

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
LOREN NAGY, CHAIRMAN
JUNE 10, 2021**

Members Present: Kathy Brens, Angela Churchill, Tom Galante, Lee Haggas, Ryan Johnson, Laura Miller Hill, Suzi Myers, Loren Nagy, Pam Otto, Daniella Taylor.

Members Absent: Elli Chivari, Heather Goudreau, Michael Stroud.

Others Present: Marcelline D'Argento, AJ Reineking.

Visitors Present: Callie Ramirez.

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns

See New Business below.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the May 13, 2021 Natural Resources Commission [NRC] meeting. Motion by Comm. Brens, second by Comm. Haggas to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:04 p.m.

4. Old Business

A. Earth Day Clean-Up

Comm. Otto thanked Student Comm. Taylor for her participation and assistance in helping to make the Earth Day clean-up event a success.

5. New Business

A. Potential New Student Commissioner

Callie Ramirez introduced herself to all present and expressed her interest in joining the NRC as Student Commissioner. Ms. Ramirez will be a freshman at St. Charles East High School this fall, and is active in clean-up events with Fox River Helpers.

Motion to appoint Ms. Ramirez as a NRC Student Commissioner. Motion by Comm. Miller Hill, second by Comm. Churchill to appoint Ms. Ramirez. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:07 p.m.

Chair. Nagy welcomed Student Comm. Ramirez to the NRC.

B. Urban Forestry Management Plan

Chair. Nagy stated the city's Urban Forestry Management Plan [UFMP or Plan] was due for review by the NRC; the UFMP is reviewed on a periodic basis. Chair. Nagy proposed forming an UFMP Review Committee to review the Plan. Comms. Churchill, Johnson and Chair. Nagy will serve on the new committee.

C. Callery Pear Trees

Comm. Johnson noted the city's Callery Pear tree population will be reduced in number according to the UFMP. These trees may be considered an invasive species and are a current concern due to fire blight. Chair. Nagy suggested that the city prioritize any removal of Pear trees in close proximity to natural areas. Mr. Reineking reported the city arborist projected that up to 70% of the city's Pear trees will be lost due to fire blight. City parkway trees are generally removed due to hazards or if the canopy has declined 75% or more. Mr. Reineking stated the city will be proactive in removing Pear trees from parkways.

D. First Street Plaza Expansion

Comm. Miller Hill inquired as to whether the NRC would be consulted on sustainability issues for the First Street Plaza expansion. Chair. Nagy explained the NRC has an advisory role to the city and would provide input if called upon to do so. Mr. Reineking noted NRC comments or suggestions regarding sustainability [as related to First Street or other projects] be submitted to him and he would direct them to the appropriate city staff.

E. Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Grant

Comm. Miller Hill provided information regarding a grant available to local governments from the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] with the goal of increasing generation and use of compost. The amount of the grant is \$45,000 - \$90,000 and requires a 25% match by the recipient community, which can be matched with time, equipment or funding. The commission discussed promoting composting in the community through education and possibly food waste recovery at some of the local festivals. The NRC may consider pursuing the USDA grant in 2022. A copy of the grant information is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

6. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Comm. Myers distributed information regarding Witness Trees, and explained the Morton Arboretum and Chicago Region Trees Initiative are promoting community participation to find and document these trees. Witness Trees were trees marked by federal surveyors to document and designate boundary lines and sections of land during the 1800s. Some Witness Trees are centuries old and have remained in place through many changes, including a 200-year-old Oak tree in Will County. A copy of the information on Witness Trees is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up Committee

None.

C. Community Sustainability Committee

Comm. Miller Hill reported on behalf of Comm. Goudreau regarding the NRC's cooking oil collection. The oil collection will be done by Green Grease and will be located outside the Public Works gates on Rt. 25.

Comm. Myers reported on behalf of Comm. Goudreau regarding the NRC's dark skies event. A presentation for the community will be scheduled for August or September 2021.

D. Single-Use Bag Committee

Chair. Nagy reported there have been no updates regarding Illinois Senate Bill 1240 other than a change in sponsor. Chair. Nagy will follow-up his discussions with Ald. Bongard on this topic later in July.

E. Greenest Region Compact Committee

Comm. Myers reported most sections of the GRC have been reviewed with the exception of the Sustainable Communities and Mobility sections. The committee's goal is to have each section in summary list form by the July NRC meeting.

Additionally, Comm. Myers reported Ald. Wirball had inquired if more recycling containers could be placed in the city's downtown area. The commissioners noted the importance of educating the public on recycling. Mr. Reineking reported this issue is already under discussion with the Public Works Environmental Services Manager and the city's refuse/recycling services provider, Lakeshore Recycling Systems.

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 May 2021. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Churchill to approve the reports. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:51 p.m.

8. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Newly appointed Student Comm. Ramirez provided information on the upcoming Fox River Helpers June 19 clean-up event.

B. City Staff

None.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Comm. Brens, second by Comm. Churchill to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:56 p.m.

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News Release**USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction**  [Email This Page](#)

WASHINGTON, May 17, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of up to \$2 million for local governments to host Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot projects for fiscal year 2021. The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans and they are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture.

USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (Office) will accept applications on [Grants.gov](#) until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 16, 2021. Projects should span two years with a start date of September 25, 2021 and completion date of September 25, 2023.

"Finding ways to turn food waste into nutrient rich compost is a win-win for farmers, communities and the environment," Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Gloria Montaño Greene said. "The level of enthusiasm and creativity communities are putting towards this kind of problem solving is inspiring, and USDA is proud to support it."

Details

Cooperative agreements support projects led by local governments that:

- Generate compost.
- Increase access to compost for agricultural producers.
- Reduce reliance on and limit the use of fertilizer.
- Improve soil quality.
- Encourage waste management and permaculture business development.
- Increase rainwater absorption.
- Reduce municipal food waste.
- Divert food waste from landfills.

Priority will be given to projects that anticipate or demonstrate economic benefits, incorporate plans to make compost easily accessible to farmers, including community gardeners, integrate other food waste strategies, including food recovery efforts and collaborate with multiple partners.

This is the second year the Office has offered this funding opportunity. Examples of previously-selected projects include:

Department of Sanitation of New York and nonprofit Big Reuse are establishing food scrap drop-off locations while New York City Parks Department is diverting wood chips and leaves from landfill disposal to create compost. GreenThumb, Brooklyn Grange, Hellgate Farms, Gowanus Canal Conservancy and other urban farms are distributing the compost for food production in the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn, diverting approximately 600,000 pounds of food scraps and green waste from landfills and providing 350 cubic yards of compost to food producers.

The City of Prescott, Arizona is collaborating with the farmers' market, volunteers, restaurants, Yavapai County Cooperative Extension and Prescott College to design, build and implement the Prescott Community Compost Program. The program educates the community about composting, reduces food waste by collecting and composting restaurant food scraps and provides high-quality compost to gardeners and farmers in Central Yavapai County, creating approximately 28 tons of compost over the two-year program.

Webinar

A pre-recorded webinar will provide an overview of the cooperative agreements' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application. The webinar will be posted at [farmers.gov/urban](#) . [Access the webinar recording](#) or [view the webinar transcript](#) .

More Information

Questions about this cooperative agreement opportunity can be sent to UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov.

The Office was established through the 2018 Farm Bill and is designed to be a USDA-wide effort. Representatives from agencies throughout USDA play a critical role in successfully servicing urban customers. Other grant and engagement opportunities are available in addition to the CCFWR agreements. More information is available at farmers.gov/urban .

Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include [NIFA grants](#), [FSA loans](#) and [AMS grants](#) to improve domestic and international opportunities for U.S. growers and producers.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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