



# Village of Westchester

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**Village President**  
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DEMITRUS EVANS  
MARIANA NICOLAE  
KARI ROBERG  
ALEX SILVA  
NIKKI WAY  
ELIZABETH WISEMAN-CHASE  
WALTER WOJCIK

## GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

**April 3, 2025 @ 6:30pm**

**Village Hall Board Room**

1. **6:33 - Call to Order**
2. **Pledge**

### 3. **Roll Call (All present)**

Attendees: Commissioners: Evans, Nicolae, Roberg, Silva, Way, Wiseman-Chase, Wojcik

Liaisons: Trustee Slavic, Administrative Services Coordinator, Canavan

Residents: LeeAnn Kruszynski, Nicole Moliano

### 4. **Welcome New Commissioners – Liz W-Chase**

Welcomed Demitrus Evans and Alex Silva to GROW.

5. **Inspiration – Walt Wojcik:** *If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.” — Pope Francis*

- a. Next Month 5/1/26: Demitrus

### 5. **Review of Minutes – Nikki Way (5 min)**

- a. Approval of 3/6/25 regular meeting minutes

**Liz motions to approve, Walt seconds all approve.**

### 6. **Quarterly Reports – Liz W-Chase (5 min)**

- a. Q1 - 2025: Kari Roberg, in process.
- b. Q2 - 2025: Walt volunteered

**7. Updates from Village Staff and Board Representatives – (10 min) Annie Canavan, Evie Slavic**

- a. Community Solar Energy Sovereignty and Equitable Energy Future Grants - The Building department had not heard about permits or plans.
- b. Buckthorn Grant – Pre-meeting was set.
- c. Onboarding for new members – Evie will do in a week. Annie will discuss emails. They have been added to the website.

**8. Old Business (70 min)**

**a. Greenest Region Compact (GRC) and Subcommittee Updates – Liz W-Chase (20 min)**

- a. Overview and process: The Village signed on in 2015 when there was an environmental sustainability commission that was eventually disbanded. There are 10 sections; we are currently looking at the areas listed below. The GRC was devised by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus as a tool and guide for what municipalities can do.
- b. Subcommittee reports:
  - i. Water – Mariana Nicolae/Walt
  - ii. Municipal Operations – Kari/ (open) - Demetrius volunteers
  - iii. Climate – Kari/(open) - Alex volunteers
  - iv. Energy – Liz/Walt
    - 1. Energy block grant may be used to guide future actions.
    - 2. E2 - Energy Audits – interested in pursuing engagement with local businesses
    - 3. E7 - Streetlights – conversion to LEDs is underway, we should be able to get info on percent completion
    - 4. E13 – Renewable energy technologies – have provided 2 years of solar presentations with CUB presenter, Marina Minic, to residents. Village had vetted the Municipal Mayors Caucus' Community Solar Clearinghouse solution (CS2) and residents may sign up. Liz has proposed an event where someone through the Mayor's Caucus will provide speakers on the CS2 initiative and energy efficiency. Marina Minic will also be returning to provide residents with solar education.
    - 5. E13 - Asked Building Dept for additional data on cumulative solar installations, currently have data from 2018 – Nov' 2023 to show growth in adoption of rooftop solar.
    - 6. E13 - Adopt – no difficulties with permitting process, the building department advised on timing for solar installs on new roofs. GROW would develop a flyer to share with entities that install a new roof.
    - 7. E14 - Procure renewable energy – municipalities may have multiple electrical accounts, smaller account might sign up for CS2
    - 8. E18 - Power down equipment – practiced in the office.
    - 9. Discussed adding form to google drive to ensure there is one copy.

Comments:

Evie suggests if we are submitting an actionable item, highlight it. Liz noted that the climate section of the GRC has target reductions, Westchester has metrics from CMAP from 2019, there will be a new study in 2025.

**b. West Cook Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan - Liz (5 minutes)**

- a. Advisory committee meeting attended by Lee Kaufman and Liz. Liz shared a draft of the “Low Stress Bike Network.” May be a ten-year process to complete. Goal will be to connect communities, identify safety barriers. The consultant group has done this work in many communities, large scale and small scale and engage a lot of stakeholders.

**c. SBC Stipends Fiscal Years Ending (FYE) 4/25 and 4/26– Nikki (10 minutes)**

- a. Overview & review of FYE 4/25 approved projects  
We are awaiting delivery of approved items. Collaboration on Water and Compost storyboard content is underway and will be submitted for printing ASAP.
- b. Discussed proposal template. We will be using this template for project consideration. Some projects may require planning further in advance (FYE 4/27 vs. FYE 4/26) to ensure ample time for resident engagement.
- c. During our May meeting, we will discuss proposals for consideration. Newly seated commissioners will be able to submit proposals during the June meeting. Please complete your forms and send them to Nikki and Liz.

**d. Upcoming Event Support Needs - Liz W-Chase (5 min)  
(See 2025 Planning Calendar)**

**e. Newsletter Article Ideas/Support - Liz W-Chase (5 min)  
(See 2025 Newsletter Calendar)**

**9. Comments (5 min)**

i. Commission Comments

1. Notes from Alliance for Water Efficiency Webinar (Mariana)
  - a. Federal Policy Updates – budget cut by 65%, 25 Executive Orders related to water, air, soil in first two months. Wind blows from West to East, air quality concerns, and soil concerns. EPA had 20 chemicals they are testing every day; two procedures on how to test for forever chemicals were cut immediately. Asks to tell family and friends about this. Filters for fridge – NSF Standard 53 takes lead and mercury out.
2. Mariana mentioned an organization planning a lobbying trip to Springfield for climate action on May 21st.
3. Kari mentioned an organization planning a lobby day on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

4. Liz – One Earth Film Fest is April 22 – 28; Bike Rodeo at Westchester Intermediate School – April 26; Salt Creek Watershed and Go Green LaGrange have cleanup events and would like to collaborate.
5. Walt – Do a town hall at coffee place and have people ask us questions. One Saturday for EVs or solar panels.

ii. Staff/Board Comments

1. **Evie** – Shredding events April 26 10 – 12pm at Enterprise facility.

**10. Public Participation** - *In order to give as many visitors as possible an opportunity to speak and in the interest of adjourning the meeting by 8:00 p.m., please limit your comments to 3 minutes in length, unless further time is granted by the Commission.*

- Nicole Molinaro – Proud of GROW; “Finding the Mother Tree” is a good book about trees. Can’t find information on fee schedule for SBC for composting – can we unbury it? Stormwater mitigation – utility fee that Western Springs.
- LeeAnn Kruszynski – Would we consider releasing the GRC and the Village’s progress? It will be included in GROWs quarterly reports. Kari will include 10 min about GRC in climate talk; excited to see Pale Blue Dot is the contractor for Energy Block Grant and said she could help with the engagement; CMAP greenhouse gas emissions accounting will be included in energy plan; love idea of flyer for solar for new roofs and thought it would be cool to distribute to anyone with roof permit; shoutout to West Cook Wild Ones has similar Conservation @ Home program to increase habitat and help animals move – thinks its more accessible than conservation at home, it’s a free program and more of a pledge than a process. Liz mentioned that there’s an event on that topic on April 17<sup>th</sup> at Linda Francis Sokol Library in Brookfield

## 11. Adjournment

The Village of Westchester will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Village of Westchester, should contact the office of the Fire Chief, 10300 W. Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL, (708) 345-0441, as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

8:50 PM – **Kari motions to adjourn, Mariana seconds, all approve.**



<b>2025 Planning Calendar</b>				
<b>Event</b>	<b>Organizer</b>	<b>Date</b>		
Artisan Fair	Walt/Nikki	March 23, 2025	Completed	
April Movie Night – Feeding Tomorrow	Walt	April 24, 2025 7:30 – 8:40 PM	Confirmed	Promotion started! Will have snacks. Please spread the word!
Guided Tour of Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	Mariana	May 15	Confirmed	Sign ups have gone out. Need names 2 weeks in advance. Need 10.
July 4 <sup>th</sup> Parade - EV Car / E-Bike Show	Walt	July 4th	Confirmed	Promotion started.
International Composting Awareness Week Tabling	Liz	May 4 - 10	Proposed	Materials and locations need confirmation. Liz will table at senior DMV, ( Will check into Prairie House for Sunday), if DMV is not available , Walgreens and Jewel may be options.
<del>Air Quality Awareness Week Tabling</del>	Liz	<del>May 5–9</del>	<del>Proposed</del>	Withdrawn – compost week
Waste Collection with SCARCE	Kari	September 27, 2025	Proposed	Parking lot at Church by community center. Will possibly need Public Works to help move traffic and set up tents. Evie suggests getting volunteers – put a call out and ask what they will be doing. Would reach out to other places (pet supply – blankets). Evie asked for a proposal with space needs.
Earth Day		<del>April 22</del>	<del>Proposed</del>	Feeding Tomorrow movie night: April 24th
Arbor Day – Oak?		April 25, 2025	Proposed	Arbor Day – tree planting at one of the schools with Steve – working out details.

Solar Event with Marina Minic of CUB	Liz	June 25 or 26	Approved	Date is pending confirmation of recording capability.
Energy Event: (2 topics) -Introduction to the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution (CS2) & Energy Efficiency	Liz	June?	Proposed	Wants to do an intro to energy efficiency with emission report. Evie asked for a summary of events and speakers.
Climate Action Event	Walt	Spring/Summer 2025	Proposed	Suggesting May 10, 10 – 11AM; May not be recorded because Annie is OOO.
Summer Movie Nights	Walt	Summer 2025	Proposed	Annie needs to reach out to Phil @ intermediate school.
Home Electrification	Liz	Fall 2025	Proposed	Defer for time being.
Reuse-a-palooza	Nikki	September 21 + 22	Proposed	Need to confirm date with GROW and Board.

Newsletter Calendar		
Month	Article Topic	Author
Monthly	Plant Based Recipes	Kari
Monthly	Monthly Green Fact	Walt
January 2025	Improving Your Indoor Environment	
February 2025	Eco-Friendly Valentine's Day	Walt
March 2025	International Water Day	Mariana
April 2025	Tentative: Spring Lawn Care (Calendar?) /How to Compost/July 4 <sup>th</sup> EV Casting Call	Kari
May 2025	Say Goodbye to Plastic Why no mow Mother's day	Walt
June 2025	Slow Mow Summer – be clear so it doesn't violate ordinance. (Nicole Molinaro has graphic)	Nikki
July 2025	Solar	Liz

2025 GROW Commission Priorities: Education/Engagement, Advisement, Climate Action Plan