

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:03p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairperson Simon, Commissioners Charrette, Cheng, Veazie, McLean, Student Commissioner Raidt
Absent: Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Clancy, Student Commissioner Meyer
Also Present: Management Analyst Sara Phyfer

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Simon welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ms. Phyfer thanked the public for joining the meeting. She stated this ordinance was inspired by an initiative through PlanItGreen and is modeled after what the City of Chicago adopted last summer, which was written with the business community in mind. She explained the ordinance would require that places for eating only hand out single-use foodware for take-out and delivery orders at the customer's request, meaning customers would "opt-in" to receive them. She stated the purpose of this ordinance is to reduce the unnecessary generation of waste without overly burdening the restaurant community.

Phyllis Rubin, 411 Ashland #6B. Ms. Rubin emphasized the importance of acting more sustainably and thinking seven generations ahead. She stated the ordinance is a step in the right direction but that she wishes it would go farther. She stated exempting drive-throughs is not a big enough step, that straws should be included in the request category, and that Styrofoam should be totally banned.

Kathy Balk, 1105 Forest. Ms. Balk stated she did not have much more to say than the previous speaker and wished the Village could do more. She also inquired about any requirement for Jewel to stop using so many plastic bags.

Chairperson Simon stated the entire Commission knows they have to go further and that the incremental approach is frustrating, but that this is a pragmatic way to get things done. He stated the Village cannot levy a fee on plastic bags because the Village is a non-home rule community.

There was a brief discussion about straws and agreement that they could be considered as part of the definition.

Commissioner Charrette stated if the State imposed a tax on plastic bags, the Village would be able to as well. She stated that Representative Don Harmon was the lead on that bill and perhaps if there were increased calls to his office, that would move forward.

Daniel Lauber, 7215 Oak. Mr. Lauber suggested amendments to the ordinance language. He also suggested changing the straw exclusion to just paper straws and that specifically plastic straws are part of the single-use definition. He expressed that he is troubled by the exclusion of drive-through facilities and that it would not be difficult to ask customers if they want utensils. He applauded the Commission for taking time to reflect on this and study it thoroughly

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cheng, to approve the April 12, 2022 meeting minutes.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Chairperson Simon, Commissioners Charrette, Cheng, Veazie, McLean

Absent: Commissioners Roberts and Clancy

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Cheng stated she reached out to the Chicago Region Trees Initiative and contacts at Openland regarding tree ordinances. She commended the work done on the zoning change and waste contract. She requested that should there ever be a desire to hold a special waste event, that the Commission have an opportunity to provide input. She also commented about getting metrics on the composting program like pounds of compost and number of users.

Commissioner Veazie stated that the zoning recommendation went well and asked for clarification about next steps.

Ms. Phyfer stated the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on the solar panel text amendment and issue a recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees.

Commissioner McClean stated she did a sampling for Healthy Lawn, Healthy Family and observed that signs in lawns were lacking. She described the challenges she is encountering with program advertising and getting responses from residents.

The Commission briefly discussed the program and it was determined it could be a discussion item at a future meeting.

Commissioner Charrette reported on the April PlanItGreen meeting and noted the Village of Oak Park provided a draft climate plan. She stated she also reached out to Carla Sloan at the Township to discuss senior outreach. She also commented about the base rate in the water and sewer rate ordinance, stating it lacked transparency and there should be a financial incentive to cut back water usage. She stated she also reached out to the Chicago Tree Initiative for tree preservation ordinance templates.

Ms. Phyfer stated there is an educational opportunity with tree preservation and something that could possibly be incorporated into an e-news article. She stated that as far as the regulatory side, Staff still needed to have internal discussions about it. She suggested holding off on doing more research until she can provide more definitive direction.

Trustee Gillis suggested sending information about proper mulching to landscapers.

5. CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING DRAFT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN PLACES OF EATING ORDINANCE

The Commission discussed the suggestions made during public comment.

Commissioner McLean stated their role is to do what is best for the environment and that she agreed with what Ms. Rubin and Mr. Lauber said.

Student Commissioner Raidt commented about introducing this in a way that is appealing to restaurants like what they did with VegOut, emphasizing that having the public limit some of the products they consume would save money for the businesses.

Commissioner Cheng commented that while they did not have anyone from the business community at the meeting raising concerns about the ordinance, the Commission could still recommend the ordinance to the Board and that business owners would have another opportunity to comment at the Board level. She stated she agreed with the comments that were suggested and stated the Commission should make those changes.

In response to a question from Commissioner McLean, Ms. Phyfer stated anyone in violation of the Village Code would be subject to the Village's adjudication procedures.

Commission Veazie stated he generally agreed with what was being said.

Chairperson Simon commented about how it might be tougher for chains. He recapped the suggested changes. Commissioners McLean and Charrette asked about including something to the effect of encouraging businesses to reduce use of plastic bags and Styrofoam.

In response to a question from Student Commissioner Raidt, Chairperson Simon stated they are threading the needle of being respectful of the business community and their business decisions, and that other sustainability items they could tackle in future ordinances.

Chairperson Simon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Charrette to approve the single use plastic ordinance with the following changes:

1. Change title from “plastics” to “foodware”
2. Change “in excess of” to “greater than” 170 degrees
3. Add “paper” to the straw exclusion
4. Remove exception for drive-throughs
5. Add 60-day period for ordinance to go into effect
6. Add language “encourage businesses to make every effort to reduce use of plastic bags, Styrofoam, and excess packaging

Roll Call:

Ayes: Chairperson Simon, Commissioners Charrette, Cheng, Veazie, McLean

Absent: Commissioners Roberts and Clancy

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. INTRODUCTION TO EV READINESS PROGRAM

Ms. Phyfer introduced the EV Readiness program. She stated it is somewhat similar to SolSmart in that the purpose is to reduce barriers to electric vehicle adoption to meet the growing demand for electric vehicles and charging stations. She stated the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is a great partner to have in this and that she did already complete the expression of interest form to join a cohort later this fall. She explained that the program provides municipalities with resources such as technical assistance and sample policies, as well as guidance on funding opportunities. She stated she would update the Commission when she has more information and next steps.

7. WEBSITE PLAN

Commissioners Cheng and Charrette discussed the website plan. The Commission reached a consensus to move forward with what was proposed.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission discussed the communications calendar and content options.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JUNE 14, 2022

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, June 14, 2022.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cheng made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McLean, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Chairperson Simon, Commissioners Charrette, Cheng, Veazie, McLean

Absent: Commissioners Roberts, Clancy

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Sara Phyfer, Secretary