



Village of Westchester

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GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2024 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

Village President
GREG HRIBAL

Village Clerk
SOPHIA COLLINS

Trustees
GIA MARIE BENLINE
PETER MARZANO
ROBERT MORALES
EVELYN SLAVIC
NICK STEKER
VICTORIA VANN

Village Manager
BARRY KRUMSTOK
Asst Village Manager
JOHN SCHWARZ
Administrative Services Coordinator
ANNIE CANAVAN
Village Attorney
MATTHEW WELCH

Commissioners
LEE KAUFMAN
LEEANN KRUSZYNSKI
MARIANA NICOLAE
KARI ROBERG
NIKKI WAY
ELIZABETH WISEMAN-CHASE
WALTER WOJCIK

A. 6:35 - Call to Order

B. Pledge

C. Roll Call

- a. Attending Commissioners: Liz Wiseman-Chase, Lee Kaufman, Kari Roberg, Nikki Way, Walt Wojcik
- b. Absent: LeeAnn Kruszynski, Mariana Nicolae
- c. Attending Staff Representative: Annie Canavan
- d. Attending Board Representative: Evie Slavic
- e. Attending Residents: Alex Silva, Leann Pettis

D. Inspiration – LeeAnn Kruszynski

- a. *“ Good stewardship of the environment is not just a personal responsibility, it is a public value... Our duty is to use the land well, and sometimes not to use it at all. This is our responsibility as citizens, but more than that, it is our calling as stewards of the earth. ”*
- b. Next Month – **Kari Roberg**

E. Review of Minutes – Nikki Way (5 min)

- a. Approval of 10/3/24 regular meeting minutes

Nikki motions to approve minutes, Walt seconds, all in favor

F. Quarterly Reports (5 min)

- a. Third Quarter – Walt
Nikki to ask LeeAnn for # of households, will provide description

Kari motions to approve, Lee seconds, all approve with changes.

b. Fourth Quarter –

G. Updates from Village Staff and Board Representatives – (10 min) Annie Canavan, Evie Slavic

- a. Community Energy Grant – RFP Status
 - i. Released last month, responses due November 15
- b. GROW Proposals for Westchester Schools

- i. Barry spoke with the district Superintendent about movie nights at school for extra credit. Because the school does not offer an extra credit policy, the Superintendent suggested a summer movie night. Walt asked how they would meet the governor's mandate to teach climate change? Evie suggested that Walt engage as a resident since the village does not have jurisdiction over the school. The Sup liked the children's books sent over and noted that the curriculum is set and there is overlap. The district is interested in events like Arbor Day and Air Quality Awareness Week with the village. Open to collaboration.
- c. IL Anti-Idling Statutes/Ordinance
 - i. Jim, Barry, Annie at Village, who met with the police department. The department is aware of the new statute, violations are not common, but they are acted upon. Asked that citizens call the police. ACTION: GROW to make a newsletter blurb. Liz has an Idolbox toolkit.
- d. Sustainable Purchasing Statement
 - i. Submitted to village administration. The Village Board also discussing procurement procedures; this will be discussed within the larger update.
- e. Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution
 - i. Postcard was mailed, on Facebook, website. Liz thanked Evie, Annie, and Barry for moving this forward.

H. Old Business (30 min)

- a. GRC / C-4 Discussion Special Meeting – Liz (3 min)
 - a. Lee – the document is a powerful tool and has a strong structure related to municipal operations. We need to meet with Village staff to lay out the easy wins that could be implemented by people being aware of them. Believes that GRC is more clear than C4 for a roadmap forward.
 - b. Kari – big topic, need a sperate meeting to move forward since there are so many directions to go, need to summarize so not to duplicate efforts.
 - c. Walt – There are other municipalities that have implemented these, can we understand what has been easily done?
 - d. Nikki – Should have a sub-committee to put a roadmap together for how we engage in this content. C-4 is particularly compelling because it is a local government similar to Westchester.
 - e. Liz, there are overlaps between GRC and C-4. One of the structures of C4 has teams around each objective. That structure could potentially help engage residents (such as interacting with the school district).
 - f. Evie – Subcommittees do not need public meetings.
 - g. Lee – We use the GRC to develop a plan, and then leverage C4 for resources.
 - h. ACTION: Nikki and Evie discussed whether residents can be on a subcommittee. She will investigate it. We could have multiple subcommittees and then hold a special meeting to move forward. Propose we start with the four areas that we've worked on to have subcommittess: climate, energy, municipal operations, water.
- b. Purple Air Monitor – Liz
 - i. Liz personally acquired a Purple Air Monitor for community education.
- c. GROW Holiday Gathering – Walt

- i. Would like to have an event with the Board of Trustees to build rapport and get them to events. Evie suggested we could do it personally but not discuss business. She also suggested sending personal emails.
- d. Calendars (15 min)
 - a. Events
 - i. October event debriefs (5 min)
 - 1. Pumpkin Smash – did well! Next year November 8.
 - 2. Tree Walk – Well attended; the walk was not what people anticipated. Public comments noted that the walk felt political and complaint, it detracted a lot for what people could take away. Suggested that we vet the speakers or choose ones that will represent the village.
 - ii. Upcoming event support needs (5 min)
 - 1. Food Pantry – table on November 17th, Walt will be there. Everyone to send materials to Walt for tabling.
 - 2. Prarie House – open to tabling.
 - 3. Movie night—Walt proposes “Being the Change” for January; Annie will look into it. Liz notes that the last movie night had an obstructed view.
 - b. Newsletter article ideas/support (5 min)
 - i. December – “Are plastics good or bad for us?” – Walt 2 min
 - 1. Had comments on the title, will change it.
 - ii. January – “Indoor Air Quality” - 3 min

I. New Business (6 min)

- a. Residential Outreach for Illinois Solar for All
 - 1. The program for income-eligible residents. Since we are rolling out a community solar clearing house and wanted to start a dual track for reaching out, has the village identified income-eligible residents? Annie said there are no applicants for water grants yet, but she cannot share the info but can add it to the website. Discussion of having “open office hours” where Liz can assist residents for applying for Illinois Solar for All, or include her email address so she could meet them at the Village.

J. Comments (5 min)

- a. Commission Comments
 - 1. Lee – Are there any updates for the Village Comprehensive Plan? Evie said they have looked at the old plans and nothing has changed. The other Commissions are working on some of those items.
 - 2. Nikki – What will happen with the new federal admin regarding solar? Liz – federal tax credit might change, it has fluctuated. There is a state renewable energy tax credit. Lee thinks the states will take more action, but funding was difficult to get.
 - 3. Liz – Westchester now has 119 electric vehicles. Growth is impressive. Evie suggested that these could be fun facts for the Village newsletters. Calendar – will move one week on holiday dates for January, July, December moving back a week.

All approve calendar dates.

b. Staff/Board Comments

- 1. Business Cards are now available! Ask Annie if need anything more. All the GROW materials are in a wardrobe in the hallway.

K. 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.*

1. Alex – excited to see that the village is promoting sustainability.
2. Lianne –

L. Liz motions to adjourn, Walt seconds, all approve.

Adjourn at 8:05 PM.

M. 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.

2024 Planning Calendar		
Event	Organizer	Date
<i>Pumpkin Smash</i>	<i>Kari</i>	<i>November 2nd</i>
<i>Prairie House Tabling during “The Biggest Little Farm”</i>	<i>Kari</i>	<i>November 10th @1:00pm</i>
<i>Food Pantry Tabling during Artisan Fair</i>	<i>Walt</i>	<i>November 17th</i>

2025 Planning Calendar		
Event	Organizer	Date
Proposed Movie Night: “Being the Change”	Walt	
Proposed: Indoor Air Quality (YouTube)	Liz	January 2025
Solar Event with CUB	Liz	Spring 2025
Waste Collection with SCARCE	Kari	Spring 2025
Bike Safety Event “Safe Streets for All”	Nikki/Lee	Spring 2025
Guided Tour of Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	Mariana	Spring 2025
Climate Action Event	Walt	Spring/Summer 2025
Home Electrification (w/ Incentives for Electrical Appliances Article)	Liz	Spring/Summer 2025

Newsletter Calendar		
Month	Article Topic	Author
Monthly	Plant Based Recipes	Kari
Proposed	Monthly Food Fact Bullet Point	Walt

December	Are Plastics Good or Bad for Us?	Walt
January 2025	Proposed: Indoor Air Quality	Liz
February 2025		

2024 Goals: Education and Engagement, Advisement, Climate Action Plan

Lee Kaufman	School Bicycling Event, Electric Powered Equipment for Natural Lawn Care
LeeAnn Kruszynski	Urban Forestry, Reusa Palooza, Climate Action
Mariana Nicolae	Water Quality/Sustainability, Composting, Climate Change Awareness
Kari Roberg	Zero Waste, Connection to Nature, Climate Action
Nikki Way	Reusa Palooza, Commission Marketing support, Green infrastructure/solar/rain and native garden/ecological interest walk, painted rain barrels
Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase	Climate Action Plan, Air Pollution/Health, Incentives for Electric Appliances, Solar Education
Walter Wojcik	Climate Action, Electric Vehicles, EV Car Show