MEETING NOTES-DRAFT

Evanston Environment Board
Thursday, October 9, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge, Room #2200

Members Present: Todd Schwier, Tom Clark, Samuel Headd, Linda Young, Kevin Glynn, Hugh Bartling

Members Absent: Ellen King, Husayn Allmart

Staff: Kenya Evans, Executive Secretary

Presiding Member/s: Todd Schwier(Chair)

I. CALL TO ORDER – Todd Schwier called meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. APPROVAL of MINUTES from September. Todd Schwier made a MOTION to approve minutes with amendments. All in favor.

III. CITIZEN COMMENT
Resident Nancy Sreenan was concerned about ongoing noise and possible pollution from leaf blowers. She wondered if certain noise ordinances could somehow prevent leaf blowers from being used. She stated that leaf blowers can damage top soil and hurt animals. She told the board that the winds generated are comparable to hurricane winds. She wanted to know how to begin this conversation with residents of Evanston. H. Bartling stated that there are many landscaping companies in and around Evanston and also the country that are “green,” and board could get their perspectives on action plans and citizen involvement. Also H. Bartling stated that many residents who use electric leaf blowers are unaware of all potential risks and how the use of organic material such as leaves and other debris that are blown away can be used for other things such as composting. S. Headd suggested that perhaps in conjunction with this, the City could possibly collect piles of leaves for such activities such as composting to eliminate wasting organic materials. C. Hurley said that this was something board could explore. C. Hurley stated that companies such as Greenwise are interested in talking to many residents about green activities such as limiting certain leaf blower activity. Resident Ms. Sreenan pointed out that there may be social justice issues as some employees of private companies are not wearing muffs for eliminating the loud noise. She also stated that leaves that are blown into alleys and drainage systems can cause clogs which in turn can cost money and resources. C. Hurley stated that the board will look more into this issue.

IV. STAFF UPDATES (ATTACHMENT)
C. Hurley brought attention to the staff updates. C. Hurley informed the board about outreach of “Bring Your Own Bag,” campaign that will be occurring in the city to get residents to use less plastic or paper bags and instead opt for reusable bags. C. Hurley stated that these bags are a better option as they can be used
multiple times for multiple purposes and there is lower risk to environment and natural resources. She stated that it was recommended that at many events polypropylene bags would be given to residents at events free of charge to encourage residents to utilize the reusable bag option, especially in light of the shopping bag ban.

C. Hurley mentioned that board can encourage residents to participate in many plans to help ease environmental strains and that events such as “Green Living Festival,” can help to educate and inform public of critical and time saving ways to help environment.

V. BIKE SHARE PROGRAM
C. Hurley introduced to the board the Bike Share Program with Divvy Bikes. She explained that Divvy Bikes are an alternative for bicyclists to have a bike available for short jaunts or rides around the city. She stated that Divvy currently provides about 300 stations and up to 3,000 bikes in places like Chicago. Evanston will host 8 stations and these stations’ locations were analyzed by two groups of Northwestern students as part of the initiative to best serve Evanston residents with bike sharing. L. Young asked if the stations would be permanent and C. Hurley stated that these stations, if found to be in areas that are inconvenient can be moved to other areas. H. Bartling expressed concern that eight stations may not be enough to serve Evanston’s biking community. C. Hurley stated that there would be ongoing and intense scrutiny and research into how many stations would best for Evanston. The board expressed interest in looking into how these stations could be further funded from corporate entities in Evanston. The board also expressed interest in further relaying to residents the benefits of bike sharing and getting residents involved in the process.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT
C. Hurley informed the board that the Daily Northwestern as well as a local website covered the Environmental Justice Committee in a small blurb regarding long term goals and activities. Individuals have expressed interest in the committee and would like to be a part of exploring and researching environmental justice issues in Evanston. S. Headd commented that Evanston Neighbors United was also interested in working in conjunction with the committee on many issues facing Evanston that include environmental justice. C. Hurley will continue to look into outreach and issues affecting many communities.

VII. BIKE PARKING FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT
The board discussed the ways that bike parking could be expanded. H. Bartling asked about TOD grant (Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant). H. Bartling asked if this could be linked to bike parking. C. Hurley responded that CMAP and RTA who head up this particular grant, will probably not do anything until the first of the year, and whatever technical advice that can be given from Environment Board would be welcome. Both organizations see bike parking as reducing some of the car parking issues. H. Bartling wanted to know if this would be a comprehensive plan with a steering committee. C. Hurley stated that this plan
would be more technical with engineers and experts versus dependence on more informal perspectives. L. Young inquired if the City has a definition of a TOD area like some other states. Board members were unsure and L. Young explained that many areas around the country including California have several different definitions of TOD areas. She stated that this issue may be worth looking into in the future and would be sure to bring in more data about this issue. C. Hurley suggested that board could focus on technical parts of biking and K. Glynn was interested in looking into existing buildings and structures. H. Bartling suggested that in addition, that board also look into new multi-family and commercial properties and K. Glynn stated that looking into how to make developers feel that bike parking for new developments could be something to look into.

VIII. ROUNDTABLE
T. Schwier informed the board about an article on coal tar used in street sealants, which could also be damaging to the environment. He noted that Winnetka banned the use of these chemicals, and when he researched uses here in Evanston he found that it is used mostly in private lots; and informing residents of the risks to environment could stem private use. The board agreed that this was an issue to look into further.

IX. ADJOURNMENT
T. Schwier MOTION to adjourn. T. Clark seconded. All in Favor.

NEXT MEETING – December 11, 2014