

Glen Ellyn Park District

Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting Highlights May 24th, 2022

Introduction of new Park District Natural Resources team

Nathan Troia is now Superintendent of Planning and Natural Resources. Chris Gutmann is now the Manager of Natural Areas and Outdoor Education. Laurie Bellmar is now the Environmental Outreach Specialist. Stephen Matz is the new part-time Ecological Restoration Technician.

Superintendent Troia acknowledged Renae Frigo for all her hard work in the park district's natural areas over the years. This new team will continue her work of improving natural areas in parks.

Follow up on recommendations of the February 22, 2022 Environmental Advisory Committee meeting

Sport Swap event: Manager Gutmann commended Go Green Glen Ellyn and Ackerman Sports Fitness Center staff for a successful event. Jaquelyn Casazza shared statistics from used sports equipment exchanged at the event. Some equipment was donated to a local school. \$125 was raised for the Friends of Glen Ellyn Parks Scholarship Fund.

Increased education about over-mulched trees: Park District posted a volcano mulching graphic on its Greener Glen Ellyn Facebook page. Manager Gutmann stated the post reached over 500 people and was the second most popular post of the year, thus far.

Park District environmental updates

Superintendent Troia outlined the Park District's pursuit of solar power for facilities. Ackerman Sports and Fitness Center, Maryknoll, and Spring Avenue Rec Center are being considered.

Manager Gutmann announced all twelve nature summer camps offered this year will run. Staff are attempting to add a thirteenth camp to accommodate residents on a waitlist.

Manager Gutmann announced that Lake Ellyn will be included in a regional study led by the Morton Arboretum to find the most effective treatment for root rot on trees. Earlier this year, tests on oak trees at Lake Ellyn found the presence of Phytophthora, which is a pathogen that causes root rot. This study is intended to serve as a guide for Glen Ellyn Park District and other like organizations in their attempts to manage Phytophthora.

Manager Gutmann explained the Park District's new emphasis on bird-watching for residents and the use of bird monitoring as an additional method to track restoration progress in natural areas. Bird diversity tends to increase as more native plants are introduced and the health of natural ecosystems increases. Churchill Park has the highest bird diversity, with 97 species observed to date in 2022. Churchill Park is

also the most intensively managed natural area within the District, regarding invasive species removal and restoration.

Manager Gutmann announced that staff are reviewing the dynamic between volunteers and restoration efforts, attempting to make restoration efforts more efficient and volunteer experiences more rewarding.

Referendum

Superintendent Troia gave a presentation providing details about the referendum that residents will vote on next month.

Commissioner Nephew reminded the group of the option for voters to vote on the referendum alone without needing to vote for specific parties or candidates.

The group also discussed how increased signage and postcards could help inform voters.

Commissioner Cornell emphasized a need to provide seniors with referendum information. She stated the majority of households in Glen Ellyn do not have people under the age of eighteen living within them.

Glen Ellyn Park District – Village of Glen Ellyn collaborations

Manager Gutmann explained how the Park District and Village will collaborate on three nature-themed events. These include an Earth Week during spring (including Earth Day, Arbor Day, spring bird migration, and dark skies initiative), Monarch Festival during mid-summer (including monarch butterflies, pollinators, native plants), and a Oak Festival / “Oaktober” during the fall.

Superintendent Troia added that the events are meant to serve as three “Earth weeks” that residents can reliably look forward to, annually.

SCARCE and Park District partnership review

Erin Kennedy stated that the Park District needed a staff training and a resident training to complete Water Quality Flag requirements. The resident training could be in the form of public program.

Manager Gutmann promised to reach out to Erin to set a date for the staff training and public program.

Committee suggestions and comments

Jaquelyn Casazza suggested the Park District collaborate with the Village to produce a video to educate residents about the invasive shrub, buckthorn.

Janet Kuefler announced that this will be her final committee meeting. She is moving to Minnesota.