

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
MAY 9, 2019**

Members Present: Chairman Ralph Grathoff, Isabella Bernat, Jon Duerr, Chloe Fanning, Tom Galante, Heather Goudreau, Lee Haggas, Ryan Johnson, Jillian Leturno, Loren Nagy, Pam Otto

Members Absent: Kathy Brens, Suzi Myers, Caroline Wilfong

Others Present: Chris Adesso, Marcelline D'Argento

Visitors Present: Naman Patel

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:01 p.m.

2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns

Naman Patel introduced himself to all present. Mr. Patel, a high school senior at St. Charles East High School, was in attendance at the Natural Resources Committee [NRC] meeting in connection with a school project, Government for a Day. Mr. Patel requested the NRC's input regarding his project to redevelop the St. Charles Police Department site into a restaurant. The Commissioners and City staff provided Mr. Patel with suggestions and information including consideration of building by the Fox River, existing utilities, flood plains, and traffic patterns. Comm. Duerr noted the importance of preserving the integrity of the walking path by the river which was established in the 1930's. Mr. Patel thanked the Commissioners and staff for their input.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the April 11, 2019 Natural Resources Commission [NRC] meeting. Motion by Comm. Otto, second by Comm. Nagy to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:16 p.m.

4. Old Business

A. Arbor Day

Commissioners and staff complimented the NRC Student Commissioners on their presentations at the Arbor Day celebration. Comm. Otto noted attendance was down at this year's Arbor Day event. Several Commissioners discussed possibly changing the location from Lincoln Park to the elementary school [or other location] where the Arbor Day tree planting will be held, and combining the tree planting with the Arbor Day celebration. Traffic noise on Main Street on Friday afternoons is also an issue. Other possible locations for the event may be Delnor Woods or Mount St. Mary's Park. Comm. Goudreau requested clarification as to the goals for the Arbor Day celebration. Ms. D'Argento explained an Arbor Day celebration is required and certain criteria must be met to fulfill the requirements of St. Charles' Tree City USA designation. Arbor Day 2020 plans will be further discussed at the June 2019 NRC meeting.

B. Storm Drain Markers

The storm drain markers have been received at Public Works and are ready to be installed. Storm drains in the downtown area will be targeted for installation. Commissioners will meet in the parking lot at City Hall on Thursday, June 6, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. and complete one drain

together before separating to install additional storm drain markers in the designated areas. Mr. Adesso will provide maps of the targeted areas.

5. New Business

A. Greenest Region Compact Tool

Comm. Otto reported on a meeting with the City of Batavia's Environmental Commission. The Batavia Commission utilizes a Greenest Region Compact [Compact] framework tool as a guide for planning, establishing goals and assessing their accomplishments. Comm. Otto suggested the framework tool could be used by the NRC to form sub-committees and join other municipalities in establishing a regional approach to environmental-related initiatives. Mr. Adesso noted the NRC's formal support and approval by City Council would be required to adopt the philosophies of Compact. Additionally, Mr. Adesso explained St. Charles is a voting member of the Mayors Caucus but has not yet approved a resolution to become part of the Compact. Chair. Grathoff noted the ten categories of the Compact form the basis for a natural resources management plan, and asked the Commissioners to review the categories for further discussion at the next NRC meeting in June. The ten categories are: 1) climate, 2) economic development, 3) energy, 4) land, 5) leadership, 6) mobility, 7) municipal operations, 8) sustainable communities, 9) water and 10) waste and recycling.

6. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

In Comm. Myers absence Ms. D'Argento distributed the production schedule and article guidelines for the City newsletter, *The Den*. The topic of NRC submissions for *The Den* was previously discussed at the April 2019 meeting, and several Commissioners have already committed to writing articles. However, articles are still needed for October, November and December 2019, and January 2020.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up Committee

Comm. Otto reported she and Comms. Johnson and Myers hosted a wildflower walk in Langum Woods on Sunday, May 5th. Six members of the community were in attendance. There were a variety of wildflowers in bloom, and Comm. Johnson reported they saw an owl's nest with a fledgling in the back of the woods. The participants all had favorable comments, and Comm. Otto suggested that the wildflower walk should be an annual event.

C. New Committee

Comm. Goudreau reported the location for the proposed NRC-sponsored recycling event and pumpkin collection in November is under discussion. She suggested the needs of local charitable organizations could be assessed in connection with recycling items people have already at their homes. Items such as blankets, for example, could be recycled and collected by local charities to help the people they serve and keep items out of landfills. Comm. Otto reported the St. Charles Park District sponsors an annual collection of gently used school supplies at the end of the school year. Comm. Otto noted many unopened reams of notebook paper are collected every year, and suggested possibly working with School District 303 to modify school supply lists to reduce the purchase of unused supplies. Mr. Adesso explained once a location for the recycling event and pumpkin collection is determined, City Council approval will be required.

May 9, 2019

7. Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports April 2019

Motion to approve and place into the public record the Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for the month of April 2019. Motion by Comm. Nagy, second by Comm. Haggas. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:03 p.m.

8. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Johnson requested maps of the City's exposed or day-lighted storm water infrastructure such as retention areas to determine the possibility of naturalizing the areas for ecological benefits. Mr. Adesso agreed to provide the requested maps, and explained the vast majority of storm water infrastructure in the City is privately owned, but there are several City-owned areas. Mr. Adesso noted he had previously discussed with the NRC a recently naturalized retention basin located on Foxfield Road east of Dunham Road, but there are more retention areas Comm. Johnson can review. Comm. Johnson suggested hosting a community field trip to a City-owned storm water area to inform and show the public naturalized projects the City has successfully completed.

Comm. Goudreau encouraged the Commissioners to send her photos and information for the NRC's Facebook page, and to offer any suggestions for possible tours, classes, events, etc. the NRC can promote.

Student Comm. Bernat asked if the City offers incentives to encourage renewable energy such as solar power [she is also working on a Government for a Day project]. Mr. Adesso explained the City offers a utility credit to residents with solar panels. Specifically, if a resident generates more solar energy than they use, the surplus flows into the City's electric grid and the resident receives a credit on their utility bill. Mr. Adesso suggested she contact the City's Community and Economic Development Department for additional information regarding any incentives for renewable energy, and Tom Bruhl, Electric Services Manager, for energy rate structure information. Comm. Otto stated when the Park District's Hickory Knolls location was built as a LEAD solar facility they worked a company called Earth Wind and Solar which relies on grant funding to complete projects.

B. City Staff

None.

C. Visitors

None.

D. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Comm. Nagy, second by Comm. Otto. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:15 p.m.