



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, November 19th, 2020 – 4:00pm – 5:00pm
Virtual Meeting – 127 N. Wyman St., Suite 100

ATTENDEES: Ian Linnabary, Reno and Zahm; Rebecca Olson, Olson Ecological Solutions; Tim Bragg, Dillon Schroeder, Fehr Graham; Scott Capovilla, Colin Belle, City of Rockford; Ashley Sarver, Studio GWA; Dan Kane, Boone County Conservation District; Brad Roos, Sustain Rockford; Neeley Erickson, Illinois Realtors Association; Harlan Johnson, NAACP; Shelby Best, Sydney Turner, Kaylin Janicke, Kristen Hayden, Region 1 Planning Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

- a) **Attendee Introductions:** Ms. Best completed roll call as the committee waited for Mr. Linnabary to arrive.
- b) **Call to Order:** Ms. Sarver called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM. Mr. Linnabary joined the meeting at 4:06.
- c) **Approval of September 17th, 2020 meeting minutes:** Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion for approval. Mr. Kane motioned the approval (4:06 PM); it was seconded by Ms. Sarver (4:07 PM). Approval passes unanimously at 4:07 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

2. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a) **2021 Greenways Plan:** Ms. Best provided an update on the 2021 Greenways Plan. She explained that Region 1 Planning Council has been working on the first draft of the plan and map which will be available for review by the working group and public in January. The working group has met twice already and provided feedback on the goals and objectives, as well as the map drafts. Ms. Sarver asked if there was anything that stood out as markedly different between this draft and the 2015 plan. Ms. Best stated that the main difference will be the fully interactive map that allows for storytelling.
- b) **Keith Creek Corridor Plan:** Ms. Best also explained that RPC was waiting on the final agreement from IDOT for the Keith Creek corridor project that will be launching in December, but is being worked on internally until then. Ms. Sarver added that the Section 319 grant had been received and that there was additional funding through a city match. They have submitted the paperwork to move forward with the project and are now waiting on AES. Ms. Sarver also noted that RPC is collaborating carefully with the city to prevent confusion and provide a unified approach. Ms. Olson left the meeting for the duration of this discussion due to a potential conflict of interest.
- c) **Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan:** Ms. Best also provided an update on the Electric Vehicle Readiness plan in place of Sydney Turner. The final plan will provide tools for regional EV readiness, establish regional charging, integrate charging into public planning, and act as a leader to make northern Illinois EV ready. Staff is currently finalizing the language and the draft will be sent to local governments for feedback prior to the 30-day public comment period. Any specific questions about the plan can be directed to Ms. Turner. Mr. Capovilla noted zoning issues regarding charging stations installed in parking lots, but said the City of Rockford has streamlined it to allow easier permitting. Mr. Johnson asked if the county was going to get on

board with this, Mr. Capovilla stated that agriculture was a bigger concern but hopefully the urban areas would feel the need to. Ms. Erickson noted that realtors are concerned about mandates and also what triggers readiness. She questioned how it will affect single and multi-family housing and asked when public comment period is happening. Ms. Erickson stated that she would appreciate the opportunity to review that section.

- d) **South Fork Kent Creek Plan:** Ms. Olson reported that the draft was submitted to the EPA in September and they provided feedback on the plan that will be incorporated. The revised plan will be sent out by Wednesday, November 25th for review. Those interested can contact Rebecca Olson to be added to the email list. The final plan is due December 31st, which will be followed by implementation. Mr. Roos noted that unidentified sources of coliform bacteria were an issue last time, and Ms. Olson replied that they've narrowed in on where these issues may be coming from - residential septic systems are a likely contributor. They want to encourage residents to clean and check their septic systems regularly, although it's not mandated. Other than this, the E. coli may be from wildlife, but there aren't a lot in the watershed. Mr. Roos clarified that another resident had seen large numbers of geese congregating nearby and asked if that had been considered as a cause. Ms. Olson responded that Levings Park had been identified by the Rockford Park District as requiring recommendations for geese, including a filter strip along the edge to discourage them; the dam cannot be planted with a filter strip but all other areas could be, however, it will take a few years to establish. Mr. Roos stated that another issue is that the Canadian goose population is growing exponentially without predators, which might be a health issue considering the feces, although he noted that the health department doesn't currently consider it so. This might require local intervention on a national problem. Ms. Olson also noted a recommendation in the plan regarding E. coli and more testing south of Levings Lake. The Rock River Reclamation District would donate lab fees to run samples from farther north. Rock River College would be interested in taking samples and potentially analyzing it in their lab as well. Mr. Roos noted that students had already done that in Spring Creek and Ms. Olson confirmed.
- e) **Committee Working Groups:** Mr. Linnabary asked for updates from committee working groups and there were none.
- f) **Approval of 2021 Meeting Dates:** Mr. Linnabary asked Ms. Best to confirm that the schedule was consistent with past dates and she did. He entertained a motion for approval. Ms. Sarver motioned the approval (4:25 PM); it was seconded by Mr. Capovilla (4:25 PM). Motion passed unanimously.

3. GROUP REPORT SESSION: Mr. Linnabary asked for any group reports or agency updates.

- a) Mr. Roos noted that the Core Planning Team for the Green Town Conference (GTC) had the first full meeting last week, with good attendance from 13 individuals. There is no representative from Boone County, however, so Mr. Roos asked if anyone had any connections. He noted that the March 22nd, 2018 meeting minutes discussed what this group is about and that the GTC can offer something useful to this committee. There needs to be an advisory council for the GTC to engage more leaders in the community, and the Environmental Planning Committee has people who could benefit lead up and post events as well as making future regional sustainability plans. The core team is looking for leaders to lead discussion and breakout sessions before the event and at the event. Mr. Linnabary agreed and asked if Mr. Roos had thoughts on what that might look like. Mr. Roos says it might be in-person and that there have been 23 events across the Midwest. This is a project by Seven Generations Ahead and they expect several hundred people for a full-

day event comprised of speakers, field experts, and leaders. They do not have a location yet that can accommodate this but there will be a number of events that precede the conference to increase community engagement, and breakout sessions including topics such as land use, biodiversity, and social justice. Mr. Roos commented that these are many of the same topics that the committee concerns itself with. He also stated that Transform Rockford held the Great Neighborhoods Summit on November 12th which focused on sustainability and social justice. There is a recorded conversation between five people with 7 generations Ahead and it is a really good example of an interesting community event. Ms. Best will have access to it if anyone would like to see.

- b) Mr. Schroeder from Fehr Graham, representing Jeff Macke, wanted to report to the group that they're working with the City of Loves Park on a watershed delineation with the IEPA so hopefully Loves Park can find funding for watershed projects. Mr. Macke can elaborate further if anyone is interested.
- c) Mr. Johnson sent a link in the Zoom chat for Students for Carbon Dividends, college campus activists, and noted that the NAACP justice team and CCL are interested in reaching out to the youth in the community and getting them involved in climate-related groups. Mr. Linnabary explained that the bipartisan group that pushed this was started by Howard Baker (R). He stated that they enjoy broad support and it is a very interesting concept.

4. ADJORNMENT

- a) Mr. Linnabary stated that the next Environmental Committee meeting is scheduled for **January 21st, 2021** at 4:00pm, most likely via video/teleconference but will depend on external factors.
- b) Mr. Linnabary entertained a motion to adjourn at 4:38 PM. Mr. Johnson made the motion (4:38 PM); it was seconded by Ms. Sarver (4:38 PM). Approval passed unanimously at 4:38 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

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

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