

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, January 22, 2024 – 5:15 P.M.
Lake Forest Municipal Services, 800 N Field Drive

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Eileen Weber called the meeting to order at 5:22 P.M. Aldermen John Powers and Nancy Novit were present.

Staff in attendance included George Issakoo, Assistant City Manager and Melissa Laird, Management Analyst. Two members of the public were present.

II. ACTION ITEMS

a. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 10, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

Alderman Novit moved to approve the October 10, 2023, meeting minutes. Alderman Powers seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

III. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. CURBSIDE COMPOSTING INITIATIVE – Tommy Vaughan, Business Operations Advisor, WasteNot Compost

Mr. Vaughan provided a program update; highlights included:

- o 169 total participating households, 96 on bi-weekly service and 69 on weekly service. The average participating household has composted 109 pounds of waste.
- o 18,456 total pounds have been composted from Lake Forest homes as of 1/19/24, which is equivalent to 830 gallons of gas saved and 18,028 miles of driving offset.

Mr. Vaughan noted there was a large uptick of signups after the mailer was sent out in September. Discussion ensued on a Lake Forest Love blog story in April highlighting the program and diversion metrics for Earth month. Staff will also include a feature in the upcoming E-news.

Discussion ensued on an iPad-based kiosk with mobile signups, which could be used at Elawa Farms, City Hall, or other community spaces to help get the word out. Mr. Vaughan noted a planned event with the Library scheduled for April 20, and also suggested showcasing the WasteNot electric van at Fleet Day in June.

Discussion ensued regarding increased participation with local businesses and growing commercial services, especially at restaurants that have

special events with “family style” meals. There is significant potential with Lake Forest College and Elawa Farm, both of whom have expressed interest.

Mr. Vaughan will continue to meet with interested stakeholders, including the garden clubs, local schools, and businesses, with a big push during Earth Month. Will report back to the Committee in the fall with a program update.

b. LAKE FOREST COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

Assistant City Manager Issakoo provided background and a brief overview of the timeline and next steps for the Community Garden located in the southwest corner of Townline Park at 1555 Kennedy Road.

Staff determined the total area initially selected was too large, and modifications were made to the overall scope. A conceptual preliminary design was then completed by Chalet Nursery, with construction costs ranging from \$150,000 to \$180,000. The current plans encompass 30,000 square feet and include (26) 4x12 raised beds and (16) 10x12 in-ground beds. Trenched fencing is a significant portion of the proposed cost, along with the stainless steel raised beds and necessary earthwork.

An in-depth discussion ensued, and the Committee expressed several concerns including: ongoing maintenance responsibilities, configuration and added costs of raised beds vs. in-ground beds, manpower to oversee and implement lease agreements with tenants, operating rules, not enough demand from the overall public, and the suitability of a “destination park” like Townline. Furthermore, the initial working capital required for the current design would absorb most of the sustainability fund when there are many worthy projects for the Committee to consider.

The Committee agreed that additional public input is required and directed staff to offer an online “pulse survey” followed by a formal community presentation in early-Summer. Topics to address and better understand include rental fees and operating rules, the ideal number of in-ground beds vs. raised beds, a preferred location, and the overall priorities and philosophy of interested participants. Further discussion with Elawa Farm to better understand their goals and vision for a partnership is also needed.

The Committee emphasized fiscal stewardship and taking a calculated approach. Next steps for the Garden will be determined after the community presentation in early-Summer, with a tentative goal of Spring 2025 for ground-breaking.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. SUSTAINABILTY SURVEY RESULTS

Assistant City Manager Issakoo discussed the results, explaining how the survey has historically been used as a tool to help the Committee gain a better understanding of both the City Council's current knowledge of environmental issues and assess the Council's level of interest in potential policies and initiatives. The top strategic focus areas identified are Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, Stormwater Management, and Water Usage, with the following priorities outlined:

- Enhance communication and education campaigns regarding best practices in water conservation, outdoor irrigation, and water reuse.
- Seek ways to further educate riparian (ravine) owners regarding ravine and bluff maintenance.
- Develop strategies to further reduce the City's use and collection of single-use plastics.
- Continue to educate Lake Forest residents on recycling practices to reduce the City's recycling contamination rate.
- Offer rebates or incentives for residential and business solar opportunities.
- Increase access to open spaces through safe and expanded walking/bike trail connections throughout the City.
- Create a Climate & Resilience plan to quantify associated risks and opportunities.

The Committee will continue to utilize the survey results to prioritize future projects utilizing available sustainability funds.

V. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Weber asked if there were any public comments on any non-agenda items.

One comment was made by a member of the public regarding the City's No-Idling Initiative, with a suggestion to revisit this topic. The Committee agreed and requested that staff place a temporary sandwich board sign at Starbucks (Western Ave) in anticipation of their "grand reopening" on February 1.

Seeing no further comments, Chairman Weber moved to the next agenda item.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE(S) – APRIL 8, 2024

The Committee confirmed the next meeting date for April 8, 2024, at 5:15 P.M. located at Lake Forest City Hall.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Weber moved to adjourn the meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Committee at 6:44 P.M. seconded by Alderman Powers. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Laird
Management Analyst