

Glen Ellyn Park District

Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting Highlights December 13th, 2023

Opportunities for Improvement

Energy

- Forester Zubek stated the only good electric chainsaw currently on the market is for light duty only.
- Executive Director Thommes stated that electric blowers are used at Maryknoll and Ackerman parks. They are used in circumstances where gas-powered blowers are too powerful and would blow screening.
- Stephanie Adams suggested the park district reach out to the arborist crew at Cantigny for recommendations on electric equipment. In addition, she stated that the Morton Arboretum uses electric push mowers for the Grand Garden area, and they are looking into automated mowers for the berms adjacent to I-88.
- Keriann Dubina stated that the Forest Preserve District of Kane County has been experimenting with electric equipment.
- Executive Director Thommes stated the District had a demonstration of an automated mower and cited battery cost as an issue.
- Manager Gutmann has been researching battery-powered brush cutters.
- Dan Minkus suggested the District encourage the use of electric equipment in contracts for contractors.
- Commissioner Nephew stated that some northern suburbs have banned gas-powered blowers.
- Dan Minkus asked about the District's pursuit of solar options. Executive Director Thommes and Manager Gutmann stated that Director Troia has looked into solar panels on car ports in parking lots. Spring Avenue Rec Center would be the best candidate for this concept. Forester Zubek suggested any installation should be designed to avoid interfering with snow plows.
- Director Troia confirmed that the Ackerman hub has been officially certified as Dark Sky compliant.

Waste Reduction / Recycling

- Commissioner Nephew suggested posters be displayed above District recycling bins instructing park users what is acceptable to recycle. Director Troia stated the District has begun experimenting with this concept at Spring Avenue Rec Center.
- Commissioner Nephew stated that shrink wrap used on pallets can be recycled at locations offering recycling for plastic grocery bags, citing Jewel as a good example. The plastic is used for composite decking material. She suggested the District research offering this as a service to the community. Director Troia agreed and designated this as an objective for the District to research and possibly implement before the next Environmental Advisory Meeting. Manager Gutmann will research options.
- Commissioner Cornell stated that By the Yard offers outdoor furniture constructed from recycled plastic. Keriann Dubina added that chairs at Fullersburg Woods nature center are from By the Yard.

- Commissioner Nephew stated that SCARCE has information about recycling and mentioned their bread bag tag program.
- Commissioner Cornell suggested the District promote each material that is recycled from of the holiday lights recycling program.

Education / Programmatic

- Commissioner Nephew asked about education efforts about composting. Keriann Dubina stated that the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is leading a program about mulch on Arbor Day. Commissioner Cornell suggested the District include messages in online newsletters, and pointed out that The Conservation Foundation has good outreach.

Natural Resources Protection

- Commissioner Nephew requested information about reversing tree damage from volcano mulching. Stephanie Adams stated that mulch and soil would need to be blown out from the affected area on the tree. For many trees, some exposed roots resulting from volcano mulching removal can be pruned without damaging the tree. Stephanie Adams suggested the Arboretum could do a booth at an event about mulching.
- Forester Zubek announced the District's new tree care volunteer program called Trees for Glen Ellyn. The first workday will be on April 24th, 2024. Volunteers will help plant trees, and with continued involvement, volunteers will receive additional training on tree care. The end goal is to create a team of volunteers caring for trees independently throughout the year.
- Forester Zubek expressed a desire to experiment with the creation of tree snags for wildlife from trees removals. Manager Gutmann stated the District will experiment with this concept in natural areas.

Committee Comments, Suggestions, and Questions

- Commissioner Nephew asked about herbicide options for residents who don't hold the Illinois Pesticide Licenses that District staff have. Stephanie Adams said residents can purchase various glyphosate or 2,4-D from hardware stores.

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