



Mission: The Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition (IFSCC) is a thriving not-for-profit organization advancing diversion and composting of all organics in Illinois through advocacy, program implementation, market and business development, policy, and outreach.

Minutes December 4, 2023

of Attendees: 60

Welcome (Amy DeLorenzo, IFSCC Conductor)

Speaker Spotlight: The Urban Canopy

We heard from IFSCC's Silver Member The Urban Canopy, a Chicagoland business working to create a more sustainable, nutritious and equitable local food cycle. We learned powerful lessons about how Urban Canopy is growing their food scrap collection service and turning valuable nutrients into compost. We learned about their two-acre farm in the Englewood neighborhood, food rescue efforts, and successful strategies that create a healthier food system for all: One bucket at a time.

Alex is the Distribution Lead & Operations Lead with The Urban Canopy. Within these roles he's responsible for coordinating transportation logistics, as well as distribution of both local and non-local organic produce to our commercial customers. If you're a restaurant, grocery store or generally interested in sourcing more local and organic products, please get in touch at Alex. He enjoys rock climbing, basketball, biking and cooking from scratch as much as possible.

Tom is currently Co-Lead for the Compost Club, ensuring that the farm has plenty of healthy soil for the food they grow! Tom also holds a position with the auxiliary board at Plant Chicago, leading the Toolkit Committee's efforts to assist businesses with the circular economic endeavors. He also holds an Alumni Board position with Food Recovery Network. When he's not fighting food waste Tom enjoys gardening, cooking, and recently built an aquaponic system in his home.

Website [HERE](#).

Q&A

Q: Can we tour your facility?

A: Sure, it's a big warehouse and there are a lot of washing stations and various logistics to learn

about in our operations and team. Drivers tip into a 20 yarder that then goes to Whole Earth Compost. Tom can coordinate tours at Urban Canopy and also encourages tours at Whole Earth Compost.

Q: With the city now having drop off stations. Are you collaborating at all with them?

A: Urban Canopy was not a part of the conversation from the onset. Alex mentioned that Chicago does need bigger and broader solutions to get food waste diverted from landfills. Urban Canopy does not work with the city on this program. Urban Canopy has lost a few customers (understandably) but is thankful that these are not folks that have “stopped” composting. Composting does look a little different for everyone, but there are no losses since folks are still composting!

- In chat: Food scraps from the City of Chicago's drop-off program are transported by Dept of Streets & Sanitation crews to our transfer stations, which are managed by Republic. Republic then transfers the food scraps to Whole Earth.

Q: Would you consider expanding the LUCSA (CSA) program to the south suburbs like Park Forest or having a booth at the farmers market? We are a food desert community.

A: Yes. There have been discussions and efforts to increase our logistics and we need to keep density, food safety and public health in mind –LUCSA deliveries and food scrap collection vehicles are no longer in combination on a route/s though. Therefore, requests are being tracked and both “profit” to the community and impact on the planet are taken into consideration (One thing UC keeps in mind: 100 lbs of food waste collected is needed to offset the fuel that is used to operate and manage). #'s need to be at a predetermined threshold in order to deliver a certain number of boxes. These are certainly conversations we are willing to have though!

Q: As far as UC having had and built the connections for food rescue and composting –what might our compost/composting network do to try to optimize or automate food that is edible BEFORE it is composted?

A: There are a lot of different aspects (project by project or piece by piece... this is a complex problem though!) Chicagoland Food Sovereignty Coalition has been instrumental and also well positioned at Farmers Markets (made visible and funded by NRDC so that City of Chicago + Urban Canopy can be focusing on markets at Daly Plaza). Both edible food and food scraps were tracked (composted and rescued). Partnerships and grants like this can be valuable in systematization of these types of activities.

Thanks everyone! pleasure to chat with everyone...if there are any further questions please feel welcome to connect with us via email at Alex@theurbancanopy.org, Tom@theurbancanopy.org or Compost@theurbancanopy.org or give me a call :)

IFSCC Executive Director update – (Benjamin Krumstok) benjamin@compostingpartners.com

- Benjamin gave an intro + pitch about the 2024 Membership Campaign and our relationship with our fiscal sponsor, Ecologistics. For 2024 we have revised the Platinum Level to \$2,000 (from \$3,000)

Board Chair and USCC update – (John Lardner, IFSCC Board) jlardnerpe@aol.com

- John gave updates and announcements about USCC's Making Waves COMPOST2024 Conference in Daytona, FL this February as well as USCC's DEIA Committee work: a recent town hall, an inaugural Microbusiness Innovation Corner to bring diversity (business models as well as individual profiles to promote equity) into the compost industry.
- Added in chat: A stormwater management + compost use webinar happening tomorrow, Dec. 5

Food:Land:Opportunity, funded by a grant from the Kinship Foundation and the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust. (Jen Nelson, IFSCC Board) No report –Jen is at COP28 jennifer@sevengenerationsahead.org

Admin update: (Amy Bartucci) illinoiscomposts@gmail.com

- Membership Campaigns will be sent in January
- Save the Date: Membership Appreciation Event, March 2024: Details, forthcoming! Collaboration with Midwest Grows Green's Lawn And Land Forum: Natural Lawn Care Workshop and the IFSCC CMD Committee –stay tuned.
- Calendar invites for 2024: will be sent out TODAY!

Committee Reports:

- We Compost: Mary Beth Schaye and Amy Bartucci, Co-Chairs, illinoiscomposts@gmail.com
 - Recent outreach has been strong with the help of WasteNot and Edgewater Environmental Coalition.
 - Westmont Library Garden (New Green Level partner).
 - Paramount Group –still confirming the final submission/s.
 - Please reach out if increasing the We Compost Recognition Program Directory is of interest to you - join our committee on the 3rd Fri of every month at noon.
 - Plans for 2024: CONFIRMING OUR DIRECTORY
- Communications: Amy DeLorenzo and Steph Katsaros, Co-Chairs, amy.delorenzo@gmail.com, steph@brightbeat.com
 - Shared IFSCC goal: EQUITABLY strengthen the composting community and support organizations and individuals to expand access, awareness and distribution of IFSCC resources.
 - If you understand equity and access and growing compost and composting awareness and getting resources out into IL, join this committee.
 - This committee both offers and seeks educational opportunities. This committee aims to equip volunteer IFSCC speakers and representatives at tabling events.
 - We need your support to know who is missing from our membership and coalition activities.
- Policy: Liz Kunkle and Tommy Vaughan, Co-Chairs, liz@ilenviro.org, tommy@wastenotcompost.com
 - Legislative session starts Jan 16th.
 - This committee's goal is to talk about policy and also improve the landscape for

- food scrap and diversion and compost efforts of organics in IL.
 - As an organization IFSCC only supports bills when there is consensus of the Board of Directors supporting compost or food scrap related bills/legislation.
 - This committee discusses bills and tracks things year round.
 - Join Policy Committee meetings on third Thursdays at 10AM.
- Education: Jen Nelson, Chair, jennifer@sevengenerationsahead.org (No report –Jen is at COP28)
- Compost Market Development: Kila Harwick and Mike DiMucci, Co-Chairs, kharwick@greensoilsmanagement.com, mike@gpocompost.com
 - Has been working on an ad for an ILCA publication coming this February -it will promote membership in IFSCC with the ilandscape audience (3-4 days long conference).
 - The ad is geared towards landscape contractors to use finished compost.
- International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW), Merleanne Rampale, Chair MRampale@swalco.org
 - ICAW Planning Meeting is tomorrow, contact us to join in at any time.
 - Poster winner has been announced: Compost! Nature's Climate Champion
 - “Adventures in Composting” will be programs and events for the week planned throughout IL for the first full week in May.



Committee Meetings for 2024 (Contact illinoiscomposts@gmail.com for links to join)

- Communications - 2nd Monday, 2pm (Note: this date + time may still be under discussion for 2024)
- Compost Market Development - 3rd Tuesday, 9am
- Education - 2nd Tuesday, 12pm
- Policy - 3rd Thursday 10am
- We Compost - 3rd Friday at 12pm
- ICAW - 1st Tuesdays of the month (Exception, Meeting January 16th instead)

News from IFSCC Membership:

The full IL Extension Compost Summit report has been officially published by Extension Foundation. Here's the link to download your copy!
<https://publications.extension.org/view/370933447/>

In chat:

Just wanted to call people's attention to the situation with compost and NYC, total cutting of funding. If you have any connections there let them know about petitions, protests, etc ongoing.

I am meeting with the Oak Park library after this to get some ideas together for collaboration 😊

Policy Committee's recent facility tours blog:

<https://illinoiscomposts.org/ifsc-news/compost-industry-tours-with-the-ifsc-whole-earth-compost-and-teegen-compost-services/>

On December 2, 2023, EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration released the "Draft National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics." This strategy is part of a series of strategies on building a more circular economy for all.

<https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/draft-national-strategy-reducing-food-loss-and-waste-and-recycling-organics>

Meeting adjourned 1:02PM:

NEXT SPECIAL MEETING:

Wednesday, January 24th with [Wasted Food Action Alliance](#) at 10AM

- Every member should have received a calendar invite to attend.
- Please plan to join us and email illinoiscomposts@gmail.com if you need a link to join!