

Environment Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
July 10, 2018

**Village of Homer Glen
14240 W 151st Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491
Board Room**

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Trustee Sharon Sweas.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Roll Call.

Members present at 6:35 p.m. were Trustee Sharon Sweas, Members Randy Juras, Kathy Kudla, Bob Moses, Andy Panelli, Cynthia Rataj, Margaret Sabo, Joe Turrise and Gary White.

Members Absent: Nancy Carlson.

Also Present: Also present at 6:35 p.m. was Village Assistant Planner and staff liaison Kyle McGinnis.

4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

None.

5. Minutes.

a) June 5, 2018

Member Sabo stated that because she was not present for the June 5, 2018 meeting, she would like to abstain from voting on the minutes for the meeting; however, she reviewed the minutes and felt they were detailed and clear.

Member Kudla made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2018 meeting; seconded by Member Rataj. Motion carried.

6. Public Comment.

None.

7. Announcements/Committee Members Communication

Member Sabo shared that she had attended the Bluestem Earth Festival at the University of St. Francis in Joliet. There were various tents and activities present for children, a food truck, a flower truck and many exhibits indoors. She also noted that there were many good organizations present.

Member Turrise shared that he had forwarded an email to the Environment Committee regarding algae in Lake Erie and encouraged Committee members to read the email for more information. Regarding the community's high water rates, Member Turrise noted that this may, in part, be due to the fact that the Village has three (3) small water treatment plants as opposed to fewer larger facilities, requiring more employees and maintenance and therefore increased billing rates. Member Sabo voiced disagreement with this sentiment.

Member Panelli stated that he received emails for www.environmentillinois.org. One of the organization's goals is to ban neurotoxin pesticides throughout the state. The federal Environmental Protection Agency denied a call for a nation-wide ban on the pesticides, and as a result the group has called for Governor Rauner to ban the substances in Illinois. The organization is also working to ban styrofoam. Member Panelli was interested in hearing from his fellow Committee members whether they have experience with this organization and whether they feel the group is reputable. Member Juras stated that the group is fairly small, which is common, and that the Illinois Environmental Council is large enough to have lobbying power.

No other members had announcements to share.

8. Old Business.

a) Big Tree Contest Update.

Member Sabo began by stating that she feels the contest was a success considering this was its first year being held. As a whole, there was a good community response.

Members Sabo and Turrise measured as many of the submitted trees as possible, and used leaf samples to confirm species with Village Arborist Roger Ross if they were unable to do so themselves on-site.

Items to discuss and resolve regarding the 2018 Big Tree Contest include what to award the winners and when to do so. Member Sabo stated she felt a photo of each winner with their winning tree is a good idea. Member Sabo also liked the idea of providing each winner a pass for free admission to the Morton Arboretum. Another idea would be to present each winner a plaque similar to what has been done for the winners of the Community & Nature In Harmony Awards in the past.

Member Sabo stated that she feels an award should be given for the winning tree within each specific species, not within general categories like Oak, Maple, etc. Member Turrise agreed. Member Kudla was concerned that this would generate too many winners annually, and Trustee Sweas agreed. Member Sabo stated that because trees grow differently, even when comparing closely related species, it would be impossible for some species within the same general category to fairly compete with others that grow larger naturally. Member Kudla acknowledged that to name a winner for each species specifically would make five (5) more

winners for the 2018 Big Tree Contest, increasing the number of winners to nineteen (19).

It was generally agreed upon that winners within each species will remain a winner annually provided an application is submitted each year and another, larger tree within their species is not submitted. This is to help keep the number of winners reasonable each year. Furthermore, it was stated that the awards will be presented sometime in September during a Village Board meeting; however, this plan is tentative and dates may change. Assistant Planner and staff liaison McGinnis was to discuss with Community Relations Coordinator Sue Steilen posting the awards ceremony information online.

b) **Prairie Style Garden (W. 151st and S. Bell Road).**

Member Kudla relayed that she had spoken with Nancy Kuhajda regarding the garden. Ms. Kuhajda assessed the garden and determined that it would be a significant undertaking to rehabilitate the area to its intended state. Ms. Kuhajda stated that it could be done with the required amount of effort and time to do so, but that the investment would be significant. Furthermore, she recommended planting around the sign present on the property, maintaining the established trees and removing all other vegetation.

Member Sabo stated that she walked through the garden recently and saw many benefits to the garden, including providing a habitat for wildlife, and noted that some vegetation, such as the bushes, are doing well. She feels vegetation able to be salvaged should be marked to be saved. Unmarked areas would then be treated with natural herbicides, like white vinegar, and mulched to discourage further growth of unwanted vegetation. Trustee Sweas worried that this plan would still be too much work for the staff available to handle this project.

Member Kudla asked whether the sign could be saved and moved to a new location for a future garden similar in intent. The existing garden could then be removed and the area could be used as a small tree exhibit specifically featuring a variety of lesser known species. All other vegetation would be removed. Member Sabo voiced approval of this plan, stating that a small plaque near each tree could identify them for visitors.

It was generally agreed upon that the Committee would recommend to the Village Board that the following actions be taken regarding the garden:

1. That the garden be dismantled via weed whacking or other means of appropriate removal;
2. That the sign be removed and saved for future elsewhere; and
3. That the site be used as a space for distinct tree plantings in the future.

Member Panelli made a motion to recommend the above actions to the Village Board; seconded by Member Juras. Motion passed.

Member Sabo stated she would be willing to mark plants to save.

c) Community and Nature In Harmony Awards.

Trustee Sweas asked which members of the Committee would be interested in assisting her in judging the applications. Member Turrise stated he would be available to assist.

Member Sabo recommended that the deadline for the submittal of applications be extended to August 1, 2018. Trustee Sweas agreed to this extension. Member Sabo further recommended that the event be listed in the calendar of events and voiced that the event should be publicized more often and through more platforms.

Member Kudla stated that Trustee Sweas and Member Turrise ought to review the current submissions soon before the summer dries out gardens and vegetation. Trustee Sweas and Member Turrise agreed to review current applications early during the week of July 16, 2018.

Member Turrise noted that the submitted application for Longview Drive will require access to the interior of the property, and that the contact information for this application would need to be confirmed to receive such access.

Trustee Sweas concluded by stating she would contact Community Relations Coordinator Steilen to discuss the application deadline extension.

d) §220-839 (Keeping of Farm Animals) Text Amendments.

Assistant Planner and staff liaison McGinnis reviewed the proposed amendments regarding the keeping of chickens and bees in residential zones and provided Committee members with a draft copy of what the regulations would look like once inserted into the Village Code. After a short discussion, it was agreed upon that the Committee would take more time to think over the proposals and review the changes prior to forwarding the proposal on to the next appropriate entity.

e) Litter Ordinance Proposals and Discussion.

The Committee performed a short review of example regulations utilized by other communities across the nation. Member Sabo stated that she feels the simpler the regulations the better. Trustee Sweas questioned how any proposed regulations would be enforced. Assistant Planner and staff liaison McGinnis concluded that he would speak with Building Official Joe Baber regarding the Village's existing regulations, if any, to then determine what additional regulations should be researched, reviewed and proposed.

f) Household Hazardous Waste Collection.

Trustee Sweas stated that the event will be held on September 29, 2018 at the Homer Junior High School on S. Bell Road. Community Relations Coordinator Steilen will check if this event will include electronics.

Member Panelli noted that he attended the event hosted by Will County, during which many different materials were received. Member Moses further noted that the event hosted by Mokena was well organized.

Member Juras stated that medical waste, including old pills, will not be collected at the September 29, 2018 event, as a Sheriff must be present for this type of collection.

Member Sabo made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) detailing the event, further recommending electronics be accepted during the event as well; seconded by Member Panelli. Motion carried.

9. New Business.

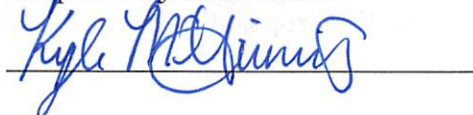
a) Blue Green Algae Discussion.

Member Panelli took some time to follow-up on his previous comments regarding blue-green algae and algal blooms in our region, and provided Committee members and Village staff with government-sourced information regarding algal blooms, how they're created and how to reduce them. Assistant Planner and staff liaison McGinnis encouraged Member Panelli to email the reviewed information to determine what can be shared online with Community Relations Coordinator Steilen.

10. Adjournment.

Motion by Member Kudla; seconded by Member Turrise to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Kyle McGinnis
Assistant Planner