

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 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 Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon (arriving at 7:02), Commissioners Hayley, Mezzatesta, and Avalos, Commissioner Veazie (arriving at 7:05) and Student Commissioner Stierwalt (arriving at 7:01).

Absent: Commissioner Kadlec

Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Phyllis Rubin of 411 Ashland provided public comment regarding the difficulty that non-residential and multifamily residential properties face in finding effective composting programs. She specifically cited the limited list of items that could be composted as part of Har Zion Temple's private compost collection contract, which only accepts items that will be composted within 90 days and excludes most compostable cups, plates, and cutlery. Ms. Rubin requested assistance in finding information about the differing levels of composting, how effective the various composting requirements are, and how more multi-family properties can compost.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Avalos to approve the meeting minutes from February 11, 2025.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Kadlec

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Mezzatesta noted that she would be presenting on the benefits of induction ovens and electric cooking at the Library on April 13th at 2:00 pm as part of Earth Month.

Commissioner Avalos noted that the Oak Park Public Library's Eco-Extravaganza is April 5th and various sustainability related community groups will have tables present. Commissioner Avalos also stated he plans to attend an upcoming C4 event.

5. PROPOSED TREE PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Mr. Jansen outlined the updates made to the draft ordinance following the Commission's discussion last month. The changes include a one-to-one replacement requirement for the removed trees of the specified species; this meets generally accepted standards. The changes also include an expanded species list of what may be planted as a replacement tree; the well-suited species for private properties is broader than the species suited for parkway planting. Mr. Jansen also provided clarification for the hardship provision that exists within the code. The Commission discussed the tree preservation ordinance generally and inquired about existing provisions of the code.

Commissioner Avalos made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta, to make a recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees to proceed with a text amendment related to tree preservation.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Kadlec

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MEMBER RECOGNITION DISCUSSION

Mr. Jansen noted that Commissioner Kadlec was unable to attend but would likely have some updates to present to the Commission next month. Co-Chair Lennon suggested that Commissioners communicate directly with Commissioner Kadlec if they have any questions or suggestions for him.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jansen outlined the Village's plans to participate in the 2025 EcoShip Earth Month collection campaign, which collects shipping materials and provide them to small businesses for reuse. Village Hall will have a drop box located in the lobby to collect the items through the month of April; promotion of the program will be incorporated into regular communications. The Commissioners discussed the types of items that are accepted as part of the program.

Commissioner Hayley inquired about bicycle helmet recycling, but no programs appear to exist. Commissioner Mezzatesta mentioned she continues to check when Target's next car seat recycling event will be held. The Commission discussed what types of materials can and cannot be recycled at specialty drop off recycling events.

Mr. Jansen provided a brief update on the expansion of compost drop-off locations suggested by the Commission at the previous month. Mr. Jansen shared the design used for previous signage, and the Commission provided input as to what the new signs should contain. Mr. Jansen outlined the plans for where the new compost carts will be located at the Public Works Garage and Pumping Station. The Commissioners suggested placing more of an emphasis on food scrap collection at the new locations while discouraging yard waste be disposed of at these locations.

Mr. Jansen shared information about a grant the Village received through CN Railway to assist with tree planting. Mr. Jansen stated that the grant requirements include a media event, which will occur in June. Another requirement of the grant is participation in the America In Bloom Level 3 program. This program includes a community assessment which needs to be completed and a two-day visit from America In Bloom volunteers for tours of the Village and meetings with community partners. Mr. Jansen solicited ideas from the Commission for potential tour sites. Commissioner Hayley suggested the new native garden at Concordia and the community gardens at the Pumping Station. Co-Chair Charrette suggested edible gardens throughout the community, the parkway pollinator locations, and the Chicago Ave. Bioswales. Mr. Jansen shared that the Village was applying for the same grant that funded the Parkway Pollinator program to assist with the Chicago Ave. Bioswale clean up. Mr. Jansen also stated he would be looking into how the bioswales and other native plantings may assist the Village in various recognitions similar to the Village's existing Tree City USA designation. Mr. Jansen shared information about the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors Monarch Pledge as one of these programs that the Village intended to participate in during the coming year.

Mr. Jansen stated that the Community Survey that the Commission had created was recently closed and that he would share the final results with the Commission. The Commission agreed to dedicate time to discuss the results in detail at the next meeting. Mr. Jansen indicated he will share the survey results and data with the Commission.

Co-Chair Lennon inquired about the role of the Commission with regards to the America In Bloom program going forward; Mr. Jansen indicated he would be providing regular updates and stated he would likely be seeking input and suggestions from the Commission. Commissioner Mezzatesta stated that Thatcher Woods hosts a regular event on pollinators and making seed bombs to promote milkweed planting to support Monarch butterflies. Co-Chair Charrette stated the event is generally held in the fall and suggested the Commission promote the event this fall. The Commission discussed Village planting and suggested building out native planting over time.

Mr. Jansen shared planned newsletter communications over the next month. The Commission discussed some of the upcoming communications plans over the next few months including Bike Month in May, highlighting the grant award in June, and the Plastic Free July campaign in July. Mr. Jansen briefly provided an update as to the progress of the EV Charging Station Installation Project. Mr. Jansens stated that the fees for EV charging will need to come before the Commission as the project nears completion.

8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – APRIL 8, 2025

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Avalos, to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 PM.

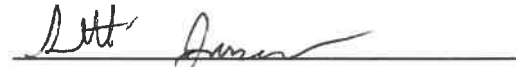
Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Kadlec

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary