

from: **Paul Berland** <pnb3210@gmail.com>
to: Michael Sewall
<michael@aldermanmartin.com>
cc: Matthew Martin Chicago Alderman
<ward47@cityofchicago.org>,
Nicholas Zettel
<nicholaszettel@the1stward.com>,
Daniel La Spata
<daniel.laspata@cityofchicago.org>,
Lori Lightfoot Chicago Mayor
letterforthemayor@cityofchicago.org,
And others
date: Sep 9, 2021, 9:36 AM
subject: Re: Plan for Addressing Climate
Emergency Education for City of
Chicago
mailed- gmail.com
by:

Michael,

Please spare me a few more moments of your time to discuss 2 problems I see with your approach when you have time:

1. I don't think that your community outreach and digital communications is reaching or going to people like my landlord building manager or many, many others who go around insistently with gas leaf blowers, lawn mowers, snow blowers, or gas guzzling cars with no seeming understanding between the connection of their actions and the climate emergency. I believe your community outreach and digital communications, for them, would fall under the category of inessential information. On the other hand, direct mail communications on city letterhead would probably fall for them more under the category of essential information.

2. In your E-mail from July 21, you said "Right now, we remain focused on implementing broad strategies that will have the biggest impacts, including building decarbonization, expanding the urban tree canopy, developing composting programs and eliminating plastic waste." You say these strategies have "the biggest impacts" but in reality the impact or possible impact of these projects on the overall climate emergency will always be quite small, not big. A project of potentially much bigger impact, in my opinion, would be to seriously engage the public on matters of gasoline and meat consumption and really convince them and get them to see that they must curtail their usage of these

resources, and then to gradually implement ordinances to mandate their restricted usage of these resources (such as banning of gas-powered leaf blowers) or to encourage usage of other resources (such as mandating more vegan options on restaurant menus). The strategies with biggest impacts have to start with really having a genuine dialog with the people about these matters so they understand the importance of this effort. Also, I'm not saying "either-or" (either your strategy or mine) but "both-and" (both your strategy and mine).

I was also asking a very specific question about the 2022 budget of Chicago. I know the 47th Ward has hosted many budget conferences. Can you give any insight as to what the budget for 2022 will be for education on the climate emergency?

Sincerely,

Paul Berland

On Wed, Sep 8, 2021 at 4:28 PM Paul Berland pnb3210@gmail.com also wrote:

Michael,

Thank you for taking the time to get back to me. I understand you have a busy schedule and a lot on your plate and this is an important issue so thanks again.

I have to admit that I am frustrated with your opinion about direct mailers not being the way to go, with no supporting arguments, after I have provided all kinds of arguments that it is a good idea, and not even trying to discuss the matter. You also mention that it is not really under your department (47th ward) even though the 47th ward is the leader on environmental issues in Chicago. You said to take this up with the 48th ward. However I have found the 48th Ward equally unresponsive on important environmental issues ranging from feeding the birds to trash cans. I have been in contact with Emily Volini, assistant of the 48th Ward, and I am having a similar responsiveness issue just even on the issue of trash cans.

I feel that nobody is really taking responsibility for this issue.

I am perplexed that you think this idea is not a good idea but that Mayor Lori Lightfoot herself said it was a good idea. I guess this means I will have to take this up directly with the Mayor's office?

Thank you at least for being responsive.

Peace!

Paul



On Wed, Sep 8, 2021 at 8:00 AM Michael Sewall <michael@aldermanmartin.com> wrote:

Hi Paul,

I'm sorry I hadn't seen your previous two emails -- it's a particularly busy time of year for us, and I've been adjusting to being back in the office full-time following parental leave and losing our summer interns. Your questions are primarily directed to the Mayor's office, so it is best to follow up with them, or I recommend contacting your alderman's office ([Ald. Harry Osterman](#)) if you wish to discuss this with them.

As I've mentioned, this matter is not something we have direct authority over, nor is it something we have the capacity to advocate for right now. I've explained on several occasions the important work we're doing and the ways we're reaching residents in our ward with this message. I agree that more needs to be done to discuss these issues with residents, but I disagree that a direct mailer is the approach on which we need to focus our limited capacity right now.

Be well,
-Michael

On Tue, Sep 7, 2021 at 2:21 PM Paul Berland <pnb3210@gmail.com> wrote:
Michael,

Did you see this E-mail?
I am waiting for your reply.

Thanks,

Paul

On Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 3:41 PM Paul Berland <pnb3210@gmail.com> wrote:
Michael,

On Thursday August 12, 2021, I had the opportunity to speak to Mayor Lori Lightfoot at the Budget Engagement Forum in a public setting. I discussed my direct mailer idea and the necessity to better educate the people of Chicago and the hopes to set aside some money in the 2022 budget for this purpose. So far I don't see any money set aside for this purpose in all the paperwork I've seen of the 2022 budget. Can you tell me if there is an update on this and whether money is set aside for the 2022 budget for this purpose, and whether any further discussion of this matter is needed? Mayor Lori Lightfoot expressed agreement that this is a worthwhile effort at this forum and so I would like to follow up and make sure this actually gets enacted.

At the Budget Engagement Forum, I pointed out the large number of people (such as my landlord, who does this every morning around 8 AM) that still go around with gas-powered leaf blowers or lawnmowers as if there is nothing wrong with wasting gasoline and go around blowing imaginary leaves or cutting imaginary grass almost every single day. This points out the severe disconnect between people of Chicago's knowledge of the Climate Emergency and the words being said by your office that people in general know about this issue and that you are handling this fine without the use of more explicit educational materials.

I would also like you to answer my 12:33 PM E-mail from Wednesday July 21 (below), which so far remains unanswered.

I think you (as well as many other governmental agencies) keep missing the point about why it is so important to send a letter to every resident on city letterhead and why every other form of communication that has been tried thus far has been largely ignored by the public.

I would also like to point out that what is really needed to be sent to every resident of a big city like Chicago is a letter [more like this](#) (our draft #7 that we composed for Elgin but was severely watered down by their city staff without consent of our Climate Emergency Workgroup), where it is pointed out that where we need to start with initially voluntary actions of the public, that gradually these actions need to become more and more mandatory, a point that was left out in Elgin's [version of the letter](#), which was released in December of 2020, but as we can clearly see has had very little impact, since it was not distributed to every citizen of Elgin, was not on city letterhead, and left out the part about gradually becoming more and more mandatory.

An account of this (currently tragic) story about trying to get proper education for the city of Chicago and Elgin by Environment Matters enthusiasts such as myself is documented at [this link](#) for all the public to see, and this matter will not be swept under the rug any time soon.

So please follow up on this discussion, which I believe has Mayor Lori Lightfoot's approval, for getting a substantial educational budget about the climate emergency into the 2022 budget.

What is the plan for addressing the climate emergency on city letterhead to Chicago residents?

Paul

On Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 12:33 PM Paul Berland <pnb3210@gmail.com> wrote:

Michael,

As a resident of Chicago and as a lifelong member of the Chicagoland community, I assure you that "direct community outreach" only reaches a very tiny segment of the population (probably less than 3%) for numerous reasons, and "digital communications" also fails to reach many people as well. Both of these methods of citywide communications are usually discarded without much thought by a majority of people who are so used to being inundated with commercial content and corporations trying to sell product that they don't even bother to notice.

I actually think there are 2 problems: (1) municipal government agencies always dismiss the direct mailer idea on city letterhead without ever trying it once, immediately assuming that it will not generate any positive result without even trying it, which is a big mistake. How can you immediately presume to know the results of an operation that has never been tried before, not even once? (2) municipal government agencies severely underestimate the magnitude of the ecological crisis and generally overestimate the effectiveness of their policies.

I really wish you would take this heart and take this seriously. There is ample discussion of this on my website envmatters.org.

Peace.

Paul Berland
5750 N Kenmore #317
Chicago, IL 60660
224-800-8232

On Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 8:47 AM Michael Sewall <michael@aldermanmartin.com> wrote:

Hi Paul,

I've shared that idea with the Mayor's team, as they oversee citywide communications. I think everyone agrees that additional communication is needed to educate residents about the climate crisis, but doing so through more direct community outreach and digital communications is preferred to the costs and waste generated through a mass-mailer. Right now, we remain focused on implementing broad strategies that will have the biggest impacts, including building decarbonization, expanding the urban tree canopy, developing composting programs and eliminating plastic waste.

Be well,
-Michael

On Mon, Jul 19, 2021 at 10:42 AM Paul Berland <pnb3210@gmail.com> wrote:
Michael,

Thanks!

I'm still advocating for more spreading of real truth general knowledge about the ecological crisis we are in such as a direct mailer.
I think that would go a long way towards making progress towards our goals.
Let me know if you've thought more about that.

Peace!

Paul Berland
Chicago, IL

On Mon, Jul 19, 2021 at 10:32 AM Michael Sewall <michael@aldermanmartin.com> wrote:

Hi Paul,

Sorry about that! You can view the latest Green Council newsletter here: <https://conta.cc/3wPxKDC>.
-Michael

On Mon, Jul 19, 2021 at 10:27 AM Alderman Martin's Office <info@aldermanmartin.com> wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Paul Berland** <pnb3210@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jul 19, 2021 at 10:19 AM
Subject: Re: 47th Ward Newsletter - July 16, 2021
To: <info@aldermanmartin.com>

Hello,

The Green Council newsletter link in your last newsletter was wrong. It pointed to the recycling pop-up event instead of the Green council newsletter.
I was curious to read the Green Council newsletter. Can you provide a link?

Thanks,

Paul Berland
Chicago, IL

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Michael Sewall (he/him/his)

Director, Constituent Services & Community Outreach
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