

Wetland Task Force Meeting Minutes

Executive Conference Room, City Hall, 3rd Floor

1528 3rd Avenue

May 22, 2025

8:30 AM



Task Force Members Present	Nina Struss Mike Thoms Missy Gasiorowski Mayor Ashley Harris Kathy Wine Tim Pressly Jon Duyvejonck
Task Force Members Absent	Ald. Randy Hurt Hannah Alexander
Staff Present	Tom Flaherty Tanner Osing Todd Thompson
Guests	Alan Branhagen, Natural Land Institute

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am.

Presentation and Discussion on conservation easement with the Natural Land Institute (NLI)

Alan Branhagen, Executive Director of the Natural Land Institute (NLI), provided an overview of conservation easements through a land trust model.

NLI holds conservation easements in perpetuity and conducts annual monitoring to ensure compliance. Easements are only considered for properties with demonstrated conservation value and must meet strict internal criteria, including clear title, defined conservation benefits, and enforceable restrictions sufficient to protect the land. The process requires detailed documentation, including surveyed boundaries. A one-time stewardship donation, typically around \$10,000, is required to support long-term monitoring and potential legal defense of the easement. While a management plan is not required, it is encouraged. Responsibility for long-term maintenance and stewardship activities, such as invasive species removal and prescribed burns, remains with the landowner. Branhagen noted limited capacity for direct financial or operational support of land management and emphasized the importance of local partnerships and funding.

The Task Force discussed how this option compares to Illinois Land and Water Reserve (LWR) designation.

The Task Force asked questions about permitted uses and flexibility of the easement, the possibility for expansion, potential funding and support, management responsibilities, tax benefits for private landowners, and timeline to established the easement.

Other Business

The Task Force discussed next steps and broader strategy for moving forward with wetland protection efforts. Discussion included engaging legal counsel to evaluate options, developing a recommending for the City Council, and identifying potential partners for long-term management and support.

The Task Force also discussed scheduling a meeting with the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District regarding a potential partnership.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present to comment.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by consensus.

Minutes submitted by Tanner Osing.