

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the Statutes of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Highland Park, the next meeting of the Natural Resources Commission of the City of Highland Park is scheduled to be held at the hour of 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at the City of Highland Park City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois, during which it is anticipated there will be a discussion of the following:

CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015
HIGHLAND PARK CITY HALL
1707 ST. JOHNS AVENUE
HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS
6:30 P.M.

MEETING AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Minutes: January 14, 2015

IV. Business from the Public

V. New Business

- A. Ravine Drive Beach Rock Garden Installation Project Overview
- B. Status Report on Sustainability Code Review
- C. Discussion on Electricity Aggregation 100% Green Energy Program

VI. Old Business

- A. Status Report on Environmental Movie Screenings

VII. Other Business

- A. Commissioner Comments
- B. Administrative Items

VIII. Adjournment

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND
PARK, ILLINOIS**

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2015

MEETING LOCATION: Presession Conference Room, Highland Park City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:34 p.m., Chairwoman Coyle called the meeting to order and the Staff Liaison called the roll.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Coyle, Rheinstrom, Wagenius, Pagoria, Ross, Matthews, Hannick, Lewittes, Theodosakis, and Stone

Members Absent: Dotson

The Chairwoman declared that there was a quorum of the Commission present.

Staff Present: Staff Liaison Karen Berardi

Chair Coyle discussed commission ground rules for new members of the commission. Commissioner Rheinstrom also reminded the commission about the Open Meetings Act.

MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of the Natural Resources Commission—December 10, 2014

Commissioner Rheinstrom moved to approve the minutes of a regular meeting held on December 10, 2014. Commissioner Wagenius seconded the motion. Commissioners Matthews and Hannick abstained from the vote due to their absence at the December meeting. On a voice vote, Chairwoman Coyle declared that the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

Joel Cahn, 26 Lakeview Terrace, objected to the December 10, 2014 meeting minutes as approved because he believes the minutes do not accurately report what occurred at the meeting. Mr. Cahn distributed Living on the Coast materials to commissioners not in attendance at the December meeting and read a statement into the record. Mr. Cahn stated that the commission does not have the expertise to make permitting decisions and that the commission should stop permitting hard coastal structures.

Chair Coyle noted that the meeting minutes are a summary only and not a verbatim record.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Welcome and Introduction of New Commission Members

The commission welcomed new members to the group and all members introduced themselves.

B. Review of 2015 Commission Work Plan

Staff Liaison Berardi summarized the 2015 Work Plan as approved at the September 10, 2014 meeting. The commission discussed the purpose and timeline for each action item and some changes were noted.

Specifically, for action item 2A: Evaluate Recycling and Composting Services, Chair Coyle was replaced with Commissioner Rheinstrom as a responsible party; for action item 3A: Evaluate Energy Efficiency and Renewables, Commissioner Rheinstrom was replaced with Vice Chair Ross as a responsible party; Commissioner Pagoria was added as a responsible party to all items under action item 4 regarding stormwater management and water pollution; and finally, the commission agreed that promotion of the environmental award should begin in third quarter.

The revised plan will be included in the commission packet next month.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Consideration and Approval of Bird Friendly Ordinance Recommendation

The commission discussed the bird friendly ordinance recommendation as drafted by Berardi. Chair Coyle noted that December 20 should be changed to December 10.

Commissioner Rheinstrom felt the memorandum properly reflected the decision made by the commission. Vice Chair Ross noted that multi-story should be changed to multi-family in the final recommendation.

Commissioner Wagenius moved to approve the recommendation as amended. Commissioner Rheinstrom seconded the motion. On a voice vote, Chairwoman Coyle declared that the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

At 7:20 p.m. Chairwoman Coyle recessed the meeting.

At 7:27 p.m. Chairwoman Coyle called the meeting back to order.

B. Status Report on Environmental Movie Screenings

The commission discussed the three proposed films: *Flow*, *Watermark* and *Marion Lake Story*. The commission discussed each proposed film based on the trailers viewed and reviews given for each. The commission was split in support of all three films, however the majority supported *Flow* as the backup film. The commission agreed to look for alternate films that focus more on local issues or the Great Lakes. The commission directed Staff Liaison Berardi to reserve the library auditorium for

March 22 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. and that a movie would be decided upon before the February meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Matthews left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Vice Chair Ross stated that he has an interest in bringing in outside coastal engineers to conduct a refresher on coastal management.

Commissioner Rheinstrom commended the responsible parties for the electronics recycling program. Councilwoman Stone gave credit to SWALCO and noted that the program is a temporary fix only.

Commissioner Hannick inquired about the 65 Vine application and Staff Liaison Berardi noted that the applicant had formally withdrawn the application.

B. Administrative Items

There were no administrative items this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Wagenius motioned to adjourn the meeting. Rheinstrom seconded the motion. Chairwoman Coyle adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Berardi, Assistant to the City Manager

MINUTES APPROVED BY THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ON

- WITH NO CORRECTIONS _____
- WITH CORRECTIONS _____
(SEE MINUTES OF [_____] MEETING FOR CORRECTIONS)



Memorandum

To: Members of the Natural Resources Commission

From: Karen Berardi, Assistant to the City Manager

Date: March 6, 2015

Re: Agenda Items for the March 11th Meeting of the Natural Resources Commission

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Ravine Drive Beach Rock Garden Installation Project Overview

Rebecca Grill, Natural Areas Manager with the Park District of Highland Park, and Highland Park resident Marjie Ettlinger will be present to provide an overview of the rock garden installation to be constructed at Ravine Drive Beach. City staff has determined that there is no permitting necessary for this project, therefore the presentation is for informative purposes only. A memorandum detailing the project is attached.

B. Status Report on Sustainability Code Review

Grace Rink, the City's Sustainability Consultant, will be present to provide an update on the code review that she is undertaking as part of the City's 2015 Sustainability Work Plan. Specifically, Ms. Rink will detail code review progress regarding compliance with dark sky / light pollution, alternative energy, green infrastructure and bird-safe design standards. Attached is the City's 2015 Sustainability Work Plan which details the code review under Task 3.

C. Discussion on Electricity Aggregation 100% Green Energy Program

Attached is a memorandum from Deputy City Manager Rudy Espiritu providing an update regarding the electricity aggregation program. The matter is scheduled for discussion during the City Council's Committee of the Whole Meeting on March 9, 2015. Councilwoman Stone will update the commission on the Council's discussion and further discuss the option to transition the program to 100% green energy. Currently, the City offers an opt-in Green Power Program where residents may choose to use green energy, however less than 100 households have opted in to the program. More information on the City's electricity aggregation program and the Green Power Program can be found on the City's website here: <http://www.cityhpil.com/index.aspx?NID=529>.

Background information on recent updates regarding the electricity aggregation program and the recommendation made to Council is provided in the attached memorandum.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Status Report on Environmental Movie Screenings

It is recommended that the commission consider a film screening sometime in April or in May. May is National Bike Month and there is community interest to host a series of biking activities in May in conjunction with bike month. Specifically, the City is finalizing details to host a Bike Fair on May 16, 2015 that will feature a bike rodeo, bike recycling drop-off, community ride and more. Additionally, the City is conducting a series of other initiatives and activities in conjunction with Bike Month.

It's been recommended that one of these activities could be a film screening of a series of short bike films. The Library and Park District are interested in co-sponsoring such a series of shorts on biking. Some of the short biking films available are the following (click on link to go to overview):

- Georgeana Terry film <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDRbinNduhM>
- The Man Who Lived on his Bike <http://vimeo.com/35927275>
- Bike vs. car vs. transit <http://www.streetfilms.org/bike-vs-car-vs-transit/>
- Cycling Copenhagen through North American Eyes
<http://www.streetfilms.org/cycling-copenhagen-through-north-american-eyes/>
- New York Streets? Not So Mean Anymore
http://www.ted.com/talks/janette_sadik_khan_new_york_s_streets_not_so_mean_any_more?language=en

Other films to consider for a future screening are (click on link to go to overview):

- Wild Things, <http://projectwildthing.com/>
- Food Patriots, <http://www.foodpatriots.com/>. This film was produced in Northbrook, Illinois and was filmed primarily in Illinois.

City Staff is seeking commission feedback on the above considerations. Please note that the Library auditorium is not available on any Sunday afternoons in April, but weeknights are available.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Ravine Drive Beach Rock Garden Installation Overview
- 2015 Sustainability Work Plan
- Electric Aggregation Update and Recommendation to City Council



MEMORANDUM

To: Natural Resources Commission, City of Highland Park

From: Rebecca Grill, Natural Areas Manager

Date: March 11, 2015

Re: **LAKE MICHIGAN ROCK GARDEN AT RAVINE DRIVE BEACH
INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY**

SUMMARY

On the following pages you'll read details about the upcoming Rock Garden for Ravine Drive beach. This project is in response to Marjie Ettliger's long time desire to create an informational exhibit about Lake Michigan beach stones. The project was presented to the Park District Board of Directors and approved at its October 28th 2014 meeting.

Rebecca Grill, Natural Areas Manager, has met with Marjie and has guided the design through a hand-picked artist, knowing that our intent is to provide a safe and well-conceived result that educates the community about our unique resources while providing a functional attraction.

Community Benefits

- Brings to the beach our commitment to Outdoor Play concepts as embodied in the successful Wander Woods.
- Provides a seating area and play space for the beach which now has no seating area.
- Gives us a way to inform the community about geological treasures they usually overlook (or don't like).
- Website component can be used for programs at the Interpretive Center
- Can be done in partnership with community volunteers
- Cost is largely underwritten by long time community resident

ACTION

Informational Only. City staff (Engineering Department) has determined that no permitting is required for this project.

Proposal for: A Lake Michigan Rock Garden

According to the Lake Michigan Rock Pickers Guide (Bruce Mueller and Kevin Gauthier) Great Lakes beaches have more color and variety of stones than anywhere else on the planet. Children (and adults) delight in picking up **pocket treasures**, sometimes smooth, sometimes shiny or translucent, often shot through with sparkles like diamonds. But what do we really know of these stones? How old are they? Where do they come from? Why are there so many?



Marjie Ettlinger has lived in Highland Park for a full and varied lifetime, with many happy hours spent on its beaches. Her childhood delight in beach treasures has never faltered, only grown with appreciation for the story of the stones. She would like to share that enthusiasm with the rest of the community.

The Ettlinger family wish to contribute to an educational component about beach stones for the newly restored Ravine Drive beach (our community's first public beach). Staff has met with Mr. and Mrs. Ettlinger and John Dalton, a respected exhibit designer, who has donated his time to infuse Marjie's concept with current educational thinking and very importantly—FUN! Coastal Geologist Charles Shabica helped us learn more about the remarkable history of stones commonly found on our beaches.

Proposal

*This proposal is to create a **Lake Michigan Rock Garden** on the north beach of Ravine Drive (Millard Park) where children and adults can bring stones they collect to engage (sift and sort) in a friendly outdoor play space while learning to identify at least five of the key types of Lake Michigan beach stones. Additional information about the stones will be available in poster form on the nearby kiosk and also hosted on the Park District website (making the Highland Park Children's Rock Garden virtually accessible to anyone with a computer).*

This will be a place for outdoor play and learning where stones can be **sorted** to make music via a Pebble Harp and **sifted** through a special inset on a spacious wooden bench. Visitors will **"meet" the parent** material for at least five of the important rock types on the beach: Basalt, Granite, Quartz, Sandstone and Limestone. This will be accomplished by installing large boulders of these rocks and engraving them with their names.

Importantly, the garden will provide a sheltered spot to sit and contemplate the beautiful beach while listening to the stones rolling together in the waves. At the moment, there are no other places to sit at the Ravine Drive beach

Pebbles have Parents (Rock ID)

Concept: The small stones we find on the beach were once (millions and even billions of years ago) giant rock formations. Many (certainly the speckled pink, white and black rocks) once formed the **Granite** core of the North American continent: the Canadian Shield. A second component (usually white with surprising sea creature fossils) comes from Illinois bedrock which is **Dolomite Limestone** formed when North America was covered by a vast ancient ocean. A third component (often composed of thin layers) comes from sediment (**sand, mud and silt stone**) deposited by ancient seas and glacial lakes and hardened over time. A fourth component (plain black stones) is **basalt** which is hardened magma from volcanic action at the time the continents were formed. Not to be forgotten, **sand** on our beaches is mostly made up of **Quartz** ground to a powder by time.

Component: We propose purchasing large boulders of five key beach stones: Granite, Basalt, Quartz, Limestone and Sandstone and engraving them with their names. These would be installed in the sheltered foredune on the north beach, along with the bench and pebble harp described below to form a touchable sculptural rock garden. Imagine a child pouring a bucket of water over the large quartz boulder (pictured right) to make it shine. Or comparing his or her small pink, black and white stone to its parent boulder while wondering what forces turned this 500 pound rock into a pebble that fits in one's hand.



1 Quartz Stone: Parent Material of Sand

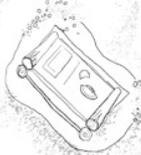
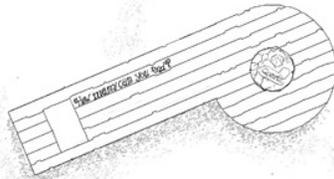
See http://www.geo.mtu.edu/~raman/SilverI/Boulder_Garden/Welcome.html for an inspiring virtual (and real life) rock garden.

Sifting and Sorting (Outdoor Play)

Concept: Heller Nature Center staff has years of experience in teaching children about our wonderful lakefront. We learned from them that **sorting stones** is a favorite activity for many ages. Also in Heller's Wander Woods play space, children gravitate to the **Pebble Harp**, in which pebbles cascade to create a tinkling musical sound. Young children love to **sift sands** to find rock treasures. This can be accommodated with a sieve inset on the wooden bench.

Component: It is anticipated that we can build the pebble harp with the help of staff and volunteers. We also believe that the bench can be built with volunteer help. Parks crews can assist with installation, but some special help may be needed to fabricate a sturdy and attractive base for the bench.

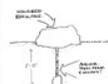
A BENCH
 WITH A LARGE PIECE OF QUARTZITE
 AND A SEWING MACHINES IN IT
 MADE A QUESTION.



Pebble Harp
 WITH A
 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2"
 "SOUND" HARP.



LARGE ROCKS
 WITH THE NAMES
 INSCRIBED ON THEM
 SET NEAR THE BENCH
 AND IN THE GARDEN.





Granite (ancient North American core / Canadian Shield). Scraped by glaciers and carried here from as far as 2,000 miles away.



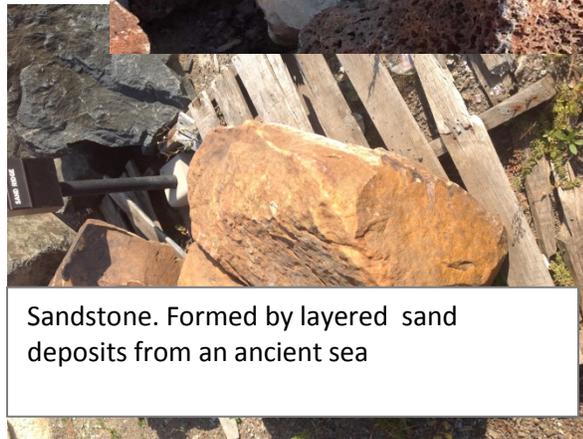
Dolomite Limestone (Illinois bedrock formed when North America covered by ancient seas)



Basalt. Formed at time of continental development as volcanic magma cooled and hardened. Used by early people as hammer stones.



Quartz: the parent material of sand.



Sandstone. Formed by layered sand deposits from an ancient sea

SCOPE OF WORK – 2015

The 2015 work plan continues the activities that were ongoing as of the end of 2014, introduces new activities per the City's request, and allows space for unforeseen priorities and opportunities that will arise throughout the year. This scope is based on our recent conversations and feedback from City staff and project stakeholders.

Task 1: Sustainable Landscape Initiatives

1a. Landscape Contractor Application

In 2014 we drafted a survey to accompany the City's existing Landscape Contractor Certification application that would document the sustainable services available from these companies. In 2015 we will assist City staff with review of these surveys, ensuring the information provided clearly indicates sustainable practices, and conducting research and/or interviews when necessary. As needed, Quercus will also assist with managing the database of certified landscapers.

1b. Green Infrastructure Pilot Program

The City has indicated an interest in encouraging residents and businesses to install water-conserving features in their landscapes (rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable paving, etc.) by raising awareness and offering matching funds. Quercus will develop a program to meet this objective, determining qualifications and developing an application, and assist the City with the application reviews and project selection process.

Task 2: Waste Management and Recycling

In 2014 we confirmed that Highland Park has a high rate of recycling among its residents, and a comparatively lower rate among its businesses and multi-unit buildings, with a lack of space and general disinterest being the top barriers. With the commercial waste hauling contract due for re-bid at the end of 2015, this is an excellent time to work on raising awareness of the importance of environmentally preferable waste management.

Everyone is motivated to adopt environmental behaviors for different reasons – be it financial, aesthetic, or otherwise personal. Many residents recycle and may be inclined to utilize food scrap recycling if it were provided, but there remains a section of the community which does not recycle, not only stressing the environment but also reducing the revenue the City could achieve with higher recycling rates. The objective of this task is behavior change – it takes time, but messages tailored to the audience and delivered effectively can have a measureable impact.

2a. Audience Assessment and Message Development

In this first task we will assess the audience (residents and business owners) through market research, surveys, and focus groups. We will identify effective communication channels and gauge interest in food scrap recycling in addition to conventional recycling. This task will result in effective messages and materials to raise awareness and rates of participation.

2b. Implement Messaging Campaign

In task 2a we will have worked with City staff to determine the most effective communication channels for reaching the intended audience. In this task, Quercus will assist City staff and other identified 'messengers' with implementing the campaign.

2c. Analyze Results

The activity will conclude with a post-campaign survey to gauge effectiveness of the messages and materials. This task will result in a clear measurement of awareness and behavior change attributable to the campaign, and recommendations for continuing the effort.

Task 3: Sustainability Code Review

In late 2014 the Natural Resources Commission asked our team to examine City codes related to lighting and determine whether or not they promote dark skies. The examination revealed two points of interest: (a) the current codes generally do support dark sky goals, and (b) portions of the relevant codes are outdated, separate from the dark sky issue. Also related to code compliance, at least one renewable power project was thwarted in recent years due to complications with the local code. For 2015, the City has indicated Quercus should review of local codes for a number of sustainability features, described below:

3a. Dark Sky/Light Pollution Prevention

In this task we will complete the project begun in 2014, producing revisions to local codes that impact light pollution.

3b. Alternative Energy

This examination will review all code sections that might allow or limit alternative energy projects, including solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, wind, and ground-source heat exchange. We will work with the City to recommend changes to these codes where necessary.

3c. Green Infrastructure

The City would like to encourage residents and businesses to disconnect downspouts and re-direct stormwater into rain barrels, rain gardens, vegetated roofs, and permeable surfaces. There are some code sections that challenge these activities. In this task we will review applicable code sections and recommend updates where needed.

3d. Bird-Safe Design

The current Building Code recommends bird-safe design. During this task we will work with the City to consider stronger language and/or requirements, and to determine whether or not other code sections would benefit from references to bird-safe design.

Task 4: Facility Energy Review

In 2014 there was an interest in engaging Primera in facility energy assessments and review of street lighting. However, since some of this work was also included in the scope of the Siemens' contract, we placed this task on hold. We understand that Public Works is in the process of determining how our team can assist the City in 2015 and take on tasks that are not addressed by Siemens.

Task 5: Grant Writing and New Tasks

5a. Grant Writing

The activities pursued in 2014 did not require additional funding, but there could be opportunities for new projects were we to seek specific grants. This will be an ongoing task in 2015 with the primary effort taking place in the first quarter.

5b. New Tasks

This task is yet undefined, by design. In 2014 the budget allowed us time to research subjects as they arose, such as the pros and cons of activated walk signals, a portable water station for events, examining the details of Chicago's residential solar program, and exploring the benefits of ICLEI membership. We suggest the same for 2015; opportunities to pursue new avenues in sustainability change with the news of the day, and allowing some flexibility in this work plan will enable our team to pivot as needed.

Task 6: Coordination

The level and frequency of communication amongst our team this year has been ideal. The City has been responsive to requests for information and document reviews, and the staff and stakeholders have been proactive about engaging us in their deliberations. We anticipate this will continue in 2015, with the addition of greater communication with the Green Alliance. During the launch meeting for that group in September 2014, each participating organization was clearly interested in collaborating on certain subjects, and could be mobilized for more joint efforts in the year to come. Quercus and its sub-contractors will continue to engage in dialogue with the City and stakeholders through in-person meetings, community presentations, and communication by phone and e-mail.

Committee of the Whole



Date: March 9, 2015
To: Mayor Nancy Rotering & City Council
From: Rudy Espiritu, Deputy City Manager
Subject: Electric Aggregation Update

Background

In December 2011, the Cities of Highland Park, Lake Forest and Park Ridge, and the Villages of Deerfield, Glencoe, Lake Bluff, Northbrook and Skokie formed the North Shore Electricity Aggregation Consortium. The Consortium was created to act as a collective body of municipalities to create and manage municipal electric aggregation services on behalf of their residents and eligible businesses. Each Consortium community executed a three-year contract with the same selected alternative electricity supplier, MC Squared Energy Services, to supply power to an estimated 90,000 Consortium customers. The current contract with MC Squared is set to expire following the May 2015 meter read.

Savings

Over the last three years, the Consortium has saved participating customers more than \$36 million due to lower rates than the ComEd default tariff service rate for its residents and small businesses. The savings for Highland Park from inception through the end of the current contract term is anticipated to be \$6.4 million.

North Shore Electricity Aggregation Consortium Power Supply Program Savings June, 2012 through May, 2015*	
Municipality	\$ Savings (in millions)
Deerfield	3.2
Glencoe	2.3
Highland Park	6.4
Lake Bluff	1.2
Lake Forest	4.8
Northbrook	6.5
Park Ridge	5.2
Skokie	6.9
TOTAL SAVINGS	36.5
*estimated	

Competitive Bidding Process

With the MC Squared contract set to expire, the Consortium conducted an extensive due diligence process to determine if a new supply agreement should be considered with an alternative electricity supplier. To facilitate a competitive bidding process, the Consortium issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on November 3, 2014, soliciting bids from all qualified providers to supply power and services for

the Consortium's portfolio of customers. Two bids were received by the November 24, 2014 due date and were evaluated by the Consortium's members, legal counsel, and energy consultant. The Consortium negotiated with suppliers and was able to gain many safeguards and concessions; nevertheless, the indicative pricing from all bidders was only anticipated to save 4 – 7% when compared to the ComEd default rate. The Consortium believes it will prove to be significantly more challenging to guarantee customers' savings in a future power supply agreement than it has in the past.

Challenges

The Consortium was confronted with several new electricity market challenges.

Default Rate – As expected, the difference (or cost savings) between the ComEd default rate and the aggregated Consortium rate has continued to converge over the last three years. Following a high of 40% savings in the first year, savings in the past year has equated to less than 5%, and is expected to diminish further, or be negated fully, over the next few years. The difference between the two rates going forward is expected to be relatively small, due in large part to the expiration of relatively high-cost power supplies in the ComEd portfolio. As a result, it has become more difficult for alternative electricity suppliers to provide a fixed, long-term competitive aggregated electric rate that significantly “beats” the ComEd default rate. This is true primarily due to the complexities of the way rates are set now versus when the Consortium began its aggregation program in 2012. ComEd's price now resets multiple times per year, and is impacted by other factors described below. The Consortium's fixed rate does not reset, thereby causing concern over the risk of the ComEd default rate actually dipping below the Consortium rate during the course of a 12-month price lock period.

Purchased Electricity Adjustment (PEA) – The ComEd electricity rate is set by the Illinois Commerce Commission and it is equal to the sum of the default rate plus (or minus) the Purchased Electricity Adjustment. The ComEd default rate does not include the PEA. The PEA fluctuates monthly and it can raise or lower the electricity bill of a ComEd customer. It is important to note that the PEA monthly fluctuations only affect ComEd customers, not Consortium customers. Nevertheless, the Consortium monitors the PEA monthly fluctuations because it serves as a benchmark that the Consortium uses to compare effective pricing.

The purpose of the PEA is to “true-up” any difference (over or under) between what ComEd paid to acquire electric supply and what ComEd previously charged customers for the electricity supply. When the PEA is a credit (i.e. negative), it reduces the gap between the default rate and the aggregated Consortium rate. The PEA can range from negative (credit) or positive (charge) of 0.50 cents per kWh. Monthly PEA fluctuations are not known in advance and only when taking into account the PEA monthly fluctuations can the Consortium truly determine the level of savings being provided to Consortium customers.

Based on extensive market research by the Consortium's energy consultant and corroborated by the suppliers themselves, the PEA is expected to be particularly volatile over the next 12 months adding even more uncertainty around the already marginal price savings. This volatility can lead to months in which the aggregated Consortium rate can either be above or below the ComEd supply rate.

Recommendation

Based on the concerns above, the Consortium originally recommended allowing the contract with MC Squared to expire and simply allow residents to go back to ComEd. However, in reviewing the contract with MC Squared, it was found that they had a provision to allow them to stay as the electric supplier unless they had received an “out opt” from residents at the end of the term. Residents would have fifteen (15) days to opt out or MC Squared would remain their supplier. The Consortium felt it was not in the best interests each community to have residents opt out of the program individually.

After much discussion by the Consortium, it was found that the only way to prevent this from occurring was to award an electric aggregation agreement to another vendor. Fortunately, Integrys offered the lowest bid and was expected to still be below the ComEd default rate, according to our energy consultant. Additionally, Integrys offered two intriguing options: a “free look” at the ComEd default rate and a natural gas option similar to aggregation. The free look allows the Consortium to monitor if ComEd is the lower rate. If ComEd is indeed the lower rate, then the Consortium could then use the ComEd rate rather than the Integrys rate. Secondly, even though there are no specifics as to the natural gas option, it still provides a discussion on how to offer something similar to electric aggregation. Please keep in mind that even though the City has been pushing natural gas aggregation with our local legislators, the General Assembly has yet to act on this. Therefore, working out an option with Integrys for natural gas might offer residents savings before any legislative action occurs regarding this. This recommendation to go to Integrys will be considered by the City Council on March 23.

Discussion

Councilwoman Stone also discussed the possibility of Highland Park becoming 100% green energy, similar to City of Lake Forest. There is an additional cost to residents if the City went with 100% green energy. Currently, residents are paying 6.688 cents/kWh. If Highland Park were to go to 100% green energy, that rate would be 6.828 cents/kWh, which is an increase of 0.140 cents/kWh over the current rate. The actual cost to an individual household would depend on how many kilowatts per hour they are consuming. On average, a residence in Highland Park uses approximately 13,735 kWh per year. Therefore if the City were on all green energy now, an average residence would pay \$19.23 more annually. There is potential that because Lake Forest is already 100% green, that it could cost an average residence in both communities about \$15.12 more annually in the first year. So the average residence would see an increase of approximately \$15 - \$19 annually. Residents have the option to opt in and go 100% green energy currently. However, less than 100 residents have opted in to 100% green energy. Nevertheless, a focus of the Committee of the Whole will be if the City Council would prefer to have all residents go to 100% green energy.