

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Hayley, Kadlec, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt. Commissioner Veazie arrived at 7:02
Absent: Commissioners Mezzatesta and Avalos
Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the Roosevelt Middle School Sustainability Club were in attendance via Zoom and were here to listen.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Co-Chair Lennon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kadlec to approve the meeting minutes from September 10, 2024, with typo corrections indicated by Co-Chair Charrette.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, and Kadlec

Absent: Commissioners Mezzatesta and Avalos

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SURVEY FEEDBACK

Mr. Jansen presented the most up-to-date results of the community survey, walking through each of the responses. Mr. Jansen specifically highlighted the responses to the leaf blower usage questions. The Commission discussed recent news regarding backyard composting and sharing additional resources for backyard composters through the Commission communications. Mr. Jansen highlighted topics of resident interest indicated in the survey, and Co-Chair Charrette discussed how to best share existing resources through the newsletter and website. Co-Chair Lennon also emphasized the need for further information and communication and using the survey to frame the actions of the Commission.

5. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Co-Chair Charrette discussed attending the Des Plaines River Trail bike path open house at Village Hall on October 1. Co-Chair Charrette also shared ComEd energy efficiency program brochures, which are free to all ComEd customers because of energy efficiency fees paid through everyone's electricity bills. Mr. Jansen added that there is a dedicated page on the Village website for the Des Plaines River Trail project. Commissioner Veazie also noted he attended the Des Plaines River Trail open house. Commissioner Veazie and Co-Chair Charrette discussed the proposed bike lane layout at each section through the Village. Mr. Jansen noted that the Village public works gas pump was just switched from diesel to biodiesel.

6. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the memo he provided to the Commission. Student Commissioner Stierwalt asked for the most recent draft ordinance to be summarized; Mr. Jansen provided a brief overview. Co-Chair Charrette inquired about wording of the fee and fine amounts established in the draft. Commissioner Kadlec inquired about the enforcement process. The Commission agreed the fine should be a one-time fine coupled with removal from the list of contractors using only electric leaf blowers. The Commission debated whether or not to limit the ban to contractors or to extend the phase in date for residents. Commissioner Hayley inquired about the contractor who wished to exempt large properties and institutions from the proposed ban. Commissioner Veazie inquired about the violation for the use of gas-powered leaf blowers generally. Co-Chair Lennon noted the additional challenges that contractors face with regards to charging and the greater battery need. Co-Chair Lennon suggested maintaining the incentive and still requiring the reduced speed in the summer months and continuing to monitor how the battery technology progresses. The Commission discussed how technology may progress moving forward and how that may impact any mandate. Commissioner Veazie inquired about the state grant program. Co-Chair Charrette suggested voting on a plan to include the incentive for landscape contractors and the half-speed seasonal restriction but still allowing for gas-powered leaf blowers generally. Commissioner Charrette indicated that her hope is that the incentive will encourage contractors to adopt electric leaf blowers and that residents seeking out those contractors will incentivize others to also change. The Commission clarified what changes are being made to the modified ordinance. Co-Chair Lennon indicated he wished to add a provision indicating the Commission will continue to revisit this policy going forward.

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Co-Chair Lennon to recommend the Village Board adopt an ordinance regulating the use of gas-powered leaf blowers with the Village and to incentivize the use of electric leaf blowers by landscape contractors operating within the Village.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, and Kadlec

Absent: Commissioners Mezzatesta and Avalos

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. CONTINUED REVIEW OF UIC CLIMATE ACTION PLANS

Co-Chair Charrette indicated that the Commission would continue to work through the recommendations of UIC Climate plans by focusing on one area or topic each month. Co-Chair Lennon indicated that the Commission would try to tie in the survey response each month as well.

Mr. Jansen summarized the memo he provided to the Commission. Co-Chair Lennon note that the survey indicated residents were interested in this area; he also added that any fee established in a tree preservation ordinance be set aside for further tree planting and greenery. Co-Chair Charrette indicated one difficulty is how close together properties are, particularly in south River Forest. Commissioner Veazie noted that, in addition to potential branch hazards, reconstruction would also be a common obstacle within the Village and expressed concern about any ordinance being to administratively burdensome for the residents. Commissioner Veazie suggested narrowly defining protected trees; Co-Chair Charrette also stated that older trees of specific species should be protect but it should not be overly broad and apply to younger trees that may be less beneficial to the surrounding environment and ecosystem. Co-Chair Charrette requested feedback from Village Forestry staff on the most beneficial species and the correct age or size at which to establish the threshold. The Commission wished to have targeted specific examples from other communities. Commissioner Hayley inquired about the administrative burden; Mr. Jansen explained how it could be incorporated into the existing permitting process.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jansen outlined the EV Charging memo he provided, which indicated an increase in number of sessions but level number of unique users, indicating that it is being used more because it is not being blocked by cars left parked there.

Mr. Jansen outlined the upcoming communications plan for the coming months. Co-Chair Charrette indicated she would provide an updated Leave the Leaves write-up to match the Roosevelt Middle School Sustainability Club's newsletter on the same topic. Mr. Jansen indicated he would provide a write-up on the change to net metering for rooftop solar. Co-Chair Charrette indicated she would do a write-up about composting for a November weekly newsletter.

Commissioner Hayley reminded Commissioners about the LRS facility visit on Friday and what the requirements are to attend the tour.

Co-Chair Charrette suggested promoting the four compost bins located at the Village Hall composting center. Mr. Jansen noted that the sign-up for compost splitting has been low; Co-Chair Charrette suggested further promoting the program through newsletters and social media.

9. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 12, 2024

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Veazie, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, and Kadlec

Absent: Commissioners Mezzatesta and Avalos

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary