

President
Jessica Fong

Vice President
Laura Milkert

Secretary
Lorraine Kells

Board Member
Naomi Davis

Board Member
Brittany Buckles

EX-Officio
Board Members

Breanne Heath

Ron Daye

Gloria Pittman
Deputy
Commissioner –
DSS

Alderman
Hopkins
2nd Ward
Alderman

Native Pollinator Advisory Garden Registry Board Minutes

Meeting May 1, 2025

Minutes submitted by Lorraine Kells, Secretary

1. Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order at 2:40 pm.

2. Roll Call

- In attendance: Jessica Fong, Laura Milkert, Lorraine Kells, Brittany Buckles, Naomi Davis, Ron Daye, Gloria Pittman, Breanne Heath, and Ald Brian Hopkins
- Public Attending: Gaby Wagener-Sobrero, Environmental Justice Project Manager at City of Chicago - Department of Environment, Liz Anna Kozik, Chicago Botanic Garden, and Rethinking Lawns Research Coordinator

3. Public Comments Liz Anna introduced herself and spoke of the Institutes goal to convert one block at a time during a 5-year period that is grant supported. The interest is to get community buy-in for maintenance and to develop best practices.

Motion to approve March 6 Meeting Minutes was called by Jessica, seconded by Breanne

Sub Committee Reports

Jessica presented the report that she and Brittany worked on concerning the language of the ordinance. Copies are available
Breanne presented the report that she and Laura worked on for the application process. Copies are available.

Questions posed by the report on structure and process - 1) how does one get onto the registry? 2) once registered, how does one stay in good standing? 3) how will it be managed? and 4) how can a Registry be designed that is both easy for homeowners to access, and yet ensures quality control and ease of management for a small Board and Streets and Sanitation staff? All were considered with comparison of compost registry, mural registry, and community garden registry. Key take-aways from each registry noted in the report.

Advocating Parkway Height Restriction Change in the Ordinance

Alderman Hopkins stated there are ways to change the height restriction; the easiest being after the ordinance has passed. To make this change, we will need someone with professional credentials to

testify before City Council. The testimony should give average growth heights to make a case for empirical evidence. As well there must be Ald Hopkins stated we need to take a closer look at definitions that conflict with what DSS considers nuisances, their process for notifying people about fines and responsibilities. Is front yard setback covered in the ordinance?

Breanne called for clarification of voting on UFAB Questions. Jessica replied we are the ones handling height restrictions and UFAB will follow. It was noted that our height restriction cannot be arbitrary. It must have science behind it, have the most impact for pollinators, at least the top five. There must also be a balance between height clear sight lines of parkways.

Liz stated she is federally funded and cannot testify, but she will contact Nick Dorian, post-doctoral researcher at the Chicago Botanic Garden who works to optimize pollinator gardens for biodiversity conservation. For our next steps, she will consider design and provide data on

- Commonly available native plants
- Most reasonable heights of native plants
- Commonly sourced native plants.

It was pointed out that there is a red flag in the ordinance to clarify watering. The application process must have questions to verify the process, deal with maintenance, and give independence. Further discussion dealt with making the registry accessible, flexible, allowing a paper application, hosting in-person registration at library branches with board review of applications with no renewal necessary unless there are problems. Is there equity in the application process?

Recommendation made to go with a Pilot Process before we roll out an official registry to ensure we the heavy lifting of a big initial registry, followed by periodic registration. There needs to be funding for a contact person; it may be the same person as contact for the compost registry? Managing for the native garden registry is an opportunity to train ward superintendents to recognize what is in the ordinance. Gloria described current training process. Can there be a pause on fines? Is there a provision for approval without fines?

Naomi proposed creating a greenway with linkage which may require express cooperation from the city. How can we be more intentional with the city? Public and private partnerships are essential. We want

to promote this ordinance with the highest quality landscaping. Information must come from science-based that captures the essence of what we are doing. Opposite of this would be enforcement, but we want to make. Opposite of this would be enforcement, but we want to make the default assumption that if it's there, it belongs there and allow gardens in good faith.

Action items

Who will fund this?

What is the capacity?

A letter of support and testimony

Meeting adjourned 4:01 pm