ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY Thursday, July 19, 2012 at 6:15 p.m.

The following persons were present: Chair Rosemary Palicki, Steven Vinezeano, Bob Johnson, Donna Hriljac, Peggy Reins, Dan Janicki, Pat Knoll, Jim Majewski, and CMAPs Kristin Ihnchak. Also in attendance were: CMAPs Louise Yeung, Assistant Community Development Director Rich Wlodarski and Trustee Louella Preston. Chris Zalinski, Peggie Maniscalco, and Debbie Graham were absent.

- I. <u>Introductions:</u> The Chair had the group reintroduce themselves due to some new faces.
- II. <u>Summary of Thursday, June 21, 2012</u>: The summary of the kick-off meeting of Thursday, June 21, 2012 was approved.
- III. <u>Project Update</u>: Planner Kristin Ihnchak used a Power Point presentation. Kristin began with a question out to the group about a plan name. She mentioned that we could keep the Environmental Action Plan or use something that is snappier. She mentioned some plans she knew about. The group is going to approach the idea again in the future. The plan name will give the plan an identity.

Kristin started with the project timeline and discussed where we are in the project. She stated the public workshop is July 25th at the Niles Senior Center at 7:00 p.m. She mentioned that in the background, CMAP has been reviewing existing Village documents and conducting key person interviews to help develop an existing conditions report. The public meeting will help further establish our understanding of the project. She informed the group about the document format.

EAP Document Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Plan Chapters
- III. Implementation Plan & Monitoring

Content Per Chapter

- A. Existing Conditions
- B. Goals
- C. Recommendations/Action Steps
- D. Implementation Approach
- E. Resources/References

Kristin discussed the outreach activities used to improve the likelihood for a well attended public workshop on July 25th. CMAP employs an individual (Cindy) to do this. Some things accomplished were: an article in the Summer newsletter, flyers to camp kids, pace bus flyers, facility flyers, local environmentally friendly businesses, local papers, Niles TV, and the police electronic sign. It is important

for CMAP and the Village to have a good turnout. She asked if there were any ideas for more outreach.

Kristin included the draft goals in the packets and on a flip chart for all to see.

Land Use and Development.

- 1. Ensure that development regulations allow sustainable development. This was added based on the recent EAP Building Blocks workshop with the Village. The Chair mentioned that some of these items will be considered when the Village conducts a code study.
- 2. Create mixed-use, walkable areas. It was discussed parking study could be added under this item.
- 3. Encourage new green buildings and sustainable retrofits for existing buildings. It was recommended that we state "allow" instead of "encourage." There was discussion that it is expensive, so you do not want to make it law or force it.

Transportation & Mobility

- 1. Reduce dependence on private vehicles for transportation. The mentioned that adequate parking is an issue to be concerned about if we are going to try and reduce independence on vehicles. If there was centralized parking, people could park and walk to a number of areas.
- 2. Improve Pace service, particularly access to Metra stations.
- 3. Enhance cycling and pedestrian facilities (such as bicycle lanes and sidewalks) and safety.
- 4. improve connectivity with the North Branch Trail and other area bicycle paths
- 5. Promote and support alternative fuel vehicles.

Open Space

1. Preserve and promote open space and parks. Kristin mentioned she heard from the group last meeting there wasn't enough access to parks, but after reviewing the data, it appears that there is adequate park space for the community. Group members mentioned that there is an understanding that the Niles park system is under the established acres standard. Trustee Preston stated she knows of a State standard. Kristin will work with Jim to determine what the actual numbers are. Louise stated that there are 10.55 acres per 1000 residents of open space. This includes more than just park district land. This includes the Forest Preserve too.

The Chair introduced Louella Preston and mentioned she was on the Beautification Committee. Bob Johnson mentioned the limited parking near Nico park by him in the summer due to ball games. He stated that it is dangerous too. He asked if we are to promote open space and parks, we should be encouraging car pooling to reduce parking issues. There was

discussion about signage. There was discussion about leasing property from the Forest Preserve District.

- 2. Increase connectivity of open spaces. Peggy asked Kristin to clarify this. There was discussion how parks seem isolated. It doesn't seem like there is a place to walk and get away. Vinezeano mentioned the Active Transportation Alliance proposed study of Niles to look at "complete streets and complete networks" and how this could help us identify how to improve connectivity. She doesn't think there are parks that are more for strolling or just walking through to relax. The parks are more utilitarian for playgrounds and sports. Jim stated that Golf Mill and Pioneer are considered walking paths. The "Wetland Park" was mentioned. Jim stated it is a real wetland completed by the Corps of Engineers with a grant. There is no connectivity to the wetland park. It is not a destination. Bob Johnson mentioned walking around Notre Dame and their open space. Can a walking path be placed on the site inexpensively? Pat Knoll asked about the neighborhood parks and whether or not they have smaller gaming tables with checker tops, etc., to encourage leisure. Jim mentioned they are at Golf Mill Park and not used as much. Kristin mentioned that maybe this is a discussion of a need to consider park diversification that encourages more than just sport.
- 3. Use sustainable management practices for open space areas. This was added by Kristin.
- 4. Increase pervious coverage and native plantings.
- 5. Preserve existing trees and increase tree canopy coverage. This was added by Kristin. She stated that trees were brought up.

Waste

- 1. Reduce the amount of land filled waste. Trustee Louella Preston mentioned SWANCC and how they are active with all of this. Vinezeano mentioned that SWANCC would be the conduit to the goals of waste and mentioned later in the process as part of an objective. A means to accomplishing these items, stated the Chair.
- 2. Improve recycling rates and increase access to recycling facilities. Jim mentioned a problem at the parks where people put garbage in the recycling bins that are clearly marked recycling. They recycle at home, but not in the park, why is that? The Chair stated that the children should be included in the education.
- 3. Encourage *proper* composting. Bob asked to add "proper" composting. It was discussed that small amounts of composting is allowed in residential area. "Responsible" composting. Bob mentioned maybe an educational compost pile near the rain garden.
- 4. Encourage material and building reuse.

- 1. Promote water conservation, efficiency, and reuse.
- 2. Address flooding through innovative stormwater management practices.
- 3. Continue to manage and maintain water infrastructure.
- 4. Reduce water pollution.
- 5. Provide educational opportunities for the public on the importance of water issues. The Chair stated a big star should be added to this one due to the neglect of the watering band in Niles. She stated she sees people watering at all times of the day. There was a comment from Peggy that native plantings should be a component of water and not open space. Kristin asked if it would be duplicative to have it in both places. She asked if it should be under water. The issue with native plants is that they are used to reduce the need for unnecessary watering. It saves water. Bob stated that native plants can be seen as a negative to those who do not like what appear to be weeds at times. Vinezeano stated that native plants are recommended under the LEED system because they reduce or eliminate irrigation requirements. Peggy mentioned that it is not an issue of being drought resistance, so much as not requiring water or as much of it. It is about changing the type of acceptable landscaping for homes and businesses.

The Chair mentioned some drought tolerant hanging baskets the Village is testing out and that everyone should take a look at them. Dan from Coca-Cola discussed the rain barrel program at Coke. He also discussed the possibility of using roof runoff for watering around the facility. It is the right thing to do, but it also gets to be cost prohibitive when water is cheap.

Energy

- 1. Promote energy efficiency and conservation.
- 2. Promote renewable energy, especially via demonstration projects. There was discussion about a solar project at Culver. Was there a turbine project there as well? Peggy asked about the possibility of the Village buying a green tag showing the Village buys green energy. Vinezeano mentioned the Village purchases energy through a broker for the water system and the opportunity is there, but does not seem likely.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Bob asked if it would be important to encourage the replacement of wood fireplaces with natural gas. Peggy asked if there is data on individual industry in Niles. Louise stated CNT data they have is not broken down to that level. Kristin mentioned you can take a look at regional levels or national vs. what is local. Dan discussed a heat recovery system from the boilers, but the payback is pushed about 12 years, so it can be expensive.

Education

- 1. Provide sustainability-related educational opportunities for a variety of audiences (business community, youth, homeowners, etc.)
- 2. Effectively publicize opportunities and Village initiatives related to sustainability.

Kristin shared a Vision Statement written based on the information from the steering committee. The committee liked the statement and simply removed "because of its" and replace with "with."

- IV. Overview of 7/25 Public Meeting Activities: Kristin restated the time and place. She stated there would be a welcome (given by the Committee Chair), an introductory PowerPoint presentation, breakdown into groups to review what is known and help brainstorming, a report back to the group and then wrap-up. It is a simple agenda. There was brief discussion about tables. Kristin stated that three moderators will be available. Kristin stated maybe ten at a table. Kristin and Steve will work on the details. The Chair encouraged the group to reach out and give invites to ensure we get a good turnout. Peggy asked about turnout in the past for these types of workshops. Vinezeano and Preston shared their thoughts. It was discussed how it is always a challenge to get a large number to an event such as this. The Chair mentioned residents are a little overwhelmed by all the public meetings lately for planning. Pat Knoll asked what other community residents brought to the table in the past and Kristin shared her thoughts. Peggy mentioned that themes tend to emerge from these types of meetings.
- V. <u>Wrap-Up & Next Steps:</u> Kristin stated the next meeting will be a review of the existing conditions that CMAP has been working on. Vinezeano will review the report to ensure there are no holes in the document. Kristin stated it would be about forty pages with graphs and maps. Kristin stated they are synthesizing lots of documents and data.
- VI. Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, September 5, 2012 at 6:15 p.m. at Village Hall.