

**COOL CITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 2026**

Goldstein called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. The following members were present and answered roll call: Goldstein, Martin, Page, Collins and Canada.

Also Present: Senior Planner, Caitlin Rice and Carol Frerker, Superintendent Willoughby Farm

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

N/A

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Martin made a motion to approve January 26, 2026, meeting minutes. Seconded by Page.

Voice Vote: 4 ayes, 1 Abstain Motion approved, (4-0)

DISCUSSION

1. Goals & Projects Update

March/April Events

Committee schedules dates for upcoming events. March 28th 9 am to noon for Invasive Sweep at Glidden Park and April 11th 9 am- 11 am for Highway Clean up rain date of April 25th.

Goldstein recommends the Committee explore an Uptown Tree Naming program for Arbor Day in April to encourage residents to learn more about and appreciate the new Uptown Trees.

Low Mow Spring

Committee discusses how to manage the Low Mow Spring signage program this year. Budgeted for thirty (30) signs. Committee with raffle the signs after at least a week of open registration to ensure distribution is more equitable. Committee discusses methods to more effectively reach residents and provide the opportunity, such as the City Scoop, social media and digital signs. Committee will prioritize those who signed up for the email list last year.

Member T-shirt Design

Rice asks for feedback on the design for Cool Cities Committee T-shirts. Rice will provide revised design to committee at March meeting to order in time for spring tabling events.

2026 Green Business Showcase Kickoff

Rice provides information about the Green Business kickoff event on February 26th.

New Earth Farms Update

Rice provides update on active registrations and waste diversion numbers. Thirteen (13) active registrants to this date. Total weight of collections since opening is 2,598 lbs, 2,378lbs from 2025. The City posted a social media blast reminder for composting.

Republic Services Update

Rice provides data and a brief overview of the diversion rates from 2025 and previous years. The rate has slightly decreased from 2024 but appears to be stabilizing around 15%. The Committee discusses programs and messaging about recycling and inquiries how Collinsville compares to peer communities.

2. Single Use Bag Fee

Rice provides an overview of research and recommendations for a single use bag fee policy in Collinsville. Rice informs the Committee that Illinois Senate Bill 1872 would aim to prohibit single use plastic bags at checkout in the entire state, currently proposed to override any home rule authority. Bill 1872 is currently proposed to ban all single use plastic and enact a 10 cent fee for recycled bags, retained by the merchant. Rice updates that the bill, introduced in February 2025,

is now pending at the Senate Assignments Committee as of June 2025. Rice will update as new information becomes available.

The Committee discusses support for a policy that would exempt food pantries/food kitchens and support to help them transition to reusable or bag free. The Committee expresses support for common exemptions such as food assistance programs or prescriptions, and a 10-cent fee as seen in many other communities. The Committee discusses the pros and cons of fee vs tax (merchant vs the City receiving the funds from the bag fee).

The Committee discusses potential survey questions during public engagement this year, such as, fee vs tax, fee amount, exceptions, size of businesses impacted etc.

OLD BUSINESS

Election of Vice Chair

Martin self nominates for Vice Chair. Goldstein made a motion to appoint Martin as Vice Chair. Seconded by Collins. Voice Vote: 5 ayes. Motion approved (5-0).

STAFF REPORT

Rice shares with the Committee about Recycle Coach, an app supported by funding with the State of Illinois and Madison County. Recycle coach is a free app that counties and municipalities can add tailored recycling or waste service information to residents. The app provides easily accessible recycling resources such as a word and picture search function, common recycling questions, blogs, articles etc. The City is currently exploring onboarding on to Recycle Coach. Rice will continue to provide updates.

COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Frerker shares that May 9th is compost palooza and encourages a partnership with the Cool Cities Committee.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Bag Fee Survey Questions
Upcoming Events/Tabling
Recycle Coach Update
T-Shirts
Arbor Day Uptown Tree Naming

Motion to adjourn made by Martin and seconded by Canada.

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Approved (5-0) ADJOURNMENT at 7:09 pm.