

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, May 14, 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 7:02 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Co-Chair Charrette, Commissioners Hayley, Lennon, Mezzatesta, Student Commissioner Avalos, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt.  
Absent: Co-Chair Simon; Commissioner Veazie  
Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Oak Park and River Forest High School Student Gabe Ruby presented to the Commission about the negative impacts of the invasive species buckthorn. Mr. Ruby discussed how buckthorn has spread to Thatcher Woods and impacts the soil health, hurting native plants, and is thorny and produces toxic berries, hurting the native wildlife. Mr. Ruby discussed the need to raise awareness of buckthorn, as residents may not even be aware it is in their yard. Commissioner Lennon provided his feedback and noted that there are resources available for those looking to remove buckthorn. Commissioner Mezzatesta also noted that it can be difficult to remove properly to prevent it from growing back. Mr. Jansen noted that the Village is updating its tree ordinance and will be referencing an invasive species list; Mr. Jansen would stated this we be brought to the Commission for review at the next month's meeting.

**3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES**

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta to approve the meeting minutes from April 9, 2024.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Commissioners Hayley, Lennon, and Mezzatesta  
Absent: Co-Chair Simon; Commissioner Veazie  
Nays: None  
Motion Passes.

**4. PROPOSED LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the memo he provided, the ordinance Oak Park adopted, and the timeline for outreach to landscape contractors moving forward. The Commission discussed

the language of Oak Park's ordinance and provided feedback. The Commission agreed there should not be a phase in period like Oak Park's existing seasonal ban, and to instead focus on a permanent ban taking effect the same date as Oak Park's, June 1, 2025. Student Commissioner Avalos inquired about other types of lawn equipment; the Commission noted the cost of other lawn equipment may make that incredibly difficult to implement. The Commission decided a draft ordinance should adhere as closely to Oak Park's ordinance to be reviewed and discussed at next month's meeting. Locally licensed landscape contractors will also be invited to the next month's meeting to provide their feedback.

## **5. OPT-OUT COMPOSTING DISCUSSION**

Mr. Jansen briefly explained that the Village Board had requested the Commission discuss the opt-out composting provision of the Village's waste contract. Mr. Jansen briefly went over what other communities have done with regards to universal composting and potential challenges he outlined in the memo. Commissioner Lennon noted the opt-out aggregation program has no cost but an opt-out composting program would function as a tax for those who do not opt out, noting that not all residents will read the notice sent to them. Commissioner Lennon stated he would prefer to have various locations to drop off compost instead. Commissioner Mezzatesta stated that providing compost carts won't necessarily mean they will compost correctly, which could lead to contamination or lack of participation. The Commission discussed how backyard composting is often the most environmentally friendly and that the Village could advertise the existing program, drop off locations, and information on backyard composting as an alternative. Co-Chair Charrette inquired about developing a compost cart splitting program, which allows for two households to share one compost cart. Co-Chair Charrette indicated this could be developed then rolled out along with a marketing and communications strategy to promote the other strategies and a public survey to gather further information on current composting activities. The Commission further discussed overall waste metrics and what metrics are most meaningful and valuable.

## **6. LRS MAILER**

Mr. Jansen presented the draft LRS recycling postcard to the Commission for their feedback. The Commission also discussed getting stickers placed on to the alley-service carts and LRS-provided recycling containers. The Commission also discussed the inclusion of the recycling graphic in previous newsletters and providing access to it on the Village website. The Commission discussed the information provided to new residents regarding garbage and recycling and which types of receptacles do and do not have the stickered graphics on them.

## **7. UIC CLIMATE ACTION PLANS REVIEW**

Mr. Jansen quickly outlined the Climate Action Plans drafted by the two UIC student groups and stated the goal would be to identify strategies from these two plans to assess the possibility of implementation. Commissioner Lennon said review of the plans should first address things the Village is already doing, then identify the quick wins, before looking into some of the longer term items. The Commissioners discussed their initial thoughts on the plans and the items proposed. Co-Chair Charrette suggested the Commission adopt one of

the plans as a template then pulling any relevant items from the other plan as the Commission sees fit.

Co-Chair Charrette also stated the Commission should focus on working sustainability in the decision making for each Village department over the next year. The Commission also discussed separate taxing bodies within the Village, and Student Commissioner Avalos suggested having an individual serve as the point person between the various taxing bodies. Commissioner Lennon suggested requiring a sustainability aspect or metric within each department's decision-making process. The Commission also discussed the need for the Village to highlight some of the things that the Village departments are already doing within the area of sustainability. The Commissioners noted the need to show how the long-run costs for sustainable technologies can produce savings. Co-Chair Charrette specifically noted the community solar accounts for the pump station and street lighting as an example of highlighting a Village action which is sustainable and saves money. Co-Chair Charrette stated the need for the Village to lead by example and that the internal Village operations should be the focus of the Village's implementation of the recommended strategies. Moving forward, the Commission will focus the implementation of the Climate Action Plan on the items that can be quickly implemented, building sustainability into all village operations, and reaching out to other community stakeholders, such as the other taxing bodies and universities, to further build out sustainability strategies.

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Jansen provided a brief update on the status of the EV Readiness Cohort and the Village's participation. He specifically sought feedback on developing an updated report for the board on useful electric vehicle metrics, noting that ChargePoint had recently changed their monthly report format. The Commission offered their input and concluded that the EV metric reports could be provided quarterly and that the EV report include: EVs and hybrid vehicles registered within the Village, EV charging station installation permits during the reporting quarter, and usage data for the Village-owned EVCS including: number of charging sessions, number of unique users, length of charging sessions, and percentage of time each port was blocked by a fully charged vehicle.

The Commission also stated that the waste metrics can also be provided quarterly as well, and time can be dedicated at those meetings to review these metrics. The Commission inquired about Village plans for expansion of EV charging infrastructure; Mr. Jansen indicated the immediate plans for the Village are dependent upon a pending grant application the Village had submitted.

## **9. COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Jansen outlined the plan to use recycled newsletter articles for forthcoming weekly newsletter articles where possible. Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated she would also send some draft articles along that can be used at any point in the coming weeks or months.

## **10. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JUNE 11, 2024**

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, June 11, 2024.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hayley, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Commissioners Hayley, Lennon, and Mezzatesta

Absent: Co-Chair Simon; Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

  
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Seth Jansen, Secretary