

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, June 21, 2012 at 6:15 p.m.

The following persons were present: Chair Rosemary Palicki, Steven Vinezeano, Chris Zalinski, Bob Johnson, Donna Hriljac, Peggy Reins, Peggie Maniscalco, Debbie Graham, Dan Janicki, Pat Knoll and Kristin Ihnchak. Community Development Director Chuck Ostman was in attendance and Park District representative was absent.

- I. Introductions: The Chair introduced herself and had the group go around the table and do the same. The Chair expressed an interest in having light sandwiches for the next meeting. One member mentioned she cannot have vinegar. Water, coffee, cookies or fruit with sandwiches will be provided at the next meeting.
- II. Brief Presentation by CMAP: Planner Kristin Ihnchak had a PowerPoint presentation titled, "Niles Environmental Action Plan." The presentation covered an overview of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the planning process, an introduction to sustainability planning, and the committee role and expectations.

Kristin asked the group to define what sustainability means. She briefly discussed the three Es of sustainability – Economy, Equity, and Environment. She stated how the Village of Niles will be seeking a more specific plan on environment, which is more focused on environmental issues. The plan will give a framework for moving forward. We will develop vision and goals, review existing conditions, work to create policies/strategies/actions, and then determine how to implement and monitor the plan.

The reason for a plan such as this is to provide a framework for sustainable decision making, consolidating initiatives, programs and policies, setting shared goals, and to make a compelling case for future grants and assistance.

There will be eight chapters to be reviewed by the committee for the EAP: 1. Land Use and Development; 2. Transportation & Mobility; 3. Open Space; 4. Waste; 5. Water; 6. Energy; 7. Greenhouse Gasses; and 8. Education. These all relate back to the environment.

The timeline began in May with a workshop with a Building Blocks grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that took a look at building codes as they relate to sustainable development. There is a public workshop July 25th and another in October with a final plan presentation to the Board of Trustees in January 2013.

The role of the Steering Committee is for guidance and feedback at key points during the process, to review an existing conditions report, recommendations

memo, and EAP draft document. The committee will be asked to attend four regular committee meetings and two public meetings in July and October.

III. Group Discussion:

- a. Sustainability Vision & Goals. Kristin asked the group to fill in the blank for the sentence of “In 2025, Niles will be _____.”
- Trees were discussed since more were being removed than replaced in Niles due to the Emerald Ash Borer issue.
 - Walkable and bikeable.
 - Family friendly.
 - Traffic congestion and improve public transit.
 - A desirable place to live.
 - Better transportation to Metra or Jefferson Park.
 - Program that helps residents maintain housing stock.
 - Energy efficiency programs for residential homes.
 - Reduce amount of stormwater in combined sewer system.
 - Village properties to focus on natives and no annual flowers.
 - Less water hungry lawn systems/a more natural environment.
 - Reduce dependency on watering village landscaping.
 - Increase residential and business recycling through education and larger recycling containers at the residential level (there was a brief discussion about the importance of recycling education at Coke and Shure, which was similar at the Village of Niles).
 - Reuse of materials.
 - The village should commit somewhat financially to sustainable practices.
 - Alternative energy sources and more efficient use of what is used currently at village buildings.

Kristin discussed the goal set by the Niles 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Kristin had the group brainstorm about the proposed chapters of the EAP.

Waste Goals:

- Improve access to recycling.
- Encourage reuse of materials.
- Composting initiatives. There was a question about the established ordinances on this issue. Would it be at the village level or encouraged at the residential level?
Encouraging composting at the school level to help it spread at the home.
- Reduce what is used.

There was discussion about how Shure and Coke could be used as positive examples of what is good for Niles. Dan stated that if kids get educated at school, it gets pushed down to the employees. Making it easy to recycle is important after the education. Shure has special drives throughout the year that focuses on particular items at a low cost to Shure. Maybe the Village could work with Shure and Coke to expand recycling for all of Niles. It was

was mentioned that the Village would like to increase what is recycled at our annual recycling with SWANCC.

Transportation:

- Transit to main transit hubs like Jefferson Park, O'Hare, and Metra. Free Bus is limited to Village boarders. Vinezeano mentioned the long-term plan of PACE to develop an Arterial Rapid Transit system on Milwaukee, Dempster and Golf that would connect to these hubs.
- Street access to bike paths.
- Sidewalk access to major transit.
- Electric vehicle charging stations. Golf Mill has three. Vinezeano mentioned the grant for these stations at 350Green.com.
- Bike paths. Ostman mentioned the path being worked on to the north of town to connect the Forest Preserve path. Vinezeano mentioned a future need for a village-wide bike path from south end to north end to improve access.
- Improve pedestrian environment on Milwaukee, major arteries, and District 63 has a plan for "Safe Route to Schools". It would be nice to have an inventory of the difficult intersections for pedestrians.
- Improve the efficiency of the Free Bus system.

Land Use and Development:

- Encourage retrofitting existing municipal buildings.
- If any new buildings constructed, make them green.
- Promote technical assistance available for businesses, schools, etc. to become more energy efficient through the Smart Energy program with ComEd.
- Residential energy efficiency promotion.
- Irrigation system audits.
- Complete streets for improved access to what you need.
- Permeable paving credit.
- Small residential shopping or dining opportunities.
- Mixed use area.
- Place for people to gather and shop.

Open Spaces:

- Create and promote connections to green space available.
- Where is there a limited amount of green space?
- Increase amount of pervious surface in village.

Water:

- Conservation of water. Who knows about sprinkling ban?
- Controlling and managing stormwater at lot level.
- Rain barrels and rain gardens.
- Native plant encouragement.
- Stormwater management BMPs.

- Water pollution or non-point source pollution issues.
- Investigation of new water source beyond Chicago.
- Water system improvement and efficiencies to eliminate water loss.
- Sewer infrastructure improvements.

Education:

- Focusing on businesses that take the extra step environmentally.
- Reach out to smaller businesses through smart energy with chamber of commerce.
- Develop a social media connection.
- Address issues of communicating with foreign speaking.

Energy:

- Energy efficiency in buildings.
- Renewable energy demo.
- Programmable thermostats.
- Municipal aggregation investigation.

- IV. Wrap-Up & Next Steps: Kristin distributed July 25 open house flyers. She discussed the webpage and updates. There was discussion about the format of the open house. Kristin stated that it will be a presentation and then a breakout for discussion. There will be more background information, so it will be more guided with a moderator. There will be a request for goals and strategies from those in attendance. The Chair asked for everyone to come and bring a friend. She mentioned cookies and coffee. The next meeting was set for Thursday, July 19 at 6:15 p.m. at Village Hall before the July 25th meeting.
- V. Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, July 19 at 6:15 p.m. at Village Hall.