 30th, in the Thompson Center in Chicago from 6-8pm.

- b. **Northwest Illinois Water Study Update** – The kick-off meeting was April 12 in Freeport, several Winnebago and Boone County reps were there. Topics covered include an intro to the planning process, discussion of strengths/weaknesses, and distribution of a survey. The next meeting is May 30th in Lake Carroll at 2 PM.
- c. **Great Plains Institute** – The letter is located on page 5 of the packet. It was signed by Environmental Committee Chair Ian Linnabary on May 14th and will be used to acquire grant funding so Great Plains Institute can help RIPC with a region-wide sustainability plan for the future. A presentation by Doug Scott, GPI representative will take place at the next RPC Board meeting.
- d. **Grant Opportunities**
 - 1) Environmental Sustainability National Science Foundation, PD-18-7643 – Science and Technology and other Research and Development
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=305202>
 - 2) Union Pacific Foundation – FDI03 – Support Economic and Community well-being of the cities and towns served by Union Pacific.
<https://www.up.com/aboutup/community/foundation/>
- e. **Groundwater Study (Boone County)**- Information was presented to the group from Ken Terrinoni, Dane Kane, and Sherry Branson from Boone County on the work that has been done for a 3D Groundwater Model for the Region. Boone County conducted a large water study in 2011. There has been a great deal of water planning research since this time to refine the information. At this point they have collected and obtained all of the data that is readily available. Now they are pursuing a model to show what is happening deep below the surface. This information is necessary to protect the quality and quantity of our region's deep water aquifer system. This data will be integrated together to create a holistic set of data and information that will give us better tools to work with in the future and to make more informed planning decisions. Additionally, the need for the study has been built into the current update of the Boone County Comprehensive Plan.

2. LARGE GROUP SESSION

a) Working Group Report Outs:

Infrastructure Group: Ashley reported that her group met last Thursday to go over the Goals of the working group. They are trying to connect planning in the SLATS MPO with what's happening in the Rockford Region by building on the Rock River Trail system to increase use and increase awareness of the trail where it is not very evident. The River is a clear connection between the two areas. They are additionally looking at the Keith Creek Greenways planning effort over the past years including small improvements by the City of Rockford. How can we speed this planning process up to increase

recreational opportunities in the area and clean this polluted water up? Maybe the water and infrastructure group could have joint discussion on this project.

Education Group: They are working on conducting interviews with each of the 17 school districts in the region, so far 4 interviews had been completed (about 1 hour each). They are asking questions that relate to environmental education and facility planning efforts at all grade levels. What are the barriers in both curriculum and facilities planning, can you integrate sustainable approaches into your planning efforts? They have discovered that children are not getting outside as much as they used to and there are very few field trips focused on nature. These issues need to be discussed and addressed within our school districts in the region. Also, there is a very large gap/disconnect between the state regulation and what is actually being taught in our schools. There is real opportunity for collective impact to occur. Ian said he has some ideas on how to help expose more children to environmental education opportunities through the Rockford Park District.

Energy Conservation Group: Wants to pursue the GHG inventory project using information from the ClearPath tool as a basis. Ben has put together a document, “Singing the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and/or Acquiring ClearPath”. Options 1-4 are explained in detail outlining what is required to get the data and tools needed. Included is also the draft commitment letter. ClearPath is now widely used and would allow us to connect with other likeminded climate and energy-focused areas of the country. Another project was also discussed, on June 23rd will be the 1st Sustainability Summit. It will showcase solar and energy efficiency. This is a great way to get the community involved, and will be at the Nicholas Conservatory from 9 AM – 1 PM (see attached flyer).

Additionally, Ben said that he met with the Energy Group to discuss putting together an informational hub of environmental news and happenings in the region. RPC recently hired a marketing intern who may be able to assist with this.

Finally, the potential of a Group Solar Buy Project was discussed. Midwest Regional Energy Association (MREA) is a group that can come to a community and operate the entire solar group buy initiative, run public participation, and coordinate contractors and governments. The Energy Group is looking into how to get MREA here for a solar group buy in Rockford this year.

Health Working Group: The health working group gave a brief presentation on how health effects all aspects of the environment and because of this they would like to work and help each working group on their projects. They will do this through looking at reach project through a public health lens. A worksheet with pointed questions for each working group to consider is included in the materials packet. The Health Working Group would like to be notified of future external meetings between working groups in the future.

b) SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

Ben Rohr announced that we will be leaving the Region I Planning Council at the end of this month to pursue a career opportunity in Madison, Wisconsin. Effective immediately, Colin Belle will take over

as the RPC's staff liaison to the Environmental Committee. For additional information please contact Colin Belle at CBelle@rlplanning.org, or (815)-319-4184.

3. WORKING GROUP SESSION:

a) Each working group met for the last 30 minutes of the meeting to discuss their individual projects and the next steps they are taking with them.

4. CONCLUSION:

a) **Next Steps:** Continue to meet within the working groups and document project progress to report in the next Environmental Committee.

b) **Next Environmental Committee Meeting:** The next Environmental Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, July 19, 2018 4:00 – 6:00 PM in the Regional Design Center.

5. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.