

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, November 12, 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 Veazie, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, Avalos, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt.

Absent: Commissioner Hayley

Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Avalos to approve the meeting minutes from October 8, 2024, with typo corrections indicated by Co-Chair Charrette.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Hayley

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Avalos stated that the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP 29, had begun and the Superintendent of Oak Park and River Forest High School and two OPRFHS students are attending the conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. Commissioner Avalos shared the link to the stream Youth Voices forum at COP 29, which the students will be participating in and stated there will be an in-person screening at the Triton College Library at 10:00 AM on Thursday the 14th. Commissioner Avalos stated he had attended a previous COP event in Egypt as part of the same group.

Commissioner Mezzatesta stated that she and Commissioners Kadlec and Avalos had a meeting with the Director of the River Forest Library on some programs, events, and displays

that could be ways for the Commission to partner with the Library. Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated that discussions and potential opportunities would continue going forward.

5. TRITON COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Commissioner Kadlec provided a presentation on the sustainability efforts underway at Triton College, where he serves as Sustainability Coordinator. Triton is part of the Illinois Green Economy Network, which is a partnership of Illinois community colleges to collaborate and seek grant funds related to environmental sustainability. Triton has installed 5 dual-port level 2 EV charging stations at various locations across campus. The charging rate is below market rate, and students and faculty are offered a discount rate. Triton has a school office supply Re-Use It Room to reduce waste. Triton has also installed LED lighting to the exterior of buildings and in the campus parking lots; there are plans to upgrade indoor lights to LED beginning next year. Triton has also installed bioswales to absorb stormwater runoff; the impact has been beneficial because of the large parking lots on the campus. Triton also has a stormwater management tool to manage sewer and stormwater and prevent backups. The Triton Hospitality Industry Administration lab composts all food scraps produced by the lab and are exploring ways to expand composting on campus. Triton is a certified Tree Campus and Bee Campus. Two gardens on campus are also monarch waystations with plants like milkweed which are essential for monarch butterflies. These gardens are also designated as pollinator habitats. Triton also recently completed a project where students in an Introduction to Biology documented milkweed plants observed on campus. Triton has also partnered with the Forest Preserve, which sponsors the Greater Maywood Paddling program, where organizations can get trained and certified to then take a kayak trip along the Des Plaines River from Maywood to Riverside. Triton has taken two trips earlier this year: one for students and one for faculty and staff. Triton also hosts monthly trash clean ups at the section of Fullerton woods adjacent to campus.

Co-Chair Lennon asked Commissioner Kadlec, of the programs put in place at Triton, which he would like to see in River Forest. Commissioner Kadlec noted the Bee City designation would be something to pursue. Commissioner Kadlec also noted his work at community events to expose people to sustainability topics and do in-person, hands-on things to inspire people to take action, such as hosting events with the Library, sharing reading lists, and developing sustainability crafts that can be done with kids. Co-Chair Charrette indicated that the Commission and the Library could also work with the Roosevelt Middle School Go Green group. Co-Chair Lennon suggested further pursuing the Bee City designation and the monarch waystations and expressed support for the Commission becoming involved in community events. The Commission discussed more ways to be involved in community events.

Commissioner Avalos shared that Triton College has just started an Environmental Club, of which he serves as Vice President. Commissioner Avalos introduced the club president Eva Carson who provided brief remarks on the plans for the Triton Environmental Club, which had just been official approved and were beginning to develop a plan, structure, and ways to partner with other clubs at Triton. Co-Chair Charrette had suggested connecting Triton with

a local resident who has developed his lawn into a native prairie and has provided seeds from his plants to local residents. The Commission discussed this as a potential partnership with the Triton Environmental Club and Horticulture Club.

6. WASTE AND LRS DISCUSSION

Co-Chair Charrette, Commissioner Mezzatesta, and Commissioner Avalos discussed their trip and explained the process as shown in the pictures and videos provided by Commissioner Hayley. Co-Chair Charrette discussed ways to share information about how to improve recycling rates, like leaving caps on bottles; Co-Chair Charrette also noted that 80% of the materials that make it to the sorting facility are recycled, with much of the rest being unrecyclable material or scraps too small to be recycled. Co-Chair Charrette noted that the Commission should work to put out further information and educational resources to keep improving recycling rates and use this trip to help inform residents. The Commissioners shared their thoughts on the trip and their takeaways of how to share this with residents to promote the correct ways to recycle.

Co-Chair Charrette inquired about an update regarding Opt-Out Composting; Mr. Jansen shared what LRS stated would be the pricing and needs, including moving to only one cart size, \$12 per month fee for all residents, even those who opt-out, and the need for a 3-year contract extension in order to recoup the cost of the additional truck that would be needed. The Commission discussed the Village composting program. Mr. Jansen outlined the quarterly waste reports.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jansen stated that this week's weekly newsletter will promote the compost sharing program. Mr. Jansen inquired about having the LRS trip as the article in the next month's newsletter. After some Commission discussion, Commissioner Mezzatesta's holiday sustainability article will be the monthly newsletter, and the LRS trip will be discussed as part of the future communications discussion planned for next month.

8. CONTINUED LEAF BLOWER DISCUSSION

Mr. Jansen briefly provided feedback from the Village Board regarding the Commission's recommendation. Mr. Jansen shared what other communities had done and the feedback he had received when speaking with staff at one community. Mr. Jansen shared what C4's Green Landscape Technology working group has been working on and that they are still in the early stages of developing a policy toolkit; they did share that Riverside is considering a 2-month seasonal ban to take effect in 2026. The Commission discussed some of the challenges with developing a seasonal ban and noted some of the feedback from the Board. Co-Chair Lennon stated that the Commission needs to figure out the "when" of when a seasonal leaf blower mandate should take effect. The Commission discussed resident feedback and inquiries and complaints that have come in from residents regarding leaf blower use. The Commission discussed the impacts of season bans in other communities and the practices of landscape contactors during summer months.

9. CONTINUED REVIEW OF UIC CLIMATE ACTION PLANS

Mr. Jansen briefly shared there is a tree preservation ordinance within the zoning code but it only applies to commercial, government, and institutional properties over a specified square footage. He indicated he was working with staff to identify tree species and sizes with staff. Mr. Jansen also indicated he would look into ways to further incorporate climate plan recommendations into any potential ordinance.

Mr. Jansen shared the draft River Forest Trees webpage within the Guide to Sustainable Living section of the Village website.

Mr. Jansen stated that the Transportation issues original set for this month would be discussed at the start of next month's meeting

9. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – DECEMBER 10, 2024

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, December 10, 2024.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Veazie made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta, to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 PM.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Hayley

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary