

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, August 13, 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-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos, Student Commissioner Stierwalt  
Absent: Co-Chair Charrette  
Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Veazie to approve the meeting minutes from July 9, 2024.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos  
Absent: Co-Chair Charrette  
Nays: None  
Motion Passes.

**4. PROPOSED LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Jansen outlined the updated draft language for the Commission. Commissioner Veazie inquired about funding for equipment replacement and about a working group of landscape contractors to provide feedback. Co-Chair Lennon indicated grant funding to replace equipment was not discussed when formulating the draft language. Co-Chair Lennon did indicate that Kelty Landscaping was putting together input and information to share with the Commission on the issue. Co-Chair Lennon indicated he wished to receive agreement from the Commission, then received feedback from the landscapers and from residents via a public survey, before finalizing language. The Commission discussed the next steps in putting a draft out and receiving feedback. Co-Chair Lennon indicated this draft will allow for further future evaluation as the ordinance is being implemented. Commissioner Hayley expressed desire for a phased in approach and not push a strong mandate, especially given the cost of

equipment and life cycle of the equipment. Co-Chair Lennon stated the phased-in, seasonal approach will allow landscapers to gain experience working with the new electric equipment, allowing them to provide further feedback in the future. Commissioner Mezzatesta discussed how this approach will allow stakeholders to provide continued feedback on issues such as battery life and how the ordinance affects operations within the community. Commissioner Hayley stated one issue for future consideration should be the best ways to handle the battery waste generated by switching to electric equipment. Commissioner Kadlec inquired about partial incentives; Mr. Jansen did indicate difficulty for enforcing such an approach. Commissioner Avalos questioned the exemptions section of the ordinance; Mr. Jansen indicated this language reflects the same exemptions established in Oak Park's ordinance. Mr. Jansen further discussed usage of gas-powered leaf blowers by Public Works staff and plans for transition to electric equipment. Co-Chair Lennon stated the language should be preserved as it would only apply to rare instances. Commissioner Veazie expressed desire to more precisely define the half speed provision and inquired if landscapers can provide more feedback on this specific option. The Commission discussed the half-speed requirement provision in the draft and enforcement of this provision. Co-Chair Lennon indicated for Commissioners to provide any further feedback to Mr. Jansen prior to next month's meeting. The Commission discussed plans for feedback and passage at the next two meetings.

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

Mr. Jansen provided an overview of his memo to the Commission. Mr. Jansen first discussed the recommendations from the report that can be incorporated into Commission's communications process. Commissioner Mezzatesta inquired about developing an internal calendar of all of the regularly recurring events to create a skeleton calendar for planned communications and to fill it in with any noteworthy national days to incorporate in as well. Commissioner Avalos suggested having recurring events permanently listed on the Sustainability provision of the website. Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated partnering with the Library to have some sort of sustainability focused event or display. Commissioner Avalos indicated he had a contact with West Cook Wild Ones and suggested a potential partnership with them for an event.

Mr. Jansen briefly gave an overview of the strategies and recommendations from the reports that the Village staff recommended against pursuing at this time.

Co-Chair Lennon inquired about the Heritage Tree Ordinance recommendation from one of the reports and indicated he would be interested in learning more about what this would entail. The Commission expressed interest in better understanding Village forestry operations and further discussing how the forestry-related recommendations could potentially be implemented. The Commission discussed treatment of elm trees for Dutch elm disease; Mr. Jansen outlined the current ash tree treatment operations and indicated that staff have wished to expand treatment to elm trees as well.

Mr. Jansen outlined the recommendations made where a formal process existed or that the recommendation could easily be incorporated into an existing process. Mr. Jansen stated

this same memo would remain in future meetings and solicited feedback from any Commissioners.

Co-Chair Lennon also indicated desire to begin working on moving up in SolSmart designation. Co-Chair Lennon also requested seeing what each Department within the Village is doing with regards to sustainability improvements, such as electrification or energy efficiency. Commissioner Mezzatesta stated that such sustainability improvements and accomplishments should also be promoted in future newsletters. Commissioner Mezzatesta inquired about the use of permeable pavers anywhere beyond the Village alleys. Mr. Jansen indicated that potential grant funding through the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to help with potential permeable lots in the future. The Commission discussed the benefits of the permeable alleys.

## **6. PROPOSED COMMUNITY SURVEY**

Mr. Jansen outlined the draft and Commissioner Hayley indicated she would like feedback from the Commissioners on what to edit and shorten. Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated she could provide some edits and suggested making some questions conditional on previous responses. Co-Chair Lennon indicated the barriers to adopt questions were beneficial and suggested he would provide a few edits. Co-Chair Lennon further stated questions should be focused on ones that can be turned into actionable items. The Commission further discussed the survey format and when the survey will be sent out. The Commission stated the survey would plan to be made available following next month's meeting. Co-Chair Lennon proposed letting residents know in coming newsletters that a survey would be forthcoming. The Commissioners agreed to provide edits to Commissioner Hayley within the next week for final review at next month's meeting.

## **7. COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Avalos inquired about compost splitting; Mr. Jansen indicated it is now live and the first sign-ups happened last week.

Mr. Jansen outlined the planned communications for the coming month, including the articles written by Commissioner Mezzatesta.

Mr. Jansen outlined the quarterly waste memo that he had drafted. The Commission discussed some of the waste, compost, and recycling trends shown in the memo.

Commissioner Hayley stated that she emailed out the date for the LRS site visit Friday, October 11, 10 AM to 12 PM and provided further information about the requirements for the visit.

## **8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 10, 2024**

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

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Veazie, to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos

Absent: Co-Chair Charrette

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

  
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Seth Jansen, Secretary