MEETING MINUTES
Evanston Environment Board
Thursday, April 12, 2012
7:00 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge, Room #2200

Members Present: Susan Besson, Paige Finnegan, Suzanne Waller, Kevin Glynn, Ellen King, Hugh Bartling, Jill Franklin, Jacob Croegaert, Likwan Cheng

Members Absent: Anne Viner, Laurie Zoloth,

Staff Present: Suzette Robinson, Public Works Director, Catherine Hurley, Sustainability Coordinator

Guests: Elizabeth Tisdahl, Mayor, City of Evanston, Richard Lanyon, Chair, Utilities Commission

Presiding Members: Paige Finnegan, Susan Besson

I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
   a. Meeting began at 7:04 pm.
   b. Minutes from the February and March meeting were approved.

II. CITIZEN COMMENT
    There was no citizen comment.

III. MAYOR ELIZABETH TISDAHL
    Mayor Tisdahl opened the meeting by first sharing the awards granted to the City. She then explained that she was visiting the Environment Board to get feedback on their experiences with Council and provide some helpful hints on how to combat any difficulties or frustrations they may be having. In addition, she wanted to share some issues she felt the Board would be instrumental in supporting.

    Mayor Tisdahl stated that she felt that the most current issue of note that she believed was relevant to the Environment Board is Veolia. The situation is a dark cloud hanging over the City and as much as she would like for it to clear, it is something we must work with. The Mayor requested that the Board act as support to the Neighborhood Group. She stated that a problem the City is currently having is that the State will not test the air for pollution because they need supporting evidence to do so. However, in order to obtain this supporting evidence, the testing would have to be run. As a result, volunteer Northwestern students are researching similar-sized transfer stations in other cities. Thus far, they have noted that pollution was found in the open air in
these other cities. Hopefully their research can be used as support to motivate the State to test for pollution.

Mayor Tisdahl then moved on to discuss her belief about moving topics through Council. Her belief is that the choice of topic is important considering the socioeconomic diversity of the City. It is something the City is proud of and wants to maintain, so thinking about expenditures is increasingly important in an effort to maintain this characteristic. For instance, she stated that if bike parking is an issue that the Board would like to focus on it shouldn’t be felt that there was a loss because parking spots weren’t absorbed and parking is on plazas instead. She said that regardless of whether a Board wins 25% of the plan they propose or 100% a win is a win.

She also asked about the frustrations of the Board members. P. Finnegan stated that the Board is happy to cultivate a collaborative relationship with the City staff and wants to get involved in the activities the Mayor believes are most beneficial, one area that is of frustration is actually the Veolia topic. She elaborated to state that in the past the Board devoted a lot of time and hard work to the Neighborhood Group; however, it appeared that nothing came of their efforts. Mayor Tisdahl stated that she understands as currently no movement is taking place for two reasons. The first reason is that the lawsuit has put all action at a standstill. The second reason is because no permanent IEPA Director has been appointed and no Interim Director would take action of this type outside of permanent appointment.

P. Finnegan stated that it is the mission of the Board to support the excellent done by the City in terms of its strategic plan, Evanston Climate Action Plan and Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. In fact, the ideas and issues they focus on are as a result of reading these documents.

K. Glynn stated that one point of contention he has seen thus far is that cost is constant battle and it is hard to get people to take the time to look at ideas through a cost-benefit analysis. Mayor Tisdahl responded stating she understands his point of view and can appreciate it; however, the responses from the Council that do not appear to favor these ideas are because of the economy. She shared that Grey St. in Evanston has experienced a heightened level of foreclosure due to the economy and with it has come crime. As a result, she and Council are very sensitive to cost issues because spending money now could raise the cost of living in Evanston of which is already fairly high. Acting sensitive to spending allows the City to maintain the socioeconomic diversity within the City. She informed the Board that the 18 million dollars that allowed the City to purchase the foreclosed homes wasn’t a decision made that raised taxes, it was stimulus money given to the City based on conversations the Mayor had with Senator Durbin, Congresswoman Schakowsky and Senator Burris when he was in office.

K. Glynn requested the Mayor’s advice on guiding issues through their Board and then to Council. He stated that he feels the Board members have these lengthy and involved debates that do result in agreement. However, then after great care and thought is put into them, the ideas seem to be pushed aside...
by Council. He used the Green Building Ordinance as one example. S. Robinson stated she could provide some information into what happened in that particular case. She stated that although City staff were involved, it wasn't all of the right staff. This was not the Board's fault as the City staff should have guided the Board and mentioned who should be reviewing their work and suggestions. She stated that this is a prime example of how communication could be better improved.

The issues was then re-focused, how does the Board take the initiatives they are involved in and develop them to be something that is communicated to Council in a coherent and effective way? Mayor Tisdahl responded that first the Board should allow Suzette and Catherine to provide support as they are two of the most politically savvy staff members the City has. She said the second way to get more support by Council is to reach out to them and ask to sit down for coffee and a talk.

In addition, the concern was raised that the Board members are concerned about what happens to their work once it is given to staff for presentation. Will the quality be maintained? C. Hurley responded stating that she can assure the Board without a doubt that any changes made would be done so with good reason as Suzette really knows the Council members and is a great strategist when it comes to presenting to them.

**IV. Evanston Utilities Commission Presentation**

Richard Lanyon, the Chair of the Utilities Commission attended the meeting to present their strategic plan as well as some of the initiatives they work on for the City.

He initiated his presentation by providing the strategic plan the Utilities Commission presented to the Rules Committee in February. He stated that the focus of the Commission is the reliability of utilities in the City of Evanston, including electricity and natural gas. In October 2010, sewers and phones were made a part of the Commission.

The topic of storm water management was raised and S. Robinson stated that Engineering worked with the Commission on this issue. She stated that currently the City is having conflict with Lincoln School over storm water management because the City has stricter requirements than the regional regulatory agency. S. Robinson stated that Catherine may be a good contact for storm water management as she works with both the Utilities Commission and the Environment Board; however currently the City has its own committee for storm water management that is made up of City staff who meet once per week.

In response, S. Besson inquired about the transparency of what goes on in the City. She stated that the Board spends a great deal of time working on topics they find important in what seems to be a vacuum. There is no communication of what is occurring with plans or issues once the City has taken them on. S. Robinson responded stating that first the City must know what the Board is interested in because they aren't going to keep them
abreast of issues they don't know the Board is interested in. Secondly, she stated that it may seem for some processes, such as design, that there is a black box around it because the Engineering Department does not design in the public eye. The ordinance doesn't require it and all plans are approved or not approved by Council. K. Glynn asked whether this was an appropriate system. Perhaps the ordinance should be amended to allow the Environment Board a review of plans. S. Robinson stated that this would be an impediment to getting work done as it would severely delay the actual construction stage. In addition, she believes that the Council would be insulted because the idea questions their authority and expertise. P. Finnegan stated that their involvement would not be to supersede Council's authority, but rather to give input.

V. CITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT UPDATE

a. Catherine Hurley
Community Choice Aggregation - Catherine first provided an update on community choice aggregation. It was passed on March 20 and Council was updated on March 26. It is required by law to hold three hearings of which occurred. The plan was taken back to council after the hearings were held and Council approved it again. D. Stoneback (Director of Utilities Department) and C. Hurley are now awaiting the law to pass for Com Ed. Following, a price review will be conducted for 7, 75 and 100%. There is a large jump from 7 to 75% because 75% is really the minimum based on the research done; however, the other percentages are provided for comparison.

Earth Day – A news story was published regarding the Earth Day activities. There are going to be a lot of City-sponsored activities held. A conference is also being held Wednesday to announce the winner of the Big 7 Employers Competition. A water efficiency support meeting will occur on April 23rd and a Green Ball to celebrate the Ecology Center.

Recycling Fair – The City will be hosting its second annual Recycling and Touch a Truck Fair on July 14. The Environment Board is being asked to come and support the event. The fair is in its planning stages currently, but it will take place at ETHS and will offer games, education and recycling opportunities, etc.

b. Suzette
Veolia Press Conference – The mayor, impacted residents and Neighborhood Group spoke at the Veolia Press Conference. Veolia feels that the City is unfairly impacting their business because an ordinance was passed approximately one year earlier requiring Veolia pay per ton to use the City’s roadways since their trucks will impact the roadways. Veolia is required to report and pay necessary fees on a quarterly basis. As of April 2012, there should have been three payments or reports; however, since the City is now involved in a lawsuit with Veolia, no action can be taken to recoup unpaid fees. Currently, it appears the IEPA is on Veolia’s side because they gave them the permit to operate. The transfer station was a mom and pop place owned by Onyx up until 5 years ago when Veolia purchased it. The permit remained in existence once Veolia purchased the transfer station and since
the business has grown and trash is being hauled in from Skokie, Wilmette, etc.

Suzette said she saw L.Zoloth at the press conference and introduced her to the Chair of the Neighborhood Group. The Neighborhood Group was advised to file as a non-for-profit entity in order to protect themselves legally.

Alley Paving Ordinance – The alley paving ordinance was passed so that it will be 50/50 for all. It costs a little more for the City and the resident, but they can share in whether they want a permeable or non-permeable alleyway.

Bike Corral Pilot – The bike corral pilot was approved and will ready on May 1, 2012. Suzette is thinking about holding a press conference or ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate. The EAC will help pay for 50% of the first year of the pilot.

Cans for Cash - The City is participating in Cans for Cash in 2012 as its sixth year. Essentially residents should try to recycle as many cans as possible. Residents are not responsible for anything else as the recycling hauler will separate and count the cans. The City will be competing against other cities of similar size. The “cash” won will go to recycling education. The contest will run until April 28th.

Suzette also pointed out that the In The Works newsletter was sent out at the beginning of the month. The newsletter featured articles about the Pilot Bike Corral, recycling fair and call for all environment agencies to help the City reach 10,000 tons.

Suzette also informed the Board that the City received approval to construct the protected bike path on Church from Dodge to Chicago Ave. Suzette presented this idea along with two others at the City’s Springfield Day. All three projects were approved. This was very exciting for the City because originally IDOT was not going to allow the repaving of Church to occur until 2015 and now they have reconsidered.

The City is also applying for a Tiger grant to help with resurfacing the road for another stretch of the bike path. Suzette said in addition, she would like to request that the Board help the Department by seeking out additional places to build bike shelters other than downtown. The goal of the bike path is to have it start at Harms and end at the Lake Front, it would be great to have bike shelters in other places along the bike path so that the biking experience in Evanston can be a destination event as well.

H. Bartling mentioned that S.Robinson might be interested in a citizen’s bike plan event his De Paul class is holding on Saturday, May 5.

VI. ENVIRONMENT BOARD PROJECT UPDATE
a. Strategic Plan
The Board extended the meeting an additional 10-15 minutes in order to discuss the strategic plan. S. Besson and P. Finnegan met and determined
five areas of importance for the strategic plan: transportation, waste, green infrastructure, renewable energy, other issues and board effectiveness. P. Finnegan and S. Besson stated that they believed they should take on board effectiveness, but they wanted to narrow down the list of topics to four total as what Mr. Lanyon presented from the Utilities Commission appeared long and overly detailed for the task at hand. S. Robinson stated that in order to give the Board more time to do their plan at the next meeting, staff can send the staff updates via e-mail. J. Franklin volunteered to take on waste.

The Board agreed that they would split up into groups and review the information they currently have on their assigned topic to streamline it. There was no expectation to re-write any sections, just mainly pick out high points and priorities to focus on. The drafts will be due by April 30 in order to have everything prepared for the May 10 meeting. The groups are as follows:

1. Transportation – Hugh, Ellen Kevin
   a. Bicycles
   b. MMTP and the ECAP
   c. Powers of the Traffic Engineer – City process
   d. Complete Streets

2. Waste – Laurie, Jill, Suzanne
   a. Disposable Bags
   b. Deconstruction
   c. Composting – residential, commercial
   d. Veolia

3. Green Infrastructure - Likwan, Jacob, Anne
   a. Storm water management – City projects
   b. Green alleys

4. Board Effectiveness - Paige, Susan
   a. Working sub-committees
   b. Regular communications with Council/other groups
   c. Board orientation for new members

VII. OPEN DISCUSSION
None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was concluded at 9:15 pm.

NEXT MEETING – Thursday, May 10, 2012

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Hurley