

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING  
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN  
DECEMBER 12, 2019**

**Members Present:** Angela Churchill, Andrew Diorio, Tom Galante, Heather Goudreau, Ralph Grathoff, Lee Haggas, Ryan Johnson, Suzi Myers, Loren Nagy, Pam Otto, Caroline Wilfong

**Members Absent:** Kathy Brens, Jillian Leturno, Claire Norman

**Others Present:** Chris Adesso, Marcelline D'Argento, AJ Reineking

**Visitors Present:** Trish Beckjord, Denise McKinley

**1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:03 p.m.

**2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns**

Ms. Beckjord was in attendance on behalf of the River Corridor Foundation and the Conservation Foundation, and expressed interest in partnering with the Natural Resources Commission [NRC] to promote and support environmental-related activities. She informed the NRC of a series of monthly educational presentations that will be hosted by the Conservation Foundation. The series focuses on the Fox River and includes talks on safe salting, wildlife and dams. Ms. Beckjord invited Chair. Grathoff to discuss the NRC's activities and initiatives as part of this series. Additionally, Ms. Beckjord provided information on a program offered by the Conservation Foundation entitled Conservation in Our Community. The program offers resources for communities and homeowners for environmental-related projects including pollinator gardens, water conservation, storm drain stenciling and other activities. Informational materials were distributed at the meeting and are attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Ms. McKinley was in attendance as a private citizen and resident of St. Charles to express her interest and support for curbside food scrap composting [please see 4.C. below].

**3. Minutes Review and Approval**

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the November 14, 2019 Natural Resources Commission [NRC] meeting. Motion by Comm. Otto, second by Comm. Johnson to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:42 p.m.

**4. Old Business**

**A. Greenest Region Compact II**

Chair. Grathoff provided a recap regarding his participation on a recent panel with members of Geneva's Natural Resources Committee and Batavia's Environmental Commission. Chair. Grathoff noted Batavia is advanced in its progress with the Greenest Region Compact [GRC], and he invited Abby Beck from Batavia to attend a NRC meeting to discuss the Batavia Environmental Commission's activities.

**B. Volunteer Waivers**

Mr. Reineking provided copies of a waiver for NRC volunteers. Additional information will be provided at the January 2020 NRC meeting regarding whether NRC Commissioners are required to sign waivers as well.

**C. Curbside Food Scrap Composting**

Comm. Goudreau reported she recently attended an Illinois Food Scrap Coalition meeting, and community interest in food scrap composting is increasing. Currently at least forty-five (45) communities in Illinois participate in curbside food scrap composting, including Batavia. Comm. Goudreau stated Lakeshore Recycling Services [Lakeshore], the city's contracted refuse/recycling hauler offers curbside food scrap composting which is picked up on residents' regular refuse/recycling days. After pick up, Lakeshore delivers the food scraps to a composting facility. She suggested food scrap composting could be offered to St. Charles residents, and those who are interested could opt-in by placing food scraps in brown paper yardwaste bags or yardwaste containers rented from Lakeshore. Yardwaste and food scrap pick-up is available during the months of April through November.

Comm. Goudreau noted the Illinois Department of Transportation uses food scrap-amended compost as a percentage of its landscaping along highways. Comm. Goudreau suggested the NRC could host a compost sale for residents, and possibly create a planting site demonstrating the successful use of compost. Ms. McKinley noted compost can be used everywhere in residents' gardens and yards.

Mr. Adesso explained the city's contract with Lakeshore includes a provision for curbside food scrap composting, but this service has not been activated. The NRC's involvement in food scrap composting would be to provide information and obtain support from the City Council, and then help with community outreach and education. Chair. Grathoff inquired as to the pathway to implement curbside food scrap composting. Mr. Adesso stated the city's Government Services Committee [GSC] and then the City Council would need to vote on the program. Mr. Adesso will include this issue on the agenda for the January 2020 GSC meeting, and suggested members of the NRC attend the meeting to provide information in support of starting curbside food scrap composting.

**5. New Business**

None.

**6. Committee Reports**

**A. Education Committee**

Comm. Myers reviewed the 2020 publication schedule for *The Den* newsletter and asked the Commissioners if they wanted to continue writing articles next year. Comm. Myers noted each member of the NRC has their own area of expertise that they contribute to the articles. The NRC agreed to continue writing articles for *The Den*.

**B. Langum Woods Clean-Up Committee**

Comms. Otto and Johnson proposed a January 2020 clean-up day in Langum Woods. The date of Saturday, January 11 was scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with an alternate date of January 25. The clean-up event will be open to the public to participate. The city will provide volunteer waivers, herbicide and tools.

**C. New Committee**

None.

**7. Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports**

Motion to approve and place into the public record the Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for the month of November 2019. Motion by Comm. Otto, second by Comm. Galante to approve the reports. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:00 p.m.

**8. Additional Items**

**A. Commissioners**

Comm. Wilfong suggested the NRC start plans for Arbor Day 2020. Ms. D'Argento will include Arbor Day on the January agenda and distribute the Arbor Day checklist at the meeting.

**B. City Staff**

None.

**C. Visitors**

Ms. Beckjord informed the NRC of a spring river clean-up event that will be hosted by the River Corridor Foundation; another event may be held in July. She requested the NRC's support in having more high school students participate.

**D. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Comm. Nagy, second by Comm. Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:06 p.m.

# Conservation In Our Community

## Engaging/Educating Local Citizenry

As requested, The Conservation Foundation will provide materials, outreach, educational and on-site support for community conservation-focused activities such as:



- Adopt-a-Stream cleanup activities by neighborhood/school groups with local streams/wetlands
- Targeted messaging to residents/business owners about stormwater management, chloride use, water conservation, etc.
- Installation of butterfly/pollinator gardens by local garden club or school groups
- Conducting Mighty Acorns® nature education and stewardship programs for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Supporting municipal leadership in establishing an eco-commission comprised of local citizens; facilitate connection to a network of similar groups active in the Fox Valley and surrounding communities
- A community rain barrel sale with presentations and a “rain barrels on parade” activity coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce
- Storm drain stenciling and distribution of information fliers by neighborhood/school groups in selected neighborhoods
- Educating Home Owner Associations interested in reducing the numbers of geese and erosion problems and cutting expenses related to their detention basins and common areas
- Educating individual homeowners on streambank restoration needs
- Helping to organize a community tree and plant sale
- Providing news releases and information items for community publications and social media



For more information, please contact::

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# Conservation In Our Community



## Program Overview

The Conservation Foundation's *Conservation in Our Community* program is a new way to make conservation an even stronger part of your community's culture. TCF is interested in partnering with interested municipalities to assist them with projects, as well as educate and engage citizens to help address local needs. TCF will develop and implement new and existing programs around the specific needs and desires of each community partner.

## Program Benefits

- More activities and less work for municipalities to meet new MS4 requirements
- Educated and engaged citizenry working on local conservation initiatives
- Local leadership and staff better informed regarding conservation and environmental issues and solutions
- Cleaner water, more natural areas and less localized flooding



## Support Services for Municipalities

As requested, The Conservation Foundation will:

- Facilitate connections to trained professionals for ordinance review to clarify language supporting identified goals for green infrastructure and conservation design initiatives
- Work with public works and parks staff members to reduce costs and streamline the process of incorporating green infrastructure and naturalized stormwater features
- Provide input on proposed developments, making recommendations on opportunities for green infrastructure and conservation design components
- Facilitate establishment of conservation easements and long-term management financing to ensure long term success of conservation/green infrastructure/stormwater elements in new and existing business and residential developments
- Host HOA education programs on the function and proper management of stormwater management elements (naturalized detention basins, etc.)
- Develop a coordinated Conservation@Home/Conservation@Work program in targeted neighborhoods to help reduce first-flush stormwater flows
- Work with public works staff to create an awareness campaign to encourage homeowners to disconnect their downspouts and build raingardens to replenish drinking water supplies and clean local rivers and streams



**THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION AND  
THE RIVER CORRIDOR FOUNDATION OF ST. CHARLES  
SPONSOR FOX RIVER PROGRAM SERIES**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 12, 2019**

Contact: Trish Beckjord, The Conservation Foundation  
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**St. Charles, IL – A River Flows Through It – Life in the Fox River Valley**

The River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles and The Conservation Foundation are partnering to sponsor a five-part lecture series on the Fox River for community residents in the Tri-Cities region. The goal of the presentations is to help educate those who live within the Fox River watershed about life (historical, cultural and natural) in the Fox River valley. It is offered as part of a new community outreach initiative of the River Corridor Foundation.

The pilot series kicks off in January. A different topic with guest speakers will be offered each month through May. Should it prove to be popular, the organizers already have more topics in mind and would love to hear your ideas. The St. Charles Park District will host the programs each month from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the Pottawatomie Community Center's Multipurpose Room.

Mark your calendars for the following programs and dates:

**Jan. 15: Safe Salting for Ice and Snow: Have We Found the Holy Grail?** – Trish Beckjord, The Fox River Initiative, The Conservation Foundation

**Feb. 19: Winter Birds of the Fox River: How Are They Doing? What Are We Seeing?** Bob and Kathy Andrini, Kane County Audubon

**Mar. 18: Fox River Dams: Should We Live With Them? Can We Live Without Them?** Deanna Doohaluk, Water Quality Scientist and Watershed Project



Manager, The Conservation Foundation, and Karen Clementi, Interim Regulatory and Public Outreach Manager, Fox Metro Water Reclamation District

Apr. 15: **Coyotes to Bees: Wildlife of the Fox River Valley**, Pam Otto, Author and Outreach Ambassador, St. Charles Park District, Member-Natural Resources Commission

May 20: **Why We Need the Fox River**. Brook McDonald, President and CEO, The Conservation Foundation

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*The River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles supports and advocates for projects that will enhance the downtown St. Charles riverfront environment as a destination for cultural, educational, recreational and economic opportunities that are accessible to all.*

[www.stcrivercorridor.org](http://www.stcrivercorridor.org)

*The Conservation Foundation's mission is to improve the health of our communities by preserving and restoring open space and natural lands, protecting rivers and watersheds, and promoting stewardship of our environment in northeastern Illinois.*

[www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org)

