

Energy and Environment Commission (EEC) Meeting Minutes

Date: February 4, 2025

Time: 7:06 p.m.

Location: Village Hall, Room 101

Chair: Elizabeth Lukehart

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lukehart at 7:06 p.m. A roll call was conducted, with Commissioners Baker, Odell, Becker, and Chair Lukehart present. Commissioner Tejas Shah was absent. The agenda for the meeting was approved, as well as the minutes from the November 2024 meeting, with a minor correction to a name spelling.

Chair Lukehart welcomed a new commissioner, Daniel Becker, who introduced himself as a retired energy engineer and current educator. Nalini Johnson, the Sustainability Coordinator, also introduced herself, noting that she had recently started in her role and would primarily be observing.

Lukehart announced that she would be stepping down from the commission in March and opened the floor for discussion on the process of appointing a new chair. The appointment is ultimately decided by President Scaman, but input from the commission is encouraged. The option of establishing a co-chair position was discussed as a means to distribute responsibilities. Commissioners agreed that they would take time to consider potential candidates, with the final decision expected before the April meeting.

The next item of discussion was the Parkway Planting Ordinance. The commission reviewed the near-final draft, which officially allows and promotes native plantings in parkways while maintaining guidelines for property owners. The ordinance sets a maximum plant height of 36 inches, except in designated sightline areas where the limit is 30 inches. The updated language also introduces definitions for cultivated and native gardens while ensuring that plantings do not create safety or accessibility hazards. A public meeting on the ordinance is scheduled for February 20 at the library, with additional community engagement events under consideration. The commission plans to vote on recommending the ordinance at the March or April meeting.

Discussion then moved to the 2025 work plan. The commission reviewed ongoing efforts related to the single-use bag ordinance, including strategies for assessing its effectiveness and potential fee adjustments. A budget of \$1,000 has been allocated for outreach and education. The commission also discussed updates on building energy policies, including the benchmarking program, which will expand to include 800 additional buildings. Compliance rates currently stand at 13%, though this is expected to shift as more buildings are added. A part-time fellow position has been advertised to assist with outreach and data collection.

The Illinois Stretch Code was briefly discussed, with questions raised regarding its application to major renovations and new construction. The commission expressed interest in hearing from the Building Code Advisory Commission to clarify specific thresholds and implementation details before making a formal recommendation. The electric shuttle feasibility study was also mentioned, with an update that an RFP had been issued and negotiations were underway with a single respondent.

Planning for Earth Month was reviewed, with commissioners considering various events leading up to Earth Day on April 22. Planned activities include screenings at the One Earth Film Festival, an Eco-Extravaganza at the library, and potential partnerships with local organizations such as West Cook Wild Ones. Additional ideas were discussed, including reviving a past Public Works open house event and distributing yard signs to promote native gardens. The commission agreed to refine plans and gather more community input in the coming weeks.

The meeting concluded with updates from the Sustainability Office. Staff are focused on advancing building energy policies, waste reduction initiatives, and benchmarking compliance. Work is ongoing with Argonne National Laboratory and UIC to provide technical support. The commission was also informed that the Streetscape Committee includes some sustainability elements, though there is no direct involvement from EEC members at this time.

A motion to adjourn was made and approved, and the meeting concluded.