

# Glen Ellyn Park District

## Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting Highlights November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Introduction of new committee members

Stephanie Adams – Plant Health Care Leader at the Morton Arboretum

Dan Minkus – Glen Ellyn resident

Laurie Bellmar – Environmental Outreach Specialist for Glen Ellyn Park District

Stephen Matz – Ecological Restoration Technician for Glen Ellyn Park District

### Opportunities for Improvement

#### Energy

- Superintendent Troia responded to questions about the park district's pursuit of solar energy. He explained the park district continues to investigate options. Current findings include the requirement of a 30-year agreement with a solar company, potential for a package deal with five to six facilities, and that Maryknoll and Spring Avenue Recreation Center could be good candidates for solar. Stephanie Adams stated the Morton Arboretum is installing solar on the I-88 berm. Christina Keasler stated she recently installed solar for a residential property, and a primary challenge was permitting delays.

#### Waste Reduction / Recycling

- Jacquelyn Casazza recommended the park district investigate a different strategy with recycling bins. The color system (i.e., blue for recycling) is not being followed. People don't know which bin is for recycling and which is for trash. Signage is needed. Erin Kennedy added that signage is key. Signage should include graphics of recyclables allowed in the bin. Slots through which items are deposited should only be as large as necessary to fit the allowable recyclables. Jacquelyn Casazza offered Go Green Glen Ellyn's assistance to create signage.
- Restoration Technician Matz asked about the installation of benches made from recycled plastic bottles. Superintendent Troia confirmed that many of the benches already in parks are made from recycled plastic bottles.
- The group discussed a variety of recycling program ideas, including pickleball recycling (Jacquelyn Casazza confirmed they are not recyclable), SCARCE's bread tag recycling program, and high school science projects / design competitions to create and showcase new recycling ideas. Should the high school competition concept come to fruition, Stephanie Adams suggested displaying the projects / concepts at Lake Ellyn during Fourth of July. Commissioner Nephew commented on the value of plastic bottle caps to the recycling industry. Erin Kennedy specified that nothing smaller than the size of a credit card should be recycled.

#### Education / Programmatic

- Stephanie Adams suggested the park district launch an education program about no-mow areas and the possibility of distributing signs for residents' yards. Jacquelyn Casazza stated that the village does not have a no-mow sign program. Superintendent Troia added that the park district just added a no-mow section to sloped areas at Newton Park.

#### Natural Resources Protection

- Restoration Technician Matz stated that Schaumburg Library has a seed library. Christina Keasler revealed that Glen Ellyn Library is proposing a seed library. Dan Minkus suggested a neighborhood program near Glen Ellyn Manor Park for residents to learn how to grow native plants in their yards that could involve giving away seed packets for native plants. Jacquelyn Casazza inquired about the feasibility of the park district holding a spring native plant sale.
- The group discussed the status of oak trees in the area. Christina Keasler asked what the oldest oak is in the park district. Stephanie Adams suggested that Marlon Bowles' survey of witness trees would be an excellent resource for information on old oaks. For oaks suffering from poor soil conditions, Stephanie Adams emphasized that no native tree needs to be fertilized, and doing so could actually result in harm to the tree. Also, she stated it's futile to attempt to change soil pH. The only soil amendment that could be considered for native trees is the addition of biochar, if needed.

#### Park District Environmental Updates

##### Sunset Park Playground

- Superintendent Troia showed a video highlighting playground equipment that will be installed at the new Sunset Park playground. Equipment will be made from 75% - 100% recycle plastic harvested from oceans. The Newton Park playground was replaced this year, and the old equipment was repurposed by the Kids Around the World program.

##### Ackerman Dark Skies

- Superintendent Troia that the Ackerman the new softball hub field lights will be Dark Skies certified. They will be the first field lights certified Dark Skies compliant in the state. Ball Park lights are slated to be converted to LED.

##### Oaktoberfest

- Environmental Outreach Specialist Bellmar stated the inaugural Oaktoberfest was a success. The event was the result of a collaboration between Go Green Glen Ellyn and the park district and was held at Maryknoll. 285 people attended the event. The event had a variety of interactive activities and representatives from partner organizations. School of Rock provided live music while Two Hound Red Brewery provided beer. Attendees had the option of trying out the park district's platform tennis at Maryknoll. Oak tree samplings were donated from Oak Park Conservatory to give away to event attendees.

##### Lake Ellyn Shoreline

- Superintendent Troia announced that the Lake Ellyn shoreline project has been completed. A new flower garden connecting the new path to the boathouse was installed this fall. The garden was designed by Austin Eischeid.

#### Committee Comments, Suggestions, and Questions

Jacquelyn Casazza asked for an update about the agreement for the park district to manage Panfish Park and the natural area north of Glen Ellyn Manor Park. Superintendent Troia stated negotiations are ongoing for the Intergovernmental Agreement.

**End**