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DSS

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2nd Ward
Alderman

Native Pollinator Advisory Garden Registry Board Minutes

Meeting September 4, 2025

Minutes submitted by Lorraine Kells, Secretary

1. Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order at 2:48 pm.

2. Roll Call

- In attendance: Jessica Fong, Laura Milkert, Lorraine Kells, Ron Daye, Gloria Pittman, Breanne Heath, and Alderman Hopkins

Board members not in attendance: Brittany Buckles, Naomi Davis

Attending: Gabriela Wagener-Sobrero

3. Public Comments

None

Agenda unavailable; regular meeting resumed with no votes taken.

Board Discussion:

Gloria stated that Cole Stallard, Commissioner of DSS gave permission for the language change and would follow up with talk to CDOT for approval of language change for the parkway.

Protocol Process Structure (Breanne and Laura)

The presentation from this subcommittee made clear that we require guidance of the legal team on the radius surrounding the fire hydrant. Chicago Municipal Code states vascular materials may not obstruct a fire hydrant within a radius of 5'. It's recommended that we look into height requirements at the edge of the radius. A 3' buffer with no plants over 8" was suggested. Additionally, it was proposed that we look further into height requirements at the edge of the radius. Plants below the fire hydrant height, maybe a maximum of 12", or a range of 8-12", or 8-15" could be allowed. Legally in the registry, a 5' radius would get all depts in alignment. Before a pilot is rolled out, we need a meeting with Fire Dept, CDOT for any planting within the 5' radius. The yellow curb is a consideration for our language as no portion of the parkway may be planted where there is a yellow curb. The dimension of the parkway is determined by the property—20-25', 50-75' and determines planting range on either side of a hydrant. Using a 5' radius allows flexibility and maintenance of the hydrant with no plants within the 5' radius. For parkways, an 18" perimeter allows a "flop buffer", preventing the taller plants from flopping over onto the sidewalk or into the street; a 12" buffer around trees, and no raised structures of a certain dimension was suggested. A 2' minimum

CDOT puts us in conflict with other rules. We may consider official language of CDOT concerning removable bricks and boulders.

Alderman Hopkins stated he does not want the board to be too self-restricted; the language of the ordinance will be cleaned up by his lawyers after the budget meeting.

Breanne stated concerns for property owner acknowledgement in a link rather than a form. A template and the ability to upload proposals could be available in transfer of resident gardener.

It will be under the ownership of the Park District. Any pdf is blocked from Park District networks. Registration is only good for the resident and property owner which may be complaint driven. Alders will strongly encourage gardens to be kept in good condition. Alderman Hopkins states there is an internal email for all ward offices. He will be the lead alder to push the ordinance.

Other details discussed briefly: uploading of current photos is ok; plant list could be uploaded.

The registry requires acknowledgement of what the gardener is doing. Do we want the 3-yr maintenance plan as a form or template? It could be a 'click here' for a maintenance template, then gardener uploads the document. DSS will review and have eyes on all completed forms. DSS will verify the address and approval of process. Questions that come up may require an educational component, so the board will work with them. Upon final approval the application comes to the board.

Infractions will be spelled out in the ordinance with DSS engagement for compliance. Out of compliance is a call to the DSS Superintendent.

It was recommended that we pilot the ordinance with the gardens to start with in Hopkins' ward only.

What needs to be in place:

- Internal testing;
- Timeline with the commissioner of DSS with a limitation imposed-Where would you plant? In what manner?
- Timeline with Hopkins staff; attorney clears language. Ald files. Without technical changes there would be no going into committee. Small technical changes could be expedited by Hopkins without committee. If a committee is needed there would be a hearing and a call for advocates giving testimony; a 4-minute segment with WTTW's Patti Wetli would bring positive endorsement.

Discussion of a budget for the hang tag, need for funding. Does the hand tag need a QR code which will send people to the Botanic Garden or Arboretum helpful information? Do approved gardens get a something that states "this garden had been approved by the City of Chicago, a QR code goes to updates of the address, something like the mural registry does.

Action Item: Laura and Breanne are tasked with language new language to be on the form.

Meeting ended 4:04