Program Coordinator with the University of Illinois Extension gave an update on the Conservation@Home Program.

MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and Commissioner Kari K. Steele presented awards to individuals and organizations dedicated to the concept of resource recovery and the use of MWRD compost that can improve turf quality and reduce carbon footprints. MWRD biosolids are a high-quality product of the water treatment process that is turned into a valuable compost for plants. The compost can be used as a soil amendment or conditioner for establishing turf grass, for mixing into custom topsoil blends, and in planter beds and pots for establishing flowers and trees in nurseries. The MWRD produces biosolids as part of the water treatment process.

The first winner of the prestigious Biosolids User award was Andrew Smolen, Deputy Commissioner for the Village of Franklin Park. Smolen, who is a certified arborist, took initiative in establishing the demonstration of the benefits of compost in Franklin Park. His work showed that MWRD compost boosted the growth and production of crops. He also organized an event to showcase the results to the public.

The second Biosolids User award went to the Riverdale Park District for their use of biosolids in their turf maintenance program since 2013. Since that time, the Park District has used biosolids in their parks and playgrounds located throughout (continued)
MWRD’s 5th Annual Sustainability Summit honors (continued)

the village, including Riverdale, Cooper, Franson, Pacesetter, Mohawk, Pekny, Prairie, and School Street Parks. The implementation of biosolids helped develop a high quality of turf that eliminated invasive weeds and created thick, green, strong grass on playing fields. The use of biosolids aided in reducing field maintenance care costs. Mr. Kendall Parrott, Executive Director, accepted the award on behalf of the Riverdale Park District.

The first Sustainable Landscaping award was presented to the city of Evanston which reconstructed its Civic Center parking lot using permeable pavement, a rain garden, and a bioswale. The parking lot now absorbs more water and reduces runoff and flooding in the neighborhood. Sat Nagar, Senior Project Manager, Capital Planning & Engineering, accepted the award on behalf of the city.

The second Sustainable Landscaping award was presented to Meg Kelly, Senior Manager for Space to Grow at Healthy Schools Campaign. Meg has played a key role in managing the Space to Grow partnership, an initiative that is transforming Chicago’s schoolyards into vibrant outdoor community spaces incorporating ground surfaces and landscape features that absorb large amounts of water. This results in less neighborhood flooding and reduced flow to the sewer system, while providing beautiful and functional spaces for kids, teachers and neighbors to be active and healthy. Nine elementary school playgrounds have already been transformed through Space to Grow.

“Working with this wonderful partnership is a true honor,” said Kelly. “Space to Grow is one of the most cohesive and comprehensive green infrastructure programs in the country. I am so proud to be a part of this program that is connecting green stormwater management with so many benefits – Space to Grow schoolyards are places for play and learning as well as connecting with nature, while working hard to protect our city’s water resources.”

“It takes many partners like these municipalities and organiza-

(L–R): MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, Senior Manager for Space to Grow at Healthy Schools Campaign Meg Kelly, Commissioner Kari K. Steele and Commissioner Frank Avila.

(Continued on next page)

Val Kehoe, Horticulture Program Coordinator with the University of Illinois Extension explains the Conservation@Home Program.

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