

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
LOREN NAGY, CHAIRMAN
FEBRUARY 9, 2023**

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Nagy at 7:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Tom Galante, Heather Goudreau, Suzi Myers, Loren Nagy, Meagan Provencher, Michael Stroud.

Student Members Present: Jared Park, Deetya Solanki.

Absent: Commissioners: Angela Churchill, Lee Haggas, Ryan Johnson, Laura Miller Hill, Pam Otto. Student Members: Morrighan Hayes, Callie Ramirez.

City Staff Present: Marcelline D'Argento, Victor Pierce.

Visitors Present: Debi Mader.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the January 12, 2023 Natural Resources Commission [NRC] meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Galante to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.

4. Old Business

A. Arbor Day Celebration

Planning continued for the annual Arbor Day event on Saturday, April 29th:

- A parks clean-up is planned from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Clean-up volunteers will be recognized at the Arbor Day celebration
- Music by Rick Weals is confirmed
- Compass Academy is confirmed as the site of the tree planting on Friday, April 28th
- The recipient of the Stewardship Award was tentatively selected

B. Rain Garden Presentation Rescheduled

Comm. Goudreau reported the rain garden presentation scheduled for March 9th will be postponed due to a time conflict with the representative from the Conservation Foundation. The presentation is rescheduled for April 13 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. immediately before the April NRC meeting. An article on this topic will be submitted by Comm. Miller Hill for the March issue of The Den newsletter. A link for rain barrel sales will be included with the article.

5. New Business

A. Facebook Update

Comm. Goudreau reported the NRC's Facebook page currently has over 670 followers, and the recent post of Comm. Otto's article on hornets nests was shared 53 times. Comm. Myers noted the value of sharing this type of information, and that it's helpful to reach a wide readership including teachers and residents in other cities.

6. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Comm. Myers reported the NRC has reserved the Main Street display window at City Hall to publicize the May bird migration and Dark Skies. The theme will be water flyways, which are being diminished. Students' artwork on display at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center may be used in the window.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up Committee

In Comm. Otto's absence, Comm. Myers reported on the success of the recent work day at Langum Woods. Herbicide was applied to the vegetation that was removed, especially Buckthorn. Comm. Myers and former Comm. Valerie Blaine both have herbicide licenses. Comm. Myers noted there will be additional discussion regarding a plan and steward for Langum Woods during the March NRC meeting.

C. Community Sustainability Committee

Comm. Goudreau reported she had been in contact with Adam Kreuzer from the International Dark Sky Association. The Illinois Youth Center on Route 38 recently installed bright outdoor lights that shine into Hickory Knolls. Comm. Myers noted the Park District is aware of this issue, and owls and other wildlife are no longer inhabiting Hickory Knolls due to the bright lights. Comm. Goudreau will suggest that Mr. Kreuzer get in contact with the Park District regarding this issue. Chair. Nagy commented on the city's transition from traditional lights to LED [light emitting diode] streetlights, and noted the lights can be focused downward to help mitigate light pollution.

D. Single-Use Bags Committee

Chair. Nagy reported the Committee is scheduled to meet with city staff from the Finance and Community & Economic Development Departments on February 10th. The Committee plans to recommend an ordinance identical to that of Batavia.

E. Greenest Region Compact Committee

Comm. Myers noted the NRC's rain barrel sale and the Dark Sky initiatives will meet certain criteria of the Greenest Region Compact. Additionally, based on resident input at a recent City Hall meeting, Comm. Myers proposed installing more bike racks in the downtown area.

F. Urban Forestry Management Plan Review Committee

Chair. Nagy reported updates to the Urban Forestry Management Plan are ongoing. Trees have been added to both the preferred and limited tree lists. Trees that can be readily obtained from growers are included. Additionally, working with contract growers that will grow trees specifically requested by the city is a possibility.

7. Communications – Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports

Motion to approve and place on file the Public Services Division tree activity reports for January 2023. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Provencher to approve the reports. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:52 p.m.

8. Public Comment

Ms. Mader, a resident of St. Charles, thanked the Commissioners and expressed her interest in the NRC's initiatives, including reducing single-use plastic bags.

9. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Stroud circulated information on the seed library at the St. Charles Public Library.

Comm. Provencher circulated an example sketch of a lawn-alternative pollinator garden. The sketch also included a list of plants needed to grow this type of garden. Examples of other types of lawn-alternative gardens could also be created. This information could be distributed to residents and made available on the NRC's Facebook page.

Comm. Goudreau reported the Batavia Environmental Commission recognizes local businesses that are working to be greener and more sustainable. Comm. Goudreau suggested the NRC might consider something similar.

Chair. Nagy reported commercial bee hives are attracting natural queen bees that are dying inside the commercial hives. There are exclusion devices that prevent natural queen bees from entering commercial hives that should be used.

Chair Nagy noted the Illinois Invasive Species Council maintains and updates a list of invasive of plants and trees in our area.

B. City Staff

None.

10. Adjournment

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