



Village of Westchester

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

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2026 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. **6:30 - Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order @ 6:34pm by Commissioner Wiseman-Chase
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** – Present: Commissioners: Evans, Roberg, Way, Wojcik, and Wiseman-Chase.
Absent: Nicolae (sick), Silva
Also present: Trustee Liaison Slavic, and Staff Liaison Canavan.
Residents: Konnie Prohaska (Westchester’s Veterans Commissioner) and Tessa (female resident of Elmhurst)
3. **Inspiration** – Wojcik (given at end of meeting and included the first few minutes of speaker Dr. Naidoo from South Africa’s speech at Raising Hope Conference held on Oct 3rd 2025 in Rome, Italy.)
 - a. Next Month 02/05/26 – Nikki Way
5. **Review of Minutes** – N. Way
 - a. Approval of amended 11/6/25 minutes
 - b. Approval of 12/11/25 unanimously
 - c. Today’s minutes will be taken by W. Wojcik replacing M. Nicolae who is sick.
 - d. Next Month 02/05/26 – D. Evans
7. **Old Business**
 - A. **Quarterly Reports** –
 - i. Q4 – 2025: N. Way will submit for review

B. Updates from Village Staff and Board Liaisons

i. A.Canavan and E. Slavic had no new updates to present today.

C. Strategic Plan – N. Way referenced the 2026 Agenda Calendar (for reference) Table (page 4 of today's meeting handout)

-**January's** Education topics: Home Efficiency info including home energy audits

-**February's** Education topics: (in time for Valentine's Day/VD) Article on palm oil and buying sustainable chocolates for VD, eating a healthy and hearty plant based meals.

-**March's** Education topics: Article on composting, plan for Slo Mow Spring/Summer, use of e-lawn equipment.

-**April's** Education topics: Article involving Earth Day April 22nd (provide info at table event during Tree Planting on Earth Day at ES – provide 3 possible actions one can agree to do such as plant a tree, start a pollinator garden, etc.), prepare for Juneteen and Party in the Park Westchester Events, plan for EVs and e-bikes in July 4th parade.

-**May's** Education topics: Handout info on native plants (info to include importance of plants on wild life and effects of climate change on wild life).

-**June's** Education topics: Info provided on importance of having clean drinking water and water conservation actions at home and gardening.

-**July's** Education topics: Info provided on importance of having clean drinking water and water conservation actions at home and gardening – same as June.

-**August's** Education topics: plan for Westchester's National Night Out Event with EV showing. Table to discuss eating a plant based diet

-**September's** Education topics: Article on reuse/recycling (referring to Re-Use A Palooza

-**October's** Education topics: Article on composting with emphasis on upcoming Pumpkin Smash Event.

-**November's** Education topics: Holiday (Thanksgiving and Christmas) planning

-**December's** Education topics: planting native plant seeds for upcoming spring.

D. Energy Plan – E. Wiseman-Chase provided an update on VOW Energy Plan. In a previous email, she sent to GROW a table outlining plan. E. Wiseman-Chase asks GROW to read and provide her with feedback in 2-3 weeks (before next meeting). She is thinking of recommending input from volunteering Westchester residents, Village staff and GROW to work together to accomplish proposed plans.

E. Metrics – M Nicolae (postponed till next meeting when MN present).

F. SBC Grant

i. **Money remaining in '25-April '26 budget:** N. Way commented that she recently purchased brochure holders and stands for tabling but still with money available.

Action Item: all GROW members to provide N. Way and E. Wiseman-Chase ideas on what to purchase, for example, D Evans recommended buying GROW t-shirts/sweatshirts for GROW and two Village Staff (E. Slavic and A. Canavan). This was agreed on by GROW Commissioners present. GROW Commissioners can send

ideas over next few months directly to N. Way and E. Wiseman-Chase on a rolling basis until funds for this period are used.

- ii. W. Wojcik's proposal on providing \$100 refund on new e-lawn mower and \$25 refund on new e-leaf blower was submitted previously. No other proposals submitted. The amount of refund was discussed by GROW and
 - a. **GROW agreed that instead of a \$100 refund, the refund will be \$75 for an e-lawn mower and a \$25 refund on new e-leaf blower was also agreed on.**
 - b. **Also agreed on: one refund per household,**
 - c. **This refund in only for year starting in April '26, and**
 - d. **And that only \$1,000 of the SBC's \$2,000 will be targeted for this proposal.**
 - e. **Action Item:** W. Wojcik will work with A. Canavan on Flyer containing info for refunds

G. Upcoming Event Support Needs

i.-K. Roberg discussed her submitted event proposal on Repair and Collect Event for either April or Sept of 2026. Discussion that followed suggested that this event would have more time to plan if held in September. For example, it could be on Sept 19th/Sat and 20th/Sun AND Re-Use A Palooza on Sept 26th/Sat and 27th/Sun. SCARCE can provide info on vendors who could provide repairs, cleaning, knife sharpening, sewing items, etc.. M. Nicolae can help repair jewelry. GROW unanimously approved event. W. Wojcik asked if some services could be provided free as opposed to paying for service.

Action Item: Flyer for Re-Use A Palooza could be provided to residents who attend Repair and Collect Event.

ii.-D. Evans provided a possible event similar to Walking Monks to Washington DC (in the current news) and perhaps we can have some ongoing walking event. WW commented that perhaps every Sat in Spring/Summer GROW goes for walk in our Westchester parks (would need advertising) and even a parade of EVs going up and down streets at a certain time and day of week to encourage residents to become GREEN. D. Evans will submit an Event Proposal.

iii.-K. Roberg proposed a GROW Event that involves a tour of Sustain DuPage's space. She will write up a formal proposal.

iv.-K. Roberg also asked GROW to submit any plant-based recipes.

H. Events and Education Outreach Proposals

i.-Climate Action Presentation Event is renamed to **Neighbors to Neighbor GREEN Talk.**

This event was approved by Village and A. Canavan provided W. Wojcik with dates Village Board Room is available. There was a discussion that this Event can be recorded and used for Demitrus's podcast proposal/event.

Action Item: W. Wojcik will work with A. Canavan on creating a flyer.

8. Commission Comments: Liz W-C thanked Annie C. on the great design seen in the past Newsletter for the Energy Efficiency Event.

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.*

- Konnie said GROW was doing great.
- Tessa provided examples of gardening/pollinator/sustainability projects in schools and suggests reaching out to science teachers, garden clubs. She also suggested considering rebates/a rewards program for landscaping co that create pollinator garden spaces. Lastly, she mentioned Oak Park mandates use of electric lawn equipment.

11. Adjournment - at 8:15 pm

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:

- **7Fi. Action Item:** all GROW members to provide N. Way and E. Wiseman-Chase ideas on what to purchase, for example, D Evans recommended buying GROW t-shirts/sweatshirts for GROW and two Village Staff (E. Slavic and A. Canavan). This was agreed on by GROW Commissioners present. GROW Commissioners can send ideas over next few months directly to N. Way and E. Wiseman-Chase on a rolling basis until funds for this period are used.
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- **7Gi. Action Item:** Flyer for Re-Use A Palooza could be provided to residents who attend Repair and Collect Event.



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
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. W. Wojcik who initially volunteered cannot come.
<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				Proposal pending
TBD	Home Electrification	Liz				Proposal pending
TBD Spring?	Waste Collection with SCARCE	Kari				Proposal pending
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	

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June		Info provided on importance of having clean drinking water and water conservation actions at home and gardening
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