

SUBJECT: Comments on and edits to the 2017 Sustainable Land Care Policy

DATE: April 9, 2019

BACKGROUND: At the February 2019 Forest Preserve Advisory Board (FPAB) meeting, the Board was informed by Public Works Assistant Director-Parks Brian Townsend that the city's 2017 Sustainable Land Care Policy had been reopened for review. Mr. Townsend provided the board with proposed additions and edits to the existing document from Green ACES, and asked the Board to review those proposed changes and propose any additional changes or clarifications. The board reviewed the policy on March 28, 2019.

DISCUSSION: In 2017 FPAB reviewed the proposed Sustainable Land Care Policy and concluded that it was mainly focused on landscaped areas and areas of high public use. FPAB's opinion was that the document should not apply to the Forest Preserve because the forest is not a landscaped area. The first sentence of the land-care policy states that "sustainable land care means planting what will do well in regional climates," but the city did not and does not plant in the forest. Instead, Greenbelt residents are stewards of the natural ecosystem that exists there. At the October 20, 2016 Forest Preserve meeting, we recommended that the Land Care Policy be revised to state that the Forest Preserve is governed by a different policy, namely the Forest Preserve Management and Maintenance Guidelines. Our recommended edit to the Land Care Policy has not yet been made, but we reaffirm our view on this matter. (FPAB will soon to be submitting a revised version of the guidelines which we propose to call the Forest Preserve Stewardship Guidelines).

RECOMMENDATION: The Forest Preserve Advisory Board supports the 2017 version of the Sustainable Land Care Policy, and recommends no substantial changes to that policy. We do, however, wish to request again the edit that we proposed in 2017, namely that the clarification be included as language in the revised Sustainable Land Care Policy.

FPAB recommends that the 2017 version of the Sustainable Land Care Policy be revised to explicitly state that the Forest Preserve is not covered by the document, and that the Forest Preserve Stewardship Guidelines should be cited as the authoritative policy for the Forest Preserve. The specific revision that FPAB recommends to the 2017 Sustainable Land Care Policy is to replace the first sentence following the "Organization" heading on page 1 with the following text:

"The Policy applies to all City-owned property, except for specific areas that are governed by code under an alternative policy. For example, the Forest Preserve Management and Maintenance Guidelines, adopted by City Council in 2007, is the policy that governs the Greenbelt Forest Preserve pursuant to Chapter 12, Articles 8 and 9 of the Greenbelt City Code."

Once these sentences are inserted, footnote #3 can be deleted because the footnote cites the wrong document (the AMT 2016 draft Forest Health Assessment), and our edits cite City Code in the sentence above. However, FPAB does recognize that other policies are cited in footnote #3 and that other Advisory Boards may object to their removal. FPAB recommends that any Advisory Boards whose mission covers the policies currently cited in footnote #3 be encouraged to edit our language to include those policies or to cite them in a footnote. All policies that take precedence by code should be listed and called out in the text of the document.