



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, March 18th, 2021 – 4:00pm – 5:00pm
Virtual Meeting – 127 N. Wyman St., Suite 100

ATTENDEES: Ian Linnabary, Reno and Zahm; Rebecca Olson, Olson Ecological Solutions; Colin Belle, City of Rockford; Cynthia Hall, WCHD; Dick Rundall, Eliminate Racism 815; Neeley Erickson, Illinois Realtors Association; Harlan Johnson, NAACP; Steve Hall, Rebecca Quirk, Sierra Club Northwest River Valleys Chapter; Dan Kane, Boone County Conservation District; Brad Roos, Sustain Rockford; Aaron Miller, Nicor Gas; Dennis Anthony, WSWCD; Sean Von Bergen, Winnebago County; Tom Lind, Rockford Park District; Shelby Best, Sydney Turner, Isaac Guerrero, Kaylin Janicke, Kristen Hayden, Azure Dominguez, Region 1 Planning Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

- a) **Call to Order:** Mr. Linnabary called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM. He discussed his intention to transition out of his position as chairman of the Committee in the coming months.
- b) **Attendee Introductions:** Mr. Linnabary began introductions with himself and started the process of calling on the next person.
- c) **Approval of January 21st, 2021 meeting minutes:** Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion for approval. Mr. Kane motioned the approval (4:04 PM); it was seconded by Mr. Anthony (4:05 PM). Approval passes unanimously at 4:05 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

2. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a) **2021 Greenways Plan:** Ms. Best provided an update on the 2021 Greenways Plan. She stated that the period of public comment has ended and RPC received comments from both the working group and the public that will be included in the final incorporation of the plan. The goal for April is to have it ready for adoption and distribute the final plan to the committee once it is complete. It will also be presented at the next meeting in May.
- b) **Keith Creek Corridor Plan:** Ms. Best also explained that the Keith Creek project is in the final scheduling stage as RPC has yet to receive paperwork from IDOT. Until then it is being worked on internally and potential working group members are being researched as RPC awaits next steps.
- c) **Sustainability Newsletter:** Ms. Best brought attention to the committee packet in which RPC's new Sustainability Spotlight newsletter is explained. In April, the newsletter's focus will be current sustainability initiatives in order to raise awareness. It is open to the committee's suggestions.
- d) **Committee Working Group Structure Revisited:** Ms. Best began the discussion on working group recommendations. She stated that RPC has done more research on the best options depending on the level of activity. There has been no written input since 2018 and working groups met on an irregular basis with no significant updates. Options A and B detail project-specific groups and in-depth re-establishment options.

- i. Mr. Linnabary stated that he believes working groups are most active when coalesced around a project, and that he is leaning towards option A.
- ii. Ms. Olson noted that she has had many conversations with RPC on the subject, and she hopes this committee will have several projects to allow for the project-based option A, as well. However, she could not speak to the current structure so she invited others to share their thoughts.
- iii. Mr. Kane agreed with Mr. Linnabary and Ms. Olson, adding that people will get involved in their passions.
- iv. Ms. Turner asked Ms. Best to speak to some examples of projects that could be involved in the working group process. Ms. Best provided the Keith Creek Corridor Study and the Electric Vehicle implementation plan as examples, and stated that the idea is to make sure a project is lined up and then formulate a group around it.
- v. Ms. Olson added that the Watershed Coordinator position from the IEPA 319 grant could have some potential for upcoming projects.
- vi. Mr. Linnabary asked how projects come about and if it is the committee's duty to seek involvement. Ms. Best explained that the working group would convene around various projects that RPC is working on, however, if there are strong, relevant community areas that are brought up by the committee, it is possible to go that route, as well.
- vii. Mr. Linnabary asked if the committee was to make a decision today, how would it go about that? Ms. Best replied that we would vote and then RPC would bring an updated framework to the next meeting. Mr. Linnabary noted that we have heard from many who are in support of the new option and asked the committee if anyone is in favor of keeping the existing structure or has any options that have not yet been discussed.
- viii. Hearing none, Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion to accept option A with potential adoption at the May meeting at 4:20 PM. Ms. Olson made the motion (4:20 PM); it was seconded by Mr. Lind (4:21 PM). Approval passed unanimously at 4:21 PM. Motion passed unanimously.
- ix. In response to a message sent in the chat, Ms. Best stated that the Sustainability Spotlight newsletter is available to the public and can be shared with all channels.
- x. Mr. Linnabary reminded the committee that meetings are open and available to the public despite not having many public comments since switching over to virtual. He noted that it is something to remember for those that may know people who are interested in the subject matter.

3. OPEN FLOOR: Mr. Linnabary asked for any group reports or agency updates.

- a) Mr. Anthony noted that the Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District is hosting a "healthy forests" photo and poster contest over the next two months for K-12 students.
- b) Mr. Linnabary reminded the committee that the adoption of the new working group structure will occur at the next meeting.

4. ADJORNMENT

- a) Mr. Linnabary stated that the next Environmental Committee meeting is scheduled for **May 20th, 2021** at 4:00pm. *All RPC meetings are now open to a hybrid composition; attendees are welcome to join via Zoom or in person.*

- b) Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion to adjourn at 4:24 PM. Mr. Lind made the motion (4:24 PM); it was seconded by Mr. Kane (4:24 PM). Approval passed unanimously at 4:24 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Opportunities for public comment will be afforded on all agenda items.

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