

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1) 6:30 - Call to Order

Call to order executed on time.

2) Pledge

3) Roll Call

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

Also Present: Trustee Evelyn Slavic, Staff Liaison Annie Canavan, Visitor Esmerelde Matilde

4) Inspiration – Kari Roberg

Inspiration from the late Jane Goodall emphasizing the role of individual contributions to furthering environmental sustainability and conservation taken from a Netflix program, Famous Last Words

Next Month 12/11/25 – Alex Silva

5) Presentation:

N/A

6) Review of Minutes – Nikki Way (5 min)

a) Approval of 10/2/25 regular meeting minutes

Corrections forthcoming from Walt that are grammatical in nature; Kari clarified that SBC is offering tours of the compost facility to GROW members and staff ONLY.

Minutes of 11/6/25 - Commissioner Silva

b) Next Month 12/11/25 - Commissioner Demitrus Evans volunteered

7) Old Business

- a) Quarterly Reports – Nikki Way
 - i) Q3 – 2025: Commissioner Wojcik
 - (1) Draft presented and minor revisions required, which are to be re-submitted for our next meeting; Discussion with Trustee Slavic as to whether reports are accurately reflecting updates and consensus agreed that they are.
 - ii) Q4 – 2025: Commissioner Way
 - (1) Report to be shared in January

- b) Updates from Village Staff and Board Liaisons – (10 min) Annie Canavan, Evie Slavic
 - i) Staff Liaison Canavan:
 - (1) Comm. Nicolae’s event proposal for a visit to Argonne National Laboratory is approved by the Village;
 - (a) Comm. Nicolae will follow up with Argonne re: requirements for entry and intends to advertise the program in March and April; it will be a weekday trip.
 - (2) SBC field trip to compost facility is expect in late spring or early summer, in agreement with Sean from SBC.

- c) Strategic Plan – Comm. Way
 - i) Goal: Workbooking to define our audience using a large Post-It style paper
 - (1) Work began by generating a list of people who are already actively part of or encounter GROW activities. The lists included:
 - (a) Movie Nights: Comm. Wojcik retirement-age, professional neighbors via word-of-mouth
 - (b) Solar Events: Past event participants which are recorded in an email list people – exclusively adults; workforce-age and retired; mixed gender
 - (c) Tree Walk Events: adults; predominantly white audience; working age and retired
 - (d) Farm Table: families – young adults with children; somewhat knowledgeable of environmental issues
 - (e) National Night Out: Children and families; Mix of demographics – Latino, Black, white
 - (f) Juneteenth: Number of Black adults; Demitrus feels most visitors were unaware of GROW prior to visiting the booth
 - (g) MWRD Event: adults-only, retired

(h) Takeaway: Most contacts appear to be already interested/knowledgeable parties; some are not residents given the methods of advertisements reach beyond the borders

(i) Missing contacts:

(i) Children; Comm. Chase notes that there was a concern communicated via social media that children who have aged out of available programs (e.g. 12-18) do not have anything to do around here

(ii) 20 somethings; Visitor Esmerelde Matilde (Masters in Science) is looking for ways to engage in Westchester; learned about GROW via Salt Creek public committee meeting

(iii) Average resident who does not have any idea of GROW, not receiving/reading the monthly newsletter or e-news

(j) Considerations: Need methods of communicating with other languages about GROW

(i) Comm. Chase: Census tracts reflect growing population of ELL residents; Trustee Slavic notes that schools reflect a diverse breakdown; Remaining questions as to whether the 2020 census is truly accurate

(ii) Need for method of communicating cost savings to lower-economic communities, which begged a larger discussion affirming need for differing methods of communicating in order to appeal to different demographics, varying political affiliations, and interest in the environment

(iii) Comm. Wojcik asks whether we should consider finding an ambassador who is more on the level of non-GROW representatives?

(2) Work continued by brainstorming who we should target and how:

(a) Spanish-speaking audience – Visitor Matilde offered to translate; Comm. Silva is also a speaker; Trustee Slavic and Liaison Canavan note that there is a Spanish-speaking staff member, as well

- (b) Tangential conversation about offering Spanish-forward or other language translations for GROW materials; Comm. Slavic notes this might apply to other village materials and that would be an undertaking
- (c) Children – Comm. Slavic questions whether there is an opportunity to create environmentally-based summer programs for children who are missing out
- (d) For those who are unaware – Comm. Slavic: how do we go about informing the public? Comm. Way and Wojcik: How do we make the no idea about sustainability more aware?
- (e) Comm. Chase: Went to two senior gatherings to engage, but only a couple wanted to talk – feels people who came were there more for the socialization
 - (i) Comm. Slavic: Noting that as a person on the younger end of retirement, older people have grown up differently and it's not high on their priority
- (f) Visitor Matilde: Wants to know if there is an annual event offered to help get the word out that GROW exists; Comm. Way notes that this event doesn't exist yet, potentially because we have differing motivations
 - (i) Idea: Village-sponsored Earth Day
- (g) Takeaways: Comm. Way concludes that these jump out as potential priorities: Families; children who have aged out of youth problems; people who are unaware; ELL residents
 - (i) Ultimately, GROW should consider this discussion going forward as we propose activities and events, using it as a filter or a framework
 1. For example: Engage scouts through Village-sponsored programs in order to earn their Eagle badge
 - (ii) Comm. Slavic: May want to consider a special meeting to discuss this further.
 - (iii) Comm. Roberg: While representing GROW at the village's strategic planning focus group, everyone showed interest in communicating more, therefore each of these groups (e.g. library, boy scouts) should be a list that we consider for our messages

1. Comm. Slavic: Logistics is that initial contact needs to come through staff, not GROW, for any reason, including marketing

d) Energy Plan – Comm. Wiseman-Chase

i) Baseline Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Findings:

- (1) Approximate contribution by sector: ~33.5% mobile combustion, ~33.2% stationary combustion, ~23.9% electricity, ~5.1% wastewater, ~4.3% solid waste
- (2) Most indicators have decreased in recent years, especially stationary combustion and electricity.
- (3) Solid waste has increased in step with population.

ii) Targets & Next Steps

- (1) Substantial additional reductions needed by 2050 to meet a 1.5°C-aligned trajectory, including 55,687 metric tons of carbon
- (2) Energy Plan survey remains open; commissioners are asked to gather at least five additional responses each.
- (3) Upcoming meeting (toward year end, with foreman of public works, Barry from the village, etc.) will review survey results and draft reduction strategies that are aligned with results from the strategic plan
 - (a) Comm. Wiseman-Chase noted gap between public's priority for sustainability is not represented within village staff
- (4) Discussion included equity, feasibility, and availability of EV adoption and infrastructure.
- (5) Liaison Canavan will confirm the date of the next energy planning meeting.

e) Upcoming Event Support Needs - Liz W-Chase(10 min)

i) Tabling at The Farm (Debrief)

- (1) Diane Scott and Walt tabled on 10/22, 10 a.m.–noon.
- (2) Farm owners recommended late morning as best time.
- (3) Flyers for the Pumpkin Smash were distributed.
- (4) SBC will track pumpkin tonnage and share results.

ii) Pumpkin Smash

- (1) Held November 8–9.
- (2) Results to be incorporated into SBC reporting and SCARCE regional data.

- (3) Note that the ability to include pumpkins in yard waste may decrease results
 - iii) Navigating Solar Options (CUB Solar Programs – Grace Concialdi)
 - (1) Date/Time: Wednesday, December 19, 12–1 p.m. (Library).
 - (2) Hybrid format: live Zoom plus in-person viewing.
 - (3) Recording to be posted on GROW’s page of the village website.
 - (4) Equipment: HDMI cable and computer (Nikki to provide HDMI).
 - iv) Energy Efficiency Event (Metropolitan Mayors Caucus – Tori Woolbright)
 - (1) Date/Time: Saturday, January 17, 9–10:30 a.m. (weather backup: January 24).
 - (2) Format: presentation plus games on energy efficiency.
 - (3) Two commissioners needed to help run games.
 - (4) Prior similar event drew ~45 participants, but included help and materials from Nicor
 - (5) Spanish-language resources will be explored; links may be shared in both English and Spanish.
- f) Event Proposals
 - i) Climate Action Presentation – Walt & Kari
 - (1) Proposal in development; to be presented at next meeting.
 - ii) Waste Collection Event with SCARCE – Kari
 - (1) Proposal still to be drafted.
- g) Newsletter
 - i) Commissioner Evans and Commissioner Roberg will prepare a “Zero-Waste Holiday” newsletter piece.
 - ii) Discussion on whether to integrate transportation-related Green Fact or focus specifically on holiday waste reduction.
- 8) New Business
 - a) GROW Podcast
 - i) A podcast-style concept was developed by Comm. Evans.
 - ii) After review by legal and village management, a recurring podcast was deemed too resource-intensive to review and manage.
 - iii) Revised Direction: Short Educational Videos
 - (1) Village supports shorter, “TED-style” 5-minute informational videos (e.g., “How composting works”).
 - (2) Videos can be shared via village social media and/or newsletter channels.

- (3) All scripts and appearances by non-commissioners will require prior review and photo releases.
 - iv) Next Steps
 - (1) Comm. Evans may revise the concept into a short video format.
 - (2) Liaison Canavan will provide written feedback/expectations and adjust request forms accordingly
- b) Metrics – Comm. Nicolae
 - i) Purpose
 - (1) Align tracking with GROW’s mission: advising and educating around sustainable practices.
 - (2) Clarify what impact looks like in concrete terms.
 - ii) Initial Metric Ideas
 - (1) Number of solar installations, EV uptake, and other local sustainable actions potentially influenced by GROW.
 - (2) Discussion on how far indirect effects (e.g., regional funding changes) can fairly be attributed to GROW.
 - iii) Guidance & Follow-Up
 - (1) Comm. Wiseman-Chase recommended focusing on clear, resident-relevant outcomes.
 - (2) Trustee Slavic encouraged clarity on the use and audience for the data.
 - (3) Commissioners are invited to submit additional metric ideas prior to the next discussion.
- c) Agenda items for next meeting
 - i) Group Email List
 - (1) Comm. Roberg requested exploring a group email setup for outreach.
 - ii) Podcast/Video Follow-Up
 - (1) Comm. Evans will reframe the podcast into a 5-minute video proposal.
 - (2) Liaison Canavan will revise the project request form and share expectations (length, review process).
 - (3) Comm. Evans will draft a script for review once the updated form is approved.
 - (4) Comm. Way recommended script approval prior to recording; Visitor Matilde suggests the term “podcast” may not be appropriate

(5) Photo releases will be required for any non-commission participants.

9) Commission Comments

- a) Comm. Roberg: Thanks for noting that there is an expiration date on seed packets (December of this year); because there are many left, there is the option to pass them out at village board meeting or give them away
- b) No other comments

10) Liaison Comments

- a) None

11) Public Participation

- a) No comment from Guest Matilde

12) Adjournment

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Summary of Action Items

1. All commissioners:
 - a. Use the priority audiences (families, ages 12–18, 20-somethings, unaware residents, ELL communities, lower-income residents) as a filter when proposing future events and outreach.
 - b. Promote the Energy Plan survey and aim to secure at least 5 additional responses each.
 - c. Promote attendance at:
 - i. “Navigating Solar Options” (CUB) library event.
 - ii. January Energy Efficiency event (Metropolitan Mayors Caucus).
 - d. Contribute ideas for impact metrics (how to measure GROW’s influence) to Comm. Nicolae.
2. Comm. Evans
 - a. Reframe podcast concept into a ~5-minute video proposal and, if deciding to proceed, draft a script that fits the new format and submit it for review
3. Comm. Roberg & Evans -- Co-write “Zero-Waste Holiday” newsletter piece with Demitrus.
4. Comm. Roberg & Walt -- Develop Climate Action presentation proposal with Walt and bring it next meeting.
5. Comm. Wiseman-Chase -- For the January Energy Efficiency event:

- a. Coordinate content and games.
- b. Identify two commissioners to help run the activities.
- c. Follow up on Spanish-language materials or links and share them (for inclusion in outreach)