



**University of Illinois Extension  
8751 S. Greenwood Ave., Suites 112-122  
Chicago, IL 60619  
Cook County Extension Council Meeting  
Thursday, September 19, 2024  
Minutes**

**Meeting Attendees:** Richard Juarez Jr., Mary Harkenrider, Eric Meredith, Mona Strahan, Geri Redd, Dedra Ries, Monique James, Chera Parham.

**Staff Attendees:** Willene Buffett, Michael Neil, Rainah Folk.

**Welcome and Introductions**

The chair, Richard Juarez Jr., called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. The meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes from the March 21 and June 20 meetings were reviewed and approved.

**County Director's Updates**

- **Upcoming environmental summit.** The steering committee is in the first phase of creating a summit on climate change and its effects on the environment. The summit will be held in the fall of 2025 at a to-be-determined location in northern Illinois.
- **Extension's new strategic plan launch.** The plan defines Extension's direction for the next 10 years and was created with the input of residents, community, and stakeholder voices from around the state. All are invited to attend the launch on September 24 from 11 to noon via the distributed Zoom link.

**Old Business**

- **New council member recruitment.** The council is continuing its efforts to constitute a council that reflects the county's geographic and demographic makeup. With a focus on identified needs, they are working on recruitment strategies to increase Asian, Hispanic, White, and male participation.

**New Business**

- **Updates from program team meetings.** The council agreed that the minutes of the unit's program teams be made available to council members.
- **Extension Council Teams folder.** It was determined that Microsoft Teams would serve as the platform to share documents and information. The council agreed that the program team meeting minutes would be added to the team.
- **Open Meetings Act Training.** Meetings of public bodies (like the council) be open to the general public. The act also requires that council members receive training on compliance with the act. Council members completed their training, and certificates of completion are on file.
- **2025 meeting schedule.** The council agreed to continue our meeting schedule for the 2025 calendar year: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every three months at 10 a.m.

**Other Business**



- Discussion continued on ways the council could best serve the local Extension office, and suggestions were made on identifying key organizations and collecting information and data from county residents.
- The December 2024 meeting will be held in Chicago, and the county Extension office will provide refreshments.
- The March 2025 meeting will be held in North Riverside.

**Announcements**

- None

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

The next meeting is December 19, 2024, from 10 to 11 a.m., at Quad Communities Development Corporation, 4210 S. Berkeley Avenue, Chicago, 60653.

Minutes respectively submitted by Michael Neil.