

CITY OF WARRENVILLE

MEMO

TO: Mayor Brummel and City Council
CC: City Administrator Coakley
City Assistant Administrator White
Civil Engineer Romero
FROM: Environmental Advisory Commission
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION OF REC'S VS. CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS
RECOMMENDED USE OF CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS
DATE: March 14, 2022

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the EAC's current recommendations related to contributions from the Electrical Aggregation Program.

Background and Supporting Facts

The Warrenville City Council has asked the Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) to do some research on Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) plans and make a recommendation for the City's electric aggregation program. In addition, the City has asked for advice on how to spend the contributions already gained to most effectively improve environmental impacts and educate the public.

Since 2012, after a city-wide vote, The City of Warrenville has relied on an opt-out electrical aggregation program. This plan supplied all-green energy at or below ComEd's price to all businesses and residents who did not opt out. These kinds of plans rely on RECs to ensure the energy is environmentally friendly; while the electrons generated for each resident might not actually be generated by wind, water, or solar, the subsidies encourage green energy improvements throughout the state and are a commonly relied upon means of leveraging additional renewable energy. RECs have a generally good reputation among environmentalists ([USEPA 2021](#)).

EAC Recommendation

- 1) The EAC recommends continuing with 100% Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) even if that means foregoing a civic contribution. If offered and in addition to the 100% RECs, a civic contribution could be used for other local environmental initiatives. However, it is

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the unanimous opinion of the Commission that there is no single civic improvement that could more benefit the environment than encouraging renewable energy via RECs.

2)

- 3) The EAC recommends using the civic contributions earned so far to fund solar power on the bathroom by the Illinois Prairie Path trailhead building, as well as at least one solar bench at about \$6,500 (see attached). Windfree Solar has quoted the system as costing \$12,614, with a possible \$9,633 in incentives (see attached); if incentives are received back, they could pay for next year's improvements. Though this quote is outdated and may now be priced higher, the \$24,155 in funding should cover it and at least one bench. The trailhead building will be completed as solar ready, and the solar panels installed after completion. Maintenance costs for these investments should be minimal, and their high visibility may inspire others in our community to look into solar power, which we are trying to encourage. Once installed, we should announce it and advertise solar options for homeowners in the Resources newsletter. Research shows that pro-environmental behavior can benefit individuals, institutions, and organizations, building trust, reputation, cooperation, and community spirit ([Barclay and Barker 2020](#)).

References

Barclay, Pat, and Jessica L. Barker. 2020. "Greener Than Thou: People Who Protect the Environment Are More Cooperative, Compete to Be Environmental, and Benefit from Reputation." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 72: 101441.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272494419303159>

The City of Warrenville. 2022. *Municipal (Electrical) Aggregation*.

<https://www.warrenville.il.us/528/Municipal-Electrical-Aggregation>

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2021. *Clean Energy Finance: Using Renewable Energy Certificates to Achieve Local Environmental Goals*. Last updated November 5, 2021. <https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/clean-energy-finance-using-renewable-energy-certificates-achieve-local>