



## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 28, 2019 – 4:00pm  
Regional Design Center – 315 N. Main St.

**ATTENDEES:** Harlan Johnson, NAACP; Mark Stockman, COR; Scott Capovilla, COR; Tom Lind, Rockford Park District; Erin Scheffler, Zion Development; Bob Campbell, Zion Development; Rebecca Quirk, Sustain Rockford; Sydney Turner, Margaret Campbell, Colin Belle, Region 1 Planning Council.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Colin Belle called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- a) **Attendee Introductions:** Attendees introduced themselves.
- b) **Approval of the February 28, 2019 Meeting's Minutes:** Mr. Belle entertained a motion to approve the February 28, 2019 meeting minutes. First motion made to approve by Sydney Turner, R1PC and seconded Margaret Campbell, R1PC. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

### 2. UPDATES

- a) Land-Use Planner Position

Colin Belle announced that Region 1 Planning Council has hired a Land-Use Planner, Allen Mills. Mr. Mills will start 2<sup>nd</sup> week of May.

- b) Bob Campbell & Erin Scheffler (Zion Development) - Update and discussion on the Keith Creek Greenways project including work already completed and the planning efforts currently underway

Erin Scheffler described the Keith Creek Greenways project's history and location. Ms. Scheffler is with AmeriCorps and working for Zion Development since January 2019 to assist in the data collection and project engagement. Gary Anderson Architects provided depictions of hypothetical visions of the future project. The posters also depicted locations such as large parking lots that can exacerbate run-off (red marker) and brownfields or junkyards (yellow marker). Current site issues: substantial flooding, need for an alternative transportation East-West connection, and neighborhood liability. Potentially the project could connect five (5) neighborhood parks; turning a neighborhood liability to a community asset. Ms. Scheffler has spoken to several neighborhood groups so far to discuss the issues and opportunities surrounding the project. The project is primarily located in a census tract that has a high percentage of households with no car access. The project also runs along a business district that could potentially benefit from higher connectivity.

Rebecca Quirk asked what the first phase of the project would be; Ms. Scheffler said the project is not broken into phases. Currently, the group is attempting to figure out what the best starting point would be for the project. There are considerations such as housing lost to flooding, other project timelines, and city-owned property to consider. They are collecting data at the moment to assist the project moving forward and help for any future grant applications. The group also discussed potential flood mitigation techniques such as natural plantings, bioswales, creek path shifting, and others. Mark Stockman initiated a discussion of the potential difficulties of certain projects that could inhibit what techniques could be employed. There also needs to be an examination of culverts, bridges, dams that fall in the project area. Scott Capovilla asked what the timeline is for Ms. Scheffler; she is getting up-to-date on previous studies, examining hydrology, and will continue to collect data and input going forward.

Sydney Turner asked if there will be future neighborhood meetings and how to sign-up for updates on the project. Ms. Scheffler said they are attending established meetings at the moment but will host stakeholder meetings eventually and is currently creating a mailing list.

**3. RELEVANT OPPORTUNITIES**

- a) R1PC Open Positions, briefly mentioned the current open position with R1PC.
  - Metropolitan Planner
  - Internships

**4. LARGE GROUP SESSION**

- a) Report Out from Each Working Group On Project Progress
- b) Land-Use Group reported that the Brownfield Inventory is being looked at but may require more than a clean-up of data. This project will be explored by the incoming land-use planner. Mark Stockman said they are considering hiring a planner to focus on brownfields in the area. Colin Belle noted this inventory would be part of the discussion for the next Greenway Plan update.
- c) Mr. Lind reported the Park District has received an Illinois EPA watershed planning grant, focusing on the South fork of Kent Creek, for identifying projects that will eliminate non-point source pollution.
- d) Rebecca Quirk said Rockford City Council is considering a resolution endorsing the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Greenest Region Compact on April 1, 2019. Rockford also may receive a "Silver" SolSmart program rating this year.
- e) NAACP and Environmental Considerations group reported the Wisconsin Energy Fair will be held on June 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> in Custer, Wisconsin. There will be over 200 workshops and is geared towards residents.

**5. ADJORNMENT**

- a) Next Environmental Committee Meeting: May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019
- b) Tom Lind move to adjourn, Sydney Turner seconds. Meeting ended at approximately 4:45pm