

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, October 16, 2012 at 6:15 p.m.

The following persons were present: Chair Rosemary Palicki, Steven Vinezeano, Donna Hriljac, Peggy Reins, Debbie Graham, Dan Janicki, Bob Johnson, Jim Majewski and Kristin Ihnchak of CMAP. Peggie Maniscalco, Pat Knoll and Chris Zalinski were absent.

- I. Summary of September 12, 2012: The meeting summary was approved.
- II. Project Update: Kristin Ihnchak mentioned that this will most likely be the last committee meeting. She thanked those who provided suggestions and stated that they updated the document to reflect those suggestions. The timeline may be a little off, but if we went into January 2013, that would be fine. There was discussion that a goal should be to present this document in January 2013 to the Board of Trustees.
- III. Review of Preliminary Recommendations:

She used a Power Point to show the document outline. She mentioned that those items in black are to be discussed today. The recommendations section is broken down into three categories with - priority recommendations, other recommendations, and municipal policies and regulations. The priority recommendations would be those done in the next one to three years and the other to be done in the longer term.

Her staff team worked on the recommendations based on the feedback from this committee and the public and then sat down with Vinezeano to tweak those recommendations for today. We now need the committee to review and discuss these recommendations for completeness and if there is something missing, to please bring them up to the committee.

Vinezeano mentioned that the items that will be shown on this list may seem not to include all the details and that it is meant to be like this. These are upper tier recommendations that do not include the specific objectives of how to reach them. Kristin stated these are umbrella items and they will later include the details for all the items. Kristin reviewed the major recommendations for each item from the committee prior to each category.

Land Use & Development

Priority Recommendations

1. Update development regulations to promote sustainability.

Other Recommendations

1. Create a green building handbook.
2. Pursue LEED certification for Village Hall. Vinezeano mentioned how Niles West recently became LEED certified and we could work with them on this. Kristin mentioned it was brought up in the Building Blocks workshop. There was discussion about meeting green standards versus actual LEED certification based on extra costs.

Municipal Policies

1. All new Village facilities will meet/exceed LEED requirements. Kristin mentioned that the Environmental Action Plan can be written in such a way as to when it is adopted by the Village, LEED certification for any new municipal facilities will be automatically pursued. Vinezeano stated that language such as this may need to be softened from requiring LEED to recommending new facilities meet sustainable standards or incorporate green practices. Peggy Reins thinks that there is a need to name specific green building standards that the Village will follow. If not, there is really no impact. It needs to go through a peer review process and have significance. The Chair stated that there is a need to be realistic to ensure it can be done without extra costs. Vinezeano mentioned that if any new facility was to be considered in the Village of Niles, it would be done by committee. It would then be important that that committee be educated about green building practices and LEED (and other certifications) for serious consideration during the RFP process. He stated that he worked with the U.S. Green Building Council in Chicago to develop a green building presentation for municipal governments considering new buildings.

Kristin reiterated that she is hearing that some type of third party verification or certification should be considered when building any new municipal facilities, but a specific standard should not be established within the document. Peggy mentioned that we need to go beyond just having recycling bins in a building. The committee agreed.

Transportation & Mobility

Priority Recommendations

1. Work with Pace to enhance service (improve and streamline service, create circulator service to connect employers with Metra, implement ART). Vinezeano mentioned that the Pace Board approved an ordinance authorizing a contract for the purchase of consulting services for professional program management and oversight for the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ART) program.
2. Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan. Kristin mentioned that CMAP just this last week awarded Niles with a bicycle and pedestrian plan grant. Vinezeano stated that the process would not begin until the Spring of 2013. He also stated that the grant includes transit oriented development study for Milwaukee Avenue as well due to the upcoming ART project.

3. Increase community awareness of alternative modes of transportation.

Regulatory Update: Incentivize the installation of bicycle facilities. Kristin stated that this will be expanded upon in the next phase.

Other Recommendations

1. Pursue car-sharing at central locations in the Village. This includes promoting programs such as IGO or Zip Car allowing those without a car to get around when they need.
2. Encourage employer strategies to reduce vehicle trips. This would include promoting carpooling, alternative working arrangements, etc.

Municipal Policies

1. Complete Streets policy. This was recommended in the Niles 2030 Plan and relates back to the bicycle and pedestrian plan.
2. Green fleet policy for future vehicle purchases. The use of sustainable vehicles may be proposed for the fleet when it ages and needs to be replaced.

Open Space

Priority Recommendations

1. Create a Park Master Plan. Jim stated that the Niles Park District has been working to develop a master plan and it is a goal, but the work load is causing it to be put on the back burner. It is in the works and the Park District Board would be on board with this recommendation.

Regulatory Update: Increase tree canopy (street trees, parking lot landscaping). Kristin stated future should establish standards for street trees, the replacement standards, parking lot standards, etc.

Regulatory Update: Develop a tree ordinance (pursue Tree City USA).

Regulatory Update: Permit native plantings in weed ordinance/elsewhere. Kristin stated that the barriers in the current ordinance could be removed.

Other Recommendations

There was extensive discussion about the established Niles' open space ratio of 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents. It is thought that the Forest Preserve District property throws this number off because the properties in question are not all necessarily accessible besides the trail. The rest is some open space and mostly wooded with the North Branch of the Chicago River. Kristin mentioned that taking this calculation out of the ratio would certainly reduce it. Peggy

mentioned the access is a problem with most of it. Bob stated that the bike path is really only the southern part of the Village. Where he lives, the access can be difficult, especially if you want to cross the river to get to the Metra station. Peggy agreed that biking to the Metra station is problematic. Vinezeano mentioned that the future bicycle and pedestrian plan will help to study the problem.

Kristin stated that the open space ratio drops dramatically if the Forest Preserve District property is taken out. She stated that she is hearing that the committee feels that it is an access problem mostly, so most of it is not used. Vinezeano mentioned that maybe those obvious areas (open fields and the path) can be calculated within the ratio. The Chair stated that maybe show the ratio with and without the Forest Preserve District property. Peggy agrees that it is an asset and should be considered some how. The Chair believes that it is important that the ratio reflect that there are not enough parks within Niles and that since we are built out, it will be difficult to increase them.

Kristin stated that what she is hearing from the conversation is to keep the ratio as is with a caveat that if the Forest Preserve District property were to be removed, there ratio would be dramatically impacted.

1. Create a community garden program. Vinezeano mentioned that he has received numerous calls about a possible community garden program. Whenever the rain garden is in the news, he seems to get calls asking if there is a community garden and how can they sign up for it. He mentioned the township garden and how it is used to help the township food pantry. Kristin stated that an open lot or even a temporarily open lot could be used for such a program. The Chair stated that the Niles Garden Club has shown an interest, but they are probably a ways away from getting it done. Vinezeano stated that gardens such as this provide a great way for the community to interact. Jim stated that a particular town was able to work with ComEd to develop a garden under ComEd wires.
2. Preserve existing open space and parks. Bob mentioned a past discussion about the uses of existing Park District parks and how they are mostly built around some type of activity that may not be conducive to an older adult who may want to simply walk and find a park bench to relax on. Jim mentioned some parks that do have paths and benches. It was mentioned that maybe the master plan for parks could look into this.

Municipal Policies

1. Utilize green infrastructure best practices for Village facilities.
2. Utilize green maintenance practices for parks and open space. The Chair asked to include Village facilities on this as well.

Waste

Priority Recommendations

1. Provide sufficient recycling facilities (public places, larger carts). Kristin mentioned that recycling numbers acquired from Coca-Cola in Niles increased the rate in Niles by 10%, but it is still a little bit low. Kristin stated that public comment on recycling related back to the smaller 18 gallon bins and how they stop recycling when they get filled. The Chair mentioned that residents can get another bin or rent for \$27 a year a 65 gallon cart from the refuse company. There was discussion about what could be done for residents in apartments and condominiums that do not have residential recycling. There was thought of having some recycling containers placed by public services for this. It could possibly be negotiated for in the future residential contract in 2015. There was discussion about carts for single family homes. This could also be considered within the 2015 residential contract.

Kristin asked if there were ways businesses could be encouraged to recycle more. This would be beyond the free 65 gallons once a week that they get now. Dan discussed what Coke was able to do, but they have plastic barrels that they would like to shred and recycle. Vinezeano mentioned that it is the extra cost and man power to pull the recycling out of the trash stream. Maybe a future commercial contract would reduce recycling costs if recycling material is more valuable. The current contract occurred as the economy and recycling content value was dropping.

2. Undertake public education and outreach to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Kristin mentioned a program that labels cans "Landfill" to let people know where it is going.

Regulatory Update: Adopt construction and demolition debris recycling. She mentioned the City of Chicago is aggressively tackling this issue. There was discussion of how the Park District did this with a major project. The building that was on the site is still on the site in the form of parking lot base.

Other Recommendations

1. Initiate a residential pilot composting program. Kristin mentioned some towns that have implemented this. Vinezeano mentioned how the four Jewel stores in Niles will be composting by November. Kristin mentioned that 10% of the Cook County waste is compost. Recycling would probably be more important to tackle first. Vinezeano mentioned it could be discussed with the next refuse contract in 2015.
2. Offer Pay-as-You-Throw service. Kristin suggested charging the business based on what is thrown away and provide a recycling incentive. There was discussion about the way refuse is currently collected.
3. Expand opportunities to recycle electronics, hazardous waste and other special materials. There was discussion about how we need to promote the expanded opportunities available for batteries, light bulbs, etc. There was brief

discussion about the possibility of working with Golf Mill and other large organizations to expand the annual SWANCC electronics collection and paper shredding held at Public Services. Golf Mill was very successful with a collection they sponsored several years ago. There could be educational materials given to participants promoting the green issue of the month.

Municipal Policies

1. Institute an environmentally preferable purchasing policy. Get away from Styrofoam cups and other items that are not recyclable.
2. Utilize deconstruction techniques for Village facilities. There was a discussion regarding how there are companies that (at the same cost) go to homes or other buildings and deconstruct materials for resale. She stated several communities are doing this currently. Kristin mentioned the last community she helped write a plan for does this already. Delta Institute has a program that resells these types of materials.
3. Conduct a waste audit for Village facilities.

Water

Priority Recommendations

1. Promote water conservation through a variety of strategies. A majority of the water used is by the industrial sector of Niles. The Stormwater Commission is aggressively working on BMPs in the stormwater plan.
2. Launch a public education campaign about the importance of water.

Regulatory Update: Adopt a water conservation ordinance. CMAP has a model ordinance that the Village can consider. This is beyond what the Village has in place already.

Regulatory Update: Include BMPs in the Stormwater Management Ordinance.

Regulatory Update: Provide incentives to reduce impervious coverage or set impervious coverage limits. There was discussion that about maximum impervious coverage being 60% for residential only. Larger properties fall under the stormwater ordinance.

Regulatory Update: Expressly permit permeable pavers and create standards for their use.

Other Recommendations

1. Continue existing efforts (rain garden, rain barrels, Stormwater).

2. Encourage & expand rainwater reuse. This is currently not legal with the State of Illinois, but it may change.

Municipal Policies

1. Conduct a water audit for Village facilities.

Energy

Priority Recommendations

1. Launch an energy efficiency campaign. The higher users are industrial, so anything that can be done to promote the existing energy saving programs available would be very positive. These provide audits and retrofitting.
2. Pursue a model renewable energy system on a Village facility.

Regulatory Update: Enable renewable energy systems.

Regulatory Update: Enable/incentivize alternative fuel stations. There was discussion about the three at Golf Mill. These were installed with grants.

Other Recommendations

1. Continue to incorporate energy efficiency into Village facilities.

Municipal Policies

1. Investigate providing energy from renewable sources through electricity aggregation. The Village is participating with the Energy Savings Program through Clean Air Counts. About 50 residents have signed up into the opt-in program. There was discussion about the June 2013 date and the expense to negotiate a contract for the Village.
2. Keep energy code up to date.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Priority Recommendations

The rate was higher than the county rate in 2007, but the high amount of industry is the cause.

1. Pursue Clean Air Counts Platinum.

Other Recommendations

1. Other section' recommendations.

Municipal Policies

1. Anti-idling policy. Vinezeano mentioned how a policy will save funds on fuel consumption. Some municipalities will even place chips in vehicles to cause them to shut off after a period of five minutes. This would not be used on emergency vehicles. There was discussion about stops by train tracks and the possibility of signage to encourage shutting off engines, but that would be more important for freight trains and not necessarily for commuter trains.

Education

Priority Recommendations

1. Provide educational opportunities to staff. Staff will have a lot of influence on environmental practices.
2. Showcase public and private demonstration projects.
3. Create central location to house information on related resources & events. This is important for older citizens who may not be able to get information online. The library, village hall or senior center are all good locations.

Other Recommendations

1. Coordinate a monthly or bi-monthly “green bag” event. This is done regularly with lectures on monthly issues. Oak Park has been successful with these.
2. Continue to work with partners for events & distribution of information.

Municipal Policies

1. Determine the most effective means of communication w/residents & property owners.
2. Create a green team of Village staff to assess internal practices. Vinezeano mentioned that Northbrook wrote a white paper on this practice and the benefits of it for the town. It could be similar to a safety community or even done in conjunction with the safety committee already in place.

IV. Wrap-Up & Next Steps: Kristin stated that her team is working on writing EAP recommendations. These will then be shared with Vinezeano who will share it with the committee for comment. There will not be a meeting of the committee after this, but everyone is invited to participate in the public open house on December 4 at 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

V. Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday, December 4, 2012 at the Niles Public Library – Public Meeting #2.