

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING  
LOREN NAGY, CHAIRMAN  
MAY 13, 2021**

**Members Present:** Kathy Brens, Heather Goudreau, Lee Haggas, Ryan Johnson, Laura Miller Hill, Suzi Myers, Loren Nagy, Pam Otto, Michael Stroud. Present via WebEx: Daniella Taylor.

**Members Absent:** Elli Chivari, Angela Churchill, Tom Galante.

**Others Present:** Marcelline D'Argento, AJ Reineking.

**Visitors Present:** Mayor Lora Vitek.

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

The meeting was convened by Chair. Nagy at 7:05 p.m.

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

Introductions were made by all present including newly elected Mayor Lora Vitek and newly appointed Natural Resources Commission [NRC] members, Comms. Miller Hill and Stroud.

Mayor Vitek expressed her appreciation for the NRC's work and commitment to serving the community. Mayor Vitek and Chair. Nagy noted the NRC's achievements and direction going forward. Chair. Nagy described the NRC's continuing advisory role to the city council, including research and recommendations on what might be in the best interest of the city regarding issues under the purview of the NRC. Additionally, the NRC may be called upon to review landscape developments to ensure the selected plant material is in city's best long-term interest, for example. Mayor Vitek stated the importance of having the NRC educate the city council on trends and other issues, such as the proposed plastic bag ordinance and Greenest Region Compact [GRC], that elected officials might not be aware of otherwise.

**3. Minutes Review and Approval**

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the April 8, 2021 NRC meeting. Motion by Comm. Brens, second by Comm. Haggas to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:10 p.m.

**4. Old Business**

**A. Greenest Region Compact II**

A new sub-committee was formed to focus on the Greenest Region Compact [GRC]. The sub-committee members are Comms. Churchill, Goudreau and Myers. Comm. Myers reported the sub-committee had reviewed the Land, Water and Recycling sections of the GRC. Comm. Myers explained the sub-committee excluded objectives from the GRC that have been already started or are already being done by the St. Charles Park District or the city. Additional objectives excluded from the GRC were those that the City did not plan to address, such those related to farmland. The remaining GRC objectives were summarized in a list that the NRC can consider working on going forward. Mr. Reineking summarized that City staff and the GRC sub-committee are working together to bring outstanding GRC objectives back to the NRC to address.

**B. Earth Day Clean-Up**

Comm. Otto reported over 100 pounds of trash was collected by St. Charles high school students including students from the Key Club and Honors Society. Comm. Stroud suggested having the public participate in future clean-up events. Comm. Otto noted the Earth Day clean-up this year mainly included high school students, but there is an annual fall river clean-up for community participation. Comm. Miller Hill stated there is a clean-up event scheduled for June 19th coordinated by the Friends of the Fox and the Forest Preserve District. Comm. Goudreau will promote these events on the NRC's Facebook page. Comm. Otto requested additional discussion be deferred until the June 2021 NRC meeting.

**C. Arbor Day Recap**

Chair. Nagy reported organizing the Arbor Day celebration was challenging this year due to COVID restrictions and coordinating with multiple members of the school district. Mr. Reineking reported the superintendent was supportive of the event, and welcomed future tree plantings. Comm. Myers suggested planting a tree at one of the St. Charles schools and having a separate community event as the former Tree Commission and NRC have done in the past. The commissioners discussed possible changes and enhancements to next year's Arbor Day celebration.

Comm. Nagy summarized the discussions: possibly combining Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations on a Saturday instead of a Friday; moving the event from Lincoln Park to Mt. St. Mary Park; continuing the Earth Day clean-up with students and include the community, recognizing the clean-up participants at the Arbor Day event, inviting the library and local business to participate, and planting a tree at one of the St. Charles schools.

**5. New Business**

**A. Social Media Update**

Comm. Goudreau reported on behalf of Comm. Churchill who had posted information and photos regarding proper tree mulching on the NRC's Facebook page. The post received over 1,000 shares, including in several other countries, as well as 32 comments. Comm. Goudreau noted the NRC now has 467 follows on its Facebook page.

**B. Jumping Worms**

Comm. Myers distributed an article regarding jumping worms, which have been found in Kane County. The worms are considered to be an invasive species, and although they don't spread on their own [like the Emerald Ash Borer], they can be spread during plant swaps and their eggs are found in certain types of mulch. The concern is the worms cause damage to soils. Comm. Myers wanted the NRC to be aware of this issue.

**6. Committee Reports**

**A. Education Committee**

Comm. Myers noted she is writing articles for *The Den* regarding jumping worms and dark skies. Comm. Goudreau reported she previously met with Adam Kreuzer, who is a delegate with the International Dark Sky Association. Comm. Goudreau stated Mr. Kreuzer expressed interest in attending a NRC meeting and speaking with the commissioners or having an event for the community. Comm. Goudreau offered to coordinate with Mr. Kreuzer to schedule a day and time.

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

Comms. Johnson and Otto reported a fall brush clearing day will be scheduled along with the removal of invasive species.

**C. Community Sustainability Committee**

Comm. Goudreau made the following suggestions regarding possible NRC-sponsored events: a native plant sale during the next Arbor Day celebration; cooking oil collection the Saturday after Thanksgiving to promote oil recycling and education on bio-fuel; continue to offer pumpkin composting the Saturday after Halloween; and continue to offer holiday lights recycling collections.

Comm. Brens offered to assist with the holiday lights collections at Blue Goose Market. Comm. Haggas suggested having a sign-up sheet to coordinate the collections by multiple members of the NRC, and perhaps having an Eagle Scout participate.

Comms. Myers and Goudreau proposed creating a pollinator plot with signage on city property. Mr. Reineking noted possible locations might be near the Oak savannah on South 7th Avenue or across from the Public Works facility. Comm. Miller Hill suggested including city beehives as part of the proposed pollinator plot, and getting children involved with seed “bombs” of native flowers. Comm. Otto noted the NRC should review the city’s bee ordinance [Title 6 Animals, Regulation, 6.12.085 – Beekeeping] with regard to public spaces. Comm. Goudreau will include beekeeping and education on the NRC’s Facebook page.

**D. Single-Use Bag Committee**

Chair. Nagy summarized the NRC’s proposed ordinance regarding single-use bags for the benefit of the new commissioners. Chair. Nagy reported Ald. Bongard planned to talk to local retailers about the proposed ordinance.

**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 months of March and April 2021. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Otto to approve the reports. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:24 p.m.

**8. Additional Items**

**A. Commissioners**

Comm. Johnson requested information on the city’s plan to remove Callery Pear trees from the parkways. This topic will be included on the June 2021 NRC agenda for discussion along with the periodic review of the city’s Urban Forestry Management Plan.

**B. City Staff**

None.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Comm. Otto, second by Comm. Brens to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:28 p.m.