



Village of Westchester

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EVELYN SLAVIC
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Asst Village Manager
JOHN SCHWARZ
Administrative Services Coordinator
ANNIE CANAVAN
Village Attorney
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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

October 2, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. **6:30 - Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order @ 6:31pm by Commissioner Wiseman-Chase
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** – Present: Commissioners: Evans, Nicolae, Roberg, Silva, Way, Wojcik, and Wiseman-Chase, Trustee Liaison Slavic, Absent: Staff Liaison Canavan, Also present: Resident, LeeAnn Kruszynski and Shawn Flood, President of SBC Waste Solutions (present for 1st half of meeting)
4. **Inspiration** – Demitrius Evans thanked the GROW Commissioners for their work so far.
 - a. Next Month 11/6/25 – Commissioner Roberg
5. **Presentation:** Composting Program, Shawn Flood, President, SBC Waste Solutions
 - a. FYI: SBC will drop off compost for Village residents in spring of 2026.
 - b. Westchester's composting program began late, about halfway through the season. Composting program is billed separately and SBC is in direct contact with the 11 participating residents.
 - c. GROW asked SBC to update items included composting materials as the compost magnet handed out to residents is not completely accurate.
 - d. SBC is working to lower the cost to residents who compost (perhaps by half) for next year.
 - e. **Action Item:** SBC and Midwest Compost is agreeable to have GROW Commissioners and Village staff to visit Midwest Compost facility (but not the transfer station).
 - f. Questions by GROW that were previously submitted to SBC / Answers provided by President of Midwest Compost:
 - i. MidwestCompost will take some compostable items, but prefers that residents do not include compostable items (service ware, bags, ...) in the compost bins as such items may not degrade as quickly as food scraps. Thus, degrading the quality of the compost.
 - ii. Animal feces is not acceptable.
 - iii. Note: Because composting in Illinois is new, there is a need to develop statewide practices/processes to handle organics and in creating compost. FYI Midwest Compost Pres serves on IFSCC/Illinois Food Scrap Coalition and Composting Board.

6. Review of Minutes

- A. Approval of 8/7/25 regular meeting minutes – approved at September meeting.
- B. Approval of 9/4/25 regular meeting minutes – motion to approve by Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase, second by Walt Wojcik. Then minutes approved unanimously.
- D. GROW October 2nd Meeting - Walt Wojcik volunteered to take minutes.
- C. GROW Meeting on 11/6/25 – Alex Silva volunteered to take minutes.
- D. **Action Item:** Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase to make agenda items and a template for future meeting minutes through *Share Point* program.

7. Old Business

A. Quarterly Reports

- i. Q2 - 2025: prepared by Walt Wojcik. Evie Slavic made changes to previously submitted Report which will be corrected by Wojcik and re-submitted back to Ms. Slavic.
- ii. Q3 – 2025: will be prepared by Walt Wojcik
- iii. Q4 – 2025: will be prepared by Nikki Way

B. Updates from Village Staff and Board Liaisons

- i. Energy and Strategic Planning surveys – Trustee Evie Slavic provided an update on the Energy Plan Survey (has only 156 responding residents so far with survey open till Dec 31st) and Strategic Plan Survey (has 645 responders and it ends Oct 6th). Goal for Energy Survey was to have >300 responses and the target response for the Strategic Plan Survey was >450 responders. There is no clear reason why a difference in the number of responses occurred as both were advertised equally. The Energy Plan Survey needs more promotion and one recommendation was to ask neighbors to submit their survey. For the Energy Plan, two focus groups have been made. Note: Kari Roberg is participating in one of these focus groups (FYI one can talk with Kari and provide concerns/views.) Nikki Way recommended her view that such groups and Westchester need to promote “Westchester Treasures” such as our tree diversity, historic Prairie House, etc..
- C. **GROW Strategic Plan Survey** – Commissioner Way tabled this item because there were only two commissioners who responded back. NW wishes to re-look at her survey with the help of Demitrus Evans, making it more understandable before re-sending to GROW Commissioners.
- D. **Energy Plan** – Per Commissioner Wiseman-Chase: The Village is working with pale blue dot consulting group to assist throughout the process. Team members include President Hribal, Trustee Slavic, Village Mgr, Krumstok, Asst. Village Mgr, Schwartz, Admin. Svcs Coord. Canavan, Key Department Heads incl. Public Works and Bldg Dept., resident LeeAnn Kruszynski, and Commissioner Wiseman-Chase. There will be 4 meetings. Deliverables are 1) May 2025: baseline energy assessment, 2) be the main focus throughout the engagement, 3) Sept. 2025: Goal setting targets for energy efficiency, emissions reductions in alignment with C4 Cross Community Climate Collaborative (decrease greenhouse gas emissions: 45% by 2030, 100% by 2050), 4) Strategy development with proposed actions by Sept 2025, and 5) Community wide energy plan development – initial plan Nov. 2025, final plan March 2026.

E. Upcoming Event Support Needs

- a. Tabling at The Farm – Kari Roberg asked for volunteers to man a table at The Farm on 31st Street each Saturday in October. Please contact her by email and she will

arrange the schedule. Proposed info that will be handed out include: Pumpkin Smash event that will compost old pumpkins and info on plant-based food.

b. Event Proposal Components:

- i. **Action Item:** Annie Canavan and Mariana Nicolae will work together to provide information needed for the upcoming trip to Argonne Labs in 6 months. Argonne Labs has a deadline submission of forms/information of early Nov.
- ii. Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase asks Annie Canavan to create Flyer for upcoming Solar Event that will include energy efficiency games that residents can participate in.

8. Commission Comments

A. Nikki Way summarized Reuse A Palooza stating that there were 164 residences involved and about 15,000 app entries to locate participants. NW was not satisfied with the Map / app used to locate participating residents homes but recommended returning to the use of Google maps. Also, she commented on the Village needs more yard signs for next year as many were stolen. **Action Item:** Lastly, new signs made for next year should be more generic and not have specific dates so one can re-use signs for following years.

B. Liz Wiseman-Chase provided updated EV statistics of 194 EVs in Westchester til Sept '25

C. **Action Item:** Mariana Nicolae requested that Westchester create metrics that one could follow over time eg. Number of residents with EVs, Number of trees planted, etc (action was approved by Kari Roberg and Mariana Nicolae).

D. Evie Slavic reviewed the process for planning future GROW Events :

- i. Future Event Proposals be submitted before the GROW monthly meeting.
- ii. If two GROW Commissioners agree to continue with proposed Event, a more detailed plan is submitted during the next GROW meeting for discussion by all Commissioners.
- iii. The next phase is to submit the completed event proposal form to staff for their review and approval.

E. Demitrus Evans submitted an Event Proposal for a GROW Podcast. **Action Item:** Evie Slavic asked DE to submit an electronic version to Annie Canavan. This Proposal included purpose, overview, benefits, costs/resources and concerns/safeguards. Nikki Way could help with creating the Podcast also for Spanish listeners/viewers. DE informs GROW that she started a podcast some 5 years ago and not only has some experience but has appropriate equipment. Her Proposal was approved by all GROW Commissioners so that it can continue to the next phase, that is the Village Staff needs to approve event. **Action Item:** All Commissioners asked to identify topics for discussion on future podcasts. Mariana Nicolae requested that our Westchester newspaper and Newsletter provide a link to the podcast.

9. Liaison Comments : None

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.*

Former GROW Commissioner LeeAnn Kruszynski made comment that residents do not have to pay any fee directly to SBC for pick-up of yard waste (grass clippings). Thus, SBC would be ok if compostable food (organic) items be included in with the yard waste.

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.

Action Items created during the October GROW Meeting:

1. (from 5e) Action Item: SBC and Midwest Compost is agreeable to have GROW and Westchester residents to visit Midwest Compost facility (but not the transfer station).
2. (7Ebi) Action Item: Annie Canavan and Mariana Nicolae will work together to provide information needed for the upcoming trip to Argonne Labs in 6 months. Argonne Labs has a deadline submission of forms/information of early Nov.
3. (8A) Action Item: Lastly, new signs made for next year should be more generic and not have specific dates so one can re-use signs for following years.
4. (8C) Action Item: Mariana Nicolae requested that Westchester create metrics that one could follow over time eg. Number of residents with EVs, Number of trees planted, etc (action was approved by Kari Roberg and Mariana Nicolae).
5. (8E) Action Item: Evie Slavic asked DE to submit an electronic version to Annie Canavan.
6. (8E) Action Item: All Commissioners asked to identify topics for discussion on future podcasts.



2025 Planning Calendar (One event per month, plan 3 months in advance)						
Month	Event	Organizer	Date	Location	Status	Notes
Oct-25						
<i>Tabling</i>	The Farm	Kari	Saturdays 10a-5p	The Farm	Approved	Need help of GROW members for tabling and former GROW members/residents to assist. Contact Kari with availability
Nov-25	Pumpkin Smash	Kari	Nov 8-9		Approved	

	Navigating Solar Options with Grace Concialdi, CUB Solar Programs Coordinator	Liz	Nov 19 12-1pm	Library	Approved	Live on Zoom Virtual presentation will be available for viewing at the Library with GROW and available afterwards on the GROW page of the Village website
<i>Tabling</i>						
Dec-25						
<i>Tabling</i>						
Jan-26	Energy Efficiency w/ Tori Woolbright	Liz	9 – 10:30 Jan 17th Inclement weather date Jan 24th		Approved	Set-up on Friday, doors open to public at 8:30 am, Need 2 Commissioners to help run energy efficiency games during event.
<i>Tabling</i>						
Feb-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						
Mar-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						
Apr-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						
TBD	Town Hall Meeting over coffee	Walt				Proposal pending
TBD	Climate Action Presentations	Walt				Walt Wojcik will work on submitting event for approval to Liz Wiseman-Chase and Nikki Way in Oct
TBD	Home Electrification	Liz				Proposal pending
TBD Spring?	Waste Collection with SCARCE postponed till	Kari				Proposal approved – Needs agenda/plan

July 18 th ?	GROW Table / Native Plant Education at GGG Garden Walk	Liz				Proposal pending
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Newsletter Calendar		
Month	Article Topic	Author
Monthly	Plant Based Recipes	Kari
Monthly	Monthly Green Fact	Walt
November 2025	Solar / Thanksgiving Zero Waste tips	Liz / Kari
December 2025	Zero Waste Holidays	Kari
January 2026	Home Efficiency	

2026 Agenda Calendar (for reference)		
Month	GROW Business	Education topics
January	SBC Stipend Kick-Off	Home Efficiency
February	SBC Stipend Discussion	
March	SBC Stipend Vote	
April		
May	Fourth of July Planning	Native Plants
June		
July		
August		
September		Recycling
October		
November	Strategic Planning	
December	Strategic Planning	