



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 8, 2017 – 7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday August 8, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was conducted in the Community Room at the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Ave. River Forest.

Roll Call and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM. Present at this meeting were Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Moller, Commissioner Simon, Commissioner Susan Chen, Commissioner Crothers, Commissioner Credi and Commissioner Masella.

Public Comment

Bruce Faland, local bee keeper, inquired whether the draft he saw of the regulation is the latest draft, this was confirmed. He stated that everyone in the room is here to support bees. He voiced concern over the regulations and compared it to the City of Chicago where all you need to do is register the hive. Believes ordinance draft is based on fear. Would like no ordinance.

Commissioner Brennan stated that the draft is being worked on and reiterated that the village board asked this commission to research and provide a recommendation. This commission does not have the ability to pass, not pass or vote on the ordinance.

Scott Kreher, Dominican University, specified changes he would like to see in the ordinance. He would like to see language that specifies the level of training and knowledge the village inspector should have. He has concerns about the limitations of how many hives per property, feels like Dominican needs at least 4 hives to have a legitimate bee program. He stated that the size shouldn't be a one size fits all but should be appropriate to the size and resources of the institution. Katie provided examples of the sources they used to determine this including Louisiana and University of Minnesota. Scott would like consideration that a neighboring home can't have sole veto ability but it should be because of allergy.

Ellen McManus, Dominican University, feels the tone of the ordinance is unnecessarily punitive and framing bee keepers as people who are doing something wrong but will be tolerated. She stated that beekeeping is a service to the community, and education opportunity for children and adults and would like to see recognition that it isn't a danger to be regulated but a service that the community treasures.

Discussion: Bees Ordinance

Commissioner Crothers stated that this is a draft ordinance and a lot of work went into this and that we won't be voting on anything but making a recommendation to the board of trustees who are the only ones who can vote.

Ordinance examples used to create draft ordinance came from Evanston, Oak Park, Riverside, St Charles and also included the community concerns, comments and feedback from local beekeepers.

Commissioner Simon asked about the 22 permits. Commissioner Crothers explained that some ordinances have this and some don't. She explained it is a formula based on the amount of food available minus the food needed for the native pollinators. The commissioner went on to explain that they took as much of a scientific approach to this as they could although the science isn't conclusive. They looked at the 2.5 sq/miles of River Forest, 1600 acres, Took in consideration non pollinating landscape, and thatcher woods (245 acres). Assumed 85% of our area consists of structures. 15% -205 acres forgeable land for pollinators + thatcher woods. 1 acre of rich, lush, diverse land can support 1 hive. The committee calculated this and came out with 45 hives for River Forest. We don't currently know how many hives are in River Forest. Commissioner Brennan asked Scott for feedback on density.

Julie (last name?) asked questions on training in the ordinance,

Committee clarified that inspection is only triggered for complaints.

Jennifer (last name?) a beekeeper from Oak Park commented that hive inspection is different than apiary inspection. Inspector more interested in fly aways and location of hives.

Commissioner Masella commented that failure to maintain bee hive effects those bees more than anything else.

Ellen McManus wouldn't be in favor of requiring classes but Dominican provisionally would offer Dominica space for such courses. Discussion around having someone from Garfield Park Conservatory or WAX teach classes.

Julie doesn't support required education, stated that it's in the beekeepers best interest and the most effective support is beekeeping community support.

Commissioner Masella received question from Commissioner Simon on what the community concerns are, she feels most concerns can be resolved with education. She stated that information and educational documentation would be developed and accompany ordinance and the would backup any proposal with fact and research. The committee would also communicate advantages - food, flowers, that list is being developed. The would also proactively reach out to known community members with concerns.

Commissioner Credi comments on the 3 things she hears; People with allergies, kids playing with hives and getting hurt and standing water. She commented that it's the same as dog in the yard.

Commissioner Masella commented that fencing helps with this. She doesn't feel like we need to train people. Not convinced we need to have an ordinance at all. She also commented that we need to be logical on immediate neighbors versus more complex ordinances with wide ranging notification rules.

Commissioner Susan Chen added that she is not sure we need an ordinance either and can we modify other existing ordinances? She feels that we shouldn't charge fees if they are giving a gift for the community.

Commissioner Crothers stated that the fees are meant to cover the administrative costs.

Maureen (last name) comments that the Chicago ordinance is very simple - it defers to Illinois since the state does regulate number of bees per size of property, based on size of urban areas, mandates state inspections to prevent disease and promote health of bees. She doesn't think 100' setback changes anything.

Commissioner Moller started a discussion on changes and verbalized that she would like to see registration once only, not annually.

Bruce Faland commented that registering with Illinois is solely for communication around disease and protecting the population and the regional inspectors are very knowledgeable, he feels like 44 hives is way too much and there isn't enough food for that. Commissioner Crothers stated she would check on the hive count.

Discussion: Other Business

Commissioner Simon reviewed SEIN & Sun Shot programs. Commissioners agreed to say no to Sun Shot to not over extend our renewable energy efforts.

A foam proposal was discussed to have a repository for foam similar to holiday lights. Commissioner Credi commented that it's recyclable and can be re-formed if its hard foam. Winnetka has a program and City of Chicago has a program through Dart, no hauler will take it. Idea was raised to have this as part of recycling extravaganza – commission voted to move forward exploring this option.

Discussion: Goals

Commission discussed waste goals and agreed PlanItGreen goals are well stated. Question arose on how to accomplish these goals. Recycling is lighter now which is making it harder to achieve weight based goal.

Recycling extravaganza was discussed - getting people to not throw things out by offering convenient option. Holiday lights and paint were discussed as integral parts of effort.

Commissioner Moller discussed composting and discussed that a barrier is that it has cost. Volume will drive down costs though. This is tougher message, will continue to work on this.

Commission discussed pay as you throw, cost of composting is impeding usage and that even through the Roy Strom contract is long they have been very cooperative and helpful.

Commissioner Moller needs help with recycling extravaganza as it takes a lot of volunteers. She will talk to high school environmental club as an idea to build volunteer core.

Due to time constraints Commissioner Brennan is deferring conversation around Mindy's goals to next meeting as well as budget discussion. Next meeting is 9/12/17.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mary Chen and seconded by Commissioner Moller to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 P.M. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Signature Line

John Anderson, Secretary

Signature Line

Kathleen Brennan, Chairman
Sustainability Commission

Date: -----