



Village of Westchester

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ALEX SILVA
NIKKI WAY
ELIZABETH WISEMAN-
CHASE
WALTER WOJCIK

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **6:32 PM**.

2. Pledge

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Mariana Nicolae, Walt Wojcik, Alex Silva, Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase, Demitrus Evans

Also Present: Village staff, Trustee Liaison(s) Annie Canavan and Evelyn Slavic

Absent: Nikki Way, Kari Roberg

4. Approval of Minutes

- **October Minutes:** Previously approved.
- **November Minutes:**

Motion to defer approval of November minutes made by **Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase**, seconded by **Mariana Nicolae**.

Motion carried; **Nikki Way absent**.

5. Old Business

A. Quarterly Report

The quarterly report had not been received at the time of the meeting but was resent and will be reviewed.

B. Composting Program Updates

Discussion focused on improving compliance and participation in the recycling program, including:

- Use of personal bins
- No additional fee for compliant bins
- Updated rental charges for bins
- Upgrade options for residents wishing to change service levels

Commissioners discussed whether neighboring villages have adopted similar models and noted potential cost efficiencies if implemented regionally.

C. Composting & Materials

Sean Flood (SBC Waste Solutions) provided clarification regarding compostable materials, noting that some petroleum-linked “compostable” items may still leave nano-residue. Commissioners emphasized the need to update resident education materials and bin stickers accordingly.

6. New Business

A. Soil Distribution Program

Discussion regarding distribution of compost/soil to residents on a **first-come, first-served basis**, with residents prioritized.

B. Annual Spring Cleanup

The Annual Spring Cleanup with SBC Waste Solutions is scheduled for **April 25**, potentially coordinated with the SCARCE program.

C. Energy Program Update

Commissioner Wiseman-Chase reported:

- Energy survey open through **12/31**
- **204 responses** received to date
- Goal is **300 responses**, which would make Westchester a leading municipality
- Survey promoted via Facebook and GROW email

D. Emissions & Energy Planning

Discussion included:

- Transportation and building emissions as primary sources
- Consultant analysis on rooftop solar capacity needed to meet Village goals

- Illinois Solar for All program eligibility (fire station on Cermak, places of worship, EJ-qualified areas)
- EV charging infrastructure needs (Village currently has two chargers)

Relevant legislation discussed included the **Illinois Electric Vehicle Act**, requiring EV-ready infrastructure in new construction and major renovations.

7. Metrics & Data Tracking

Commissioners, lead by Commissioner Nicolae, discussed the need for clear metrics demonstrating GROW's impact, including:

- EV adoption
- Solar installations
- Tree canopy data
- Water compliance and lead service line replacement

Commissioner Nicolae will compile a spreadsheet summarizing GROW initiatives and outcomes by **January**.

8. Events & Outreach

- **Argonne National Lab Visit:** Planned for **May 7, 2025** (25 participants, first-come basis).
- **Senior Event Review:** Virtual participation issues were noted; recording will be available on the website.
- **Energy Efficiency Event:** Free kits, weatherization assistance, and outreach supported by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

9. Media & Communications

- **Podcast Proposal:**
Commissioner Evans' proposed revised GROW micro-education podcast/video series (5-minute segments) where Content would be reviewed and approved by the Village prior to release was approved.
- Topics suggested include air quality, water, energy efficiency, and EVs.
- Demitrus to present ideas/plan for discussion.

10. Meeting Schedule

- Regular meetings will continue on the **first Thursday of each month, unless holiday the first week**.
- Motion to approve meeting dates made by **Alex Silva**, seconded by **Walt Wojcik**. Motion carried.

11. Budget & Grants

- SBC stipend proposals (\$2,000 total) to be reviewed and scored by Commissioners prior to allocation.
- Commissioners discussed remaining unallocated funds and the need to obligate funds before **April 1** to avoid loss of balance.

12. Commissioner Comments

Commissioners discussed:

- Youth engagement and STEM education
- Collaboration with local schools
- Regional sustainability partnerships (Brookfield, LaGrange, Broadview)
- Climate education initiatives

13. Public Participation

There were two participants who discussed the educational pursuits of the youth and how excited the youth are about learning about recycling. Solidified that this is a great age group to focus on. (Nicole Molinaro and guest from the high school)

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM

Action Items Summary

1. Update recycling and composting educational materials and bin stickers
2. Compile GROW impact metrics spreadsheet (Nicolae – January)
3. Promote energy survey to reach 300 responses
4. Finalize Argonne Lab visit details
5. Submit podcast proposal materials to Village staff



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

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	