



Village of Antioch - Environmental Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2013

1. Call to Order: The Environmental Commission was called to order by Chairman Mike Babicz at 6:30 pm in the Board Room at Antioch Village Hall: 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL.

Present: Chairman Mike Babicz, Amanda LeBrun, Meredith Schnelle, Cynthia Stepanek, Scott Frillman, Amy Bell, Peter Grant, Casey Furlong

Absent: Melonnie Hartl

2. A motion was made to accept the meeting minutes from the April 22, 2013 meeting by Meredith, 2nd by Scott. Voice vote – all aye.

3. Proposal for “Adopt Antioch” Program (Shawn Roby)

Shawn Roby, Director of Parks and Rec, proposed that the Environmental Commission join with the Parks Dept. in organizing monthly clean ups in the Antioch area, similar to Adopt-A-Highway program.

Proposal is to split into groups and do clean-ups from April-October, possibly from 9-noon once a month on Saturdays. Public Works would pick up garbage bags. Need volunteers/helpers – approach civic organizations and NHS. Could maybe pilot a Fall Clean Up this year.

Shawn will take this to July Parks Board Meeting. Motion was made by Peter to join the “Adopt Antioch” program and work together with the Parks Dept. 2nd by Amy.

4. Proposal for Organic Farm at Bittner Property (Mitch Valentine & Bernard Kondenar)

Mitch and Bernard talked about their plans to use the Bittner Property as an Organic Farm as well as an educational setting for students and visitors. They would like to provide a year round greenhouse (using geothermal energy) and food for the Village. The Bittner Property could be used for growing plants, educating students, providing tours, leasing plots, and possibly also have animals.

Mitch and Bernard are already working with the Antioch HS students at their farm on North Ave: 18845 Stateline Rd (ALT Farms). Students are learning how to catalogue and harvest plants (peonies) and selling at VFW Post. ALT farms currently has free range chickens and goats. Some of the organic practices they use include rotation of animals, integrated pest management, natural fertilizers, and permaculture. They are not certified organic and do not have 501C3 status yet, although they are considered an organic farm and not for profit. Mitch’s phone number is 847-838-0582 for more info.

There was some discussion about the Bittner Property itself. It has 3 buildings, two of which are not habitable. It was purchased for the Parks Commission originally. Parks Board spent \$480,000. It is located on North Ave. just past the VFW Post across from Nelson Rd. Would like more info on site assessment / environmental survey / soil testing.

Mitch and Bernard emphasized that education about sustainable living would be a key component of using the Bitner Property and encourage “Farm to Table” practices. They would like to partner with the IL Farm Bureau and possibly resurrect the Antioch Farm Bureau. Have also gotten support from Rory Click at CLC. Maybe U of I Ext can help too. USDA has useful curriculum materials. Also plan to do fundraising / apply for grants.

Question came up about leasing vs buying the property from the Village and insurance coverage. Would like a clearer picture of how Organic Farm would be run. Any questions can be sent to Shawn Roby. Organic Farm will be brought up at next Parks Meeting. Mayor is supportive of property being utilized.

5. Committee Reports

a. **Alternative Energy** – Solar Panels (Scott Frillman)

Scott shared article about solar panels used at wastewater treatment facility in Penn Twp. Could do the same in Antioch and use net metering power to save money and pay off bond as well as reduce carbon footprint. Meredith proposed that Scott make bulleted list of points to present at next meeting and also to Village Board / Jim Keim. We could make recommendation for someone to come and do a free assessment.

b. **Conservation** – Recycling (Scott Frillman)

Scott mentioned that the Waste Management website is confusing about what can and cannot be recycled. Need specific info for Antioch. Invite rep to our meeting? Would also like tour of recycling facility. Village gets more money the more we recycle. Educate public.

c. **Education** – Garden Update

Mike said mayor was impressed with how garden was looking. Amy made makeshift rain barrel.

d. **Green Building** – No Report

e. **Communication** – No Report

f. **EcoFair** – Mitch Valentine donated money from Eco Fair to Veterans Family Assistance (over \$100). Amanda shared picture from newspaper. Will revisit EcoFair at next meeting.

6. Old Business –

Follow-up on Water Treatment Plant Tour: Jason Treat did great job presenting how it was run. Good idea to make list in Village Newsletter about what can't be flushed: especially “flushable” wipes and pharmaceuticals.

7. New Business –

- Mike shared that it's a violation of the Open Meetings Act for any one of us to email all of us. Email to yourself first and BCC all others in group. Need to complete mini course on Open Meetings Act (Lisa Madigan website).
- Cynthia shared info on Al Gore Climate Reality Project and Sierra Club info on Environmental Laws.
- Amy Shared the binder she put together for cashiers at Wal-Mart about how to bag items / recycling training.
- Motion to Adjourn: Meredith. 2nd by Casey. Voice vote – all aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Next Meeting – Monday, July 22, 2013 at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by Amanda LeBrun