



Village of Westchester

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KARI ROBERG
ALEX SILVA
NIKKI WAY
ELIZABETH WISEMAN-CHASE
WALTER WOJCIK

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Demitrus Evans, Mariana Nicolae, Kari Roberg, Alex Silva, Nikk Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase, Walter Wojcik

Also Present: Trustee Evelyn Slavic, Staff Liaison Annie Canavan

4. Inspiration

Commissioner Wojcik shared a quote from former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth..these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.

Next Inspiration (Oct 2, 2025): Commissioner Evans

5. Review of Minutes

- June 11, 2025 Minutes: Amended to clarify biodiesel/DEF usage and B20 biodiesel details. Approved as amended.

- August 7, 2025 Minutes: Approved with action items to be included.

Action Item: Trustee Slavic will prepare minutes for September; volunteer for October TBD.

6. Quarterly Reports

- Q1 2025 (Roberg): Final version submitted and approved.

- Q2 2025 (Wojcik): Draft presented. Action Item: All commissioners to review draft and send feedback to Commissioner Wojcik by next meeting.

- Q3 2025: Not yet presented.

7. Updates from Village Staff & Board Representatives

Discussion of agenda-setting and update processes. Items must tie to GROW's mission and have support of two commissioners, then can be added to next month's agenda. If an item has a tight deadline, with Commission approval can be discussed in current meeting. Staff/liaison comments will be under commissioner comments. Old business will track ongoing items.

Tree Program: Questions raised regarding grants; commissioners to send opportunities directly to Trustee Slavic and ASC Canavan due to deadlines.

Action Item: Commissioners to propose agenda topics in advance; staff to clarify process once legal guidance is finalized.

8. New Business

Strategic Planning: Discussion on aligning GROW activities with Village Strategic Plan and Energy Plan. Develop strategy to identify target audience and how to reach them.

Action Item: Nikki Way to prepare outline for GROW's contributions to the Strategic Plan.

9. Old Business

- Greenest Region Compact Subcommittee Updates:

- Water (Nicolae/Wojcik): Initial priorities discussed.
- Municipal Operations (Roberg/Evans): Focus on energy efficiency and fleet transition.
- Climate (Roberg/Silva): Upcoming regional collaboration highlighted.
- Energy Plan (Wiseman-Chase): Planning team forming.

Summary: GRC subcommittee work on hold to await results of Energy Plan data.

- West Cook Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan: Update provided by C. Wiseman-Chase

- Event Planning Protocol: Reviewed; proposals must follow agenda approval plan, be discussed and approved by commission in next meeting, event request form to be filled out for Village Manager review.

- Upcoming Events:

- Prairie Fest (Sept 6) – C. Wiseman-Chase coordinating table.
- Reuse-a-Palooza (Sept 20–21) – C. Way coordinating.
- Farm Saturdays – C. Nicolae/Roberg coordinating.
- Pumpkin Smash (Nov 8–9) – C. Roberg confirmed; newsletter article due October.
- CUB Solar Event (Nov 19) – Wiseman-Chase finalizing date/location.

Action Items:

- Commissioners confirm tabling availability with C. Wiseman-Chase.

- C. Roberg to draft Pumpkin Smash newsletter article.

- C. Wiseman-Chase to finalize CUB Solar details.

- SBC CEO tentatively scheduled to attend October meeting to answer composting questions.

Action Item: Commissioners submit questions to staff at least two weeks prior.

10. Comments

Discussion on maintaining quality over quantity of events and transparency in action items. Quick discussion on possible event for residents to discuss their experiences with various sustainability topics or to plan one large event with tables covering different topics.

11. Public Participation

Former GROW Commissioner Leeann Kruszynski commented she is working on a community

survey for another community and those results will drive the pillars of their Strategic Plan and events.

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Summary of Action Items

All Commissioners – review Q2 report and send edits to Wojcik.

- propose agenda items in advance; follow clarified process once finalized.

- confirm tabling roles for Prairie Fest, Reuse-a-Palooza, and Farm events with

C. Wiseman-Chase.

- submit composting/recycling questions for SBC CEO by mid-September 1.

C. Nikki Way – draft outline for GROW’s Strategic Plan contributions.

C. Roberg – submit Pumpkin Smash newsletter article by October.

C. Wiseman-Chase – finalize CUB Solar event logistics.

Trustee Slavic – prepare October meeting minutes.