



Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission

Updated July 13, 2021

Mission

- Enhance the quality of life of Village of River Forest residents through the study and promotion of sustainable practices that conserve natural resources and protect the environment. Toward this end, we employ seven strategies to enable the Village, residents and institutions to protect the environment and reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions produced by the residents, institutions and government of the Village of River Forest and that are the source of Climate Change.
 1. Energy → Replace fossil fuel with renewable energy
 2. Transportation → Expand green transportation & mobility options
 3. Water → Protect water sources as well as reduce water consumption
 4. Waste → Reduce waste & increase waste diversion
 5. Green Ecosystems → Sequester carbon & enhance support for eco-systems
 6. Action → Motivate desired community behavior
 7. Impact → Measure our success

Composition appointed by the Village President and voted on by the VBOT

- 7 Voting Commissioners
- 4 Student Commissioners
- Variable number of Resident Volunteers

Length of Commissioner Terms

- 4 years for a Voting Commissioner
- 1 year for a Student Commissioner

Meeting Frequency

- Monthly on the second Tuesday of each month with additional project work sessions as necessary

Role Descriptions for Key Positions of the River Forest Sustainability Commission

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Chair for the River Forest Sustainability Commission

The Chair of the River Forest Sustainability Commission is appointed by the Village President. The Chair has several main responsibilities including guiding the strategic direction of the River Forest Sustainability Commission and ensuring that River Forest Sustainability Commission business is conducted in an orderly fashion. In addition to these central duties, the role of the Chair also includes the following:

- Create the agenda for the River Forest Sustainability Commission monthly meeting in collaboration with the Staff Liaison for publication 48 hours before each meeting.
- Run the River Forest Sustainability Commission monthly meeting in collaboration with the Staff Liaison with an eye on effectiveness and efficiency.
- Act as the primary conduit between the River Forest Sustainability Commission, the Village Board of Trustees, and the Village President.
- Review the River Forest Sustainability Commission Strategic Action Plan each year with Voting Commissioners to update project status, align on the next year's goals and activities, and plan for the update of program information on the Village of River Forest website as well to sunset programs no longer relevant, impactful, feasible, etc. and report its performance to the Village Board of Trustees.
- Touch base with Voting Commissioners on a regular basis to ensure smooth program execution.
- Review new River Forest Sustainability Commission programs and activities with the Village Board of Trustees and the Village President for their input and approval as necessary.
- Focus on specific deliverables for the RFSC not assigned to Commissioners (e.g., River Forest Sustainability Ladder, Annual Village Board of Trustees Presentation, VRF Energy Options Grid, Grant / Award Proposals, etc.).
- Coordinate community outreach per the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission editorial calendar via Village of River Forest social media channels and newsletter working with the Voting and Student Commissioners along with the support of the Staff Liaison and Village Staff.
- Maintain list of River Forest Sustainability Commission memberships and ensure appropriate participation in organization meetings in which the River Forest Sustainability Commission is an active member including but not limited to:
 - Mayor's Metropolitan Caucus and its subcommittees
 - PlanIt Green
 - Illinois Food Scrap Coalition
 - Interfaith Green Network
- Provide support to Voting and Student Commissioners on the River Forest Sustainability Commission on an as needed basis.



- Create the budget for the River Forest Sustainability Commission working in collaboration with the Staff Liaison and the Village Board of Trustees.
- Attend sustainability functions and meetings (e.g., Mayor’s Metropolitan Caucus Monthly Meetings, Illinois Food Scrap Coalition, Awards Events, etc.).
- Ensure the success of the Student Commissioner Program.
 - Ensure that the application is on the Village of River Forest website each August
 - Highlight the program across Village of River Forest social channels and newsletter per the River Forest Sustainability Commission editorial calendar.
 - The Village President will pick 4 student names from the list of candidates sourced from the annual application pool to submit to the Village Board of Trustees for their advice and consent.
 - Onboard the Student Commissioners.
 - Work with the Voting Commissioners to identify projects for the Students to engage in.
- Respond to media and Village of River Forest resident questions regarding the River Forest Sustainability Commission and its programs as well as the Village of River Forest position on environmental issues and opportunities **as directed by the Village Administrator or Village President**, striving to respond to such inquiries in a timely manner (e.g., with 24 to 48 hours)



Voting Commissioner

The Voting Commissioner's primary responsibilities are to come prepared to meetings, make contributions towards River Forest Sustainability Commission efforts and take responsibility for moving assigned programs and projects forward working with Student Commissioners as well as with Resident Volunteers. Commissioner suggestions on new initiatives are encouraged, and Commissioners should be willing to perform associated legwork where appropriate. An effective Commissioner should endeavor to attend all Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission meetings on time, and phone the Chairperson or Staff Liaison in advance if they are expecting to be late or absent. Voting Commissioner attendance is critical because it ensures that good discussions, decisions and recommendations come out of the River Forest Sustainability Commission. The Voting Commissioner should read all agenda packet materials prior to the meeting and be prepared to participate in Commission discussions. Voting Commissioners may on occasion be approached by residents or other parties, including the media, to speak on behalf of the Village of River Forest. Voting Commissioners should exercise care in these situations to avoid statements contrary to the general position of the Village, and are advised to direct inquiries to the Village of River Forest Commission Chair or Staff Liaison as appropriate. Similarly, with requests for assistance, Voting Commissioners should direct inquiries to Village Staff, who are trained to handle resident issues, or bring the issue to the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission for discussion. Allowing staff to work directly with citizens reinforces that all are treated equally by the Village.

- Appointment to the River Forest Sustainability Commission is an honor that brings both opportunity and responsibility.
- Village Staff shall provide Voting and Student Commissioners with current and complete information and will make informative and professional recommendations that are in the best interest of the entire community.
- Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission shall provide recommendations that assist the Village Board of Trustees and Village President in making decisions upon request.
- Serve as ambassadors to the community by informing and educating the public regarding the purpose and process of the River Forest Sustainability Commission.
- Accept and incorporate feedback from the Village President, Village Board of Trustees, Village staff, and the general public.
- Be informed; do your homework and attempt to ask questions prior to the meeting.
- Be accountable, attendance is important.
- See the larger picture and be true to the mission and cause, not individual ambitions.
- Accept River Forest Sustainability Commission and Village Board of Trustees decisions, even those with which you may not personally agree.
- Be respectful and welcoming to those coming before you. Boards and Commissions are the face of the Village and quality customer service is critical for the entire organization.



Student Commissioner

Student Commissioners are appointed by the Village President based upon an application submitted to the Village of River Forest on an annual basis. Student Commissioners have every responsibility and authority of a Voting Commissioner except that of voting. Student Commissioners will instead indicate their preference for or against the motion and the reasons for their decision. Student Commissioners shall express their preference before other Commissioners vote, and provide an invaluable perspective that will be sincerely considered by the other Commissioners as the other Commissioners vote. Student Commissioners are expected to be present at Commission meetings but will not be counted as part of a quorum.

Staff Liaison

The Staff Liaison's main role is to serve as facilitator. The Staff Liaison is a non-voting member and should not be involved directly in the deliberations of items put before the River Forest Sustainability Commission. As the Village Staff representative, the Staff Liaison provides factual information as needed and clarifies Village policy if there is uncertainty on a particular issue. As the facilitator, the Staff Liaison is responsible for ensuring that Voting and Student Commissioners have all necessary information to allow them to make informed decisions and recommendations. The Staff Liaison also works with the Chair to develop the agenda and packet information. The Staff Liaison is also charged with providing the River Forest Sustainability Commission with draft minutes of commission meetings.