

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 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 7:03 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Commissioners Charrette, Hayley, Lennon, Mezzatesta, Veazie, Drury (arriving at 7:11) and Student Commissioner Stierwalt.  
Absent: Chairperson Simon  
Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**3. CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING OPPORTUNITY**

Mr. Jansen introduced Professor Kazuya Kawamura from the University of Illinois Chicago Department of Urban Planning and Policy. Prof. Kawamura began outlining the graduate student project of developing a climate action plan for local communities through the Spring 2024 semester as part of the studio plan making course. He also introduced Professors Nebiyu Tilahun and David Lopez Garcia with UIC. Prof. Kawamura indicated one to two sections of students, approximately 12-13 students per section, would be working with River Forest to develop a climate action plan and outlined what the semester plan would entail. Professor Kawamura highlighted the milestone dates for the project; with the semester beginning January 8, the mid-term update coming February 27, and the final plan being presented on April 30. Commissioner Lennon inquired about the participation opportunities and expectations of the Commission. Mr. Jansen indicated he would be the primary contact with UIC but would be providing updates and sharing opportunities at monthly meetings. Mr. Jansen indicated he would share an energy plan that a previous course had developed for Forest Park. Professor Kawamura answered questions from the Commissions seeking further clarity on the scope of the project and the role of stakeholders in developing the strategies that go into the climate action plan.

Following the zoom, the Commissioners further discussed the project, noting the benefit of assisting the graduate level students as they prepare to enter the career. The Commission noted items and information that the Village can share with the class, noting the greenhouse gas emission inventories.

**4. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Mezzatesta noted a couple of typos needing correction in the meeting minutes draft. Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lennon to approve the meeting minutes as amended from November 14, 2023.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Commissioners Charrette, Drury, Hayley, Lenon, Mezzatesta, and Veazie

Absent: Chairperson Simon

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## **5. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Commissioner Mezzatesta shared information on emerging green technologies she saw as part of the Earthshot Prize awards. Commissioner Drury suggested that the battery recycling drop off program at Village Hall be promoted in an upcoming newsletter and social media post. Commissioner Mezzatesta suggested an informational poster at Village Hall indicated what could and could not be recycled there. The Commission discussed ways into work with other taxing bodies in the village to have more drop off locations of a similar manner.

## **6. WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

Commissioner Mezzatesta discussed an email exchange she had with the Wednesday Journal pitching them on having a regular sustainability column in the newspaper. Commissioner Mezzatesta suggested that semi-regular One View op-eds from the Commission could reach a larger audience than the regular newsletter and social media posts. Commissioner Charrette suggested that the monthly newsletters could be taken and reformed and be used in this manner.

Commissioner Mezzatesta discussed finding a way to see which HVAC contractors have experience working with heat pumps and ways to identify which contractors work in the Village. Mr. Jansen explained that all HVAC contractors must be registered with the Village. The Commission inquired if there was a way for contractors to indicated if there is a way for contractors to indicate if they work with heat pumps when registering or renewing with the Village. Commissioner Charrette also noted this would be a way to indicate the Village's interest in having licensed contractors who can perform heat pump work.

Commissioner Veazie indicated that the Renewable Energy working group is organizing the information they had requested and developing their plan. The working group discussed SolSmart designation, the Community Aggregation program, and potential future Village projects.

Commissioner Haley inquired as to what's been done so far and what has been successful. Commissioner Charrette outlined the current Village waste contract, the composting program and push for universal composting. The Commission discussed the leaf collection

program and Commissioner Charrette inquired about data for how much is collected weekly as part of the leaf collection program.

Commissioner Haley inquired about the “other” category of the Commission plan; Mr. Jansen explained this what meant to catch any additional opportunities and issues that may arise and do not fit directly within the scope of one of the three working groups. Commissioner Haley inquired provided about if there was a central repository of various programs and projects; Mr. Jansen indicated he would provide a link to the more comprehensive 2020 Strategic Plan, which outlined many existing and previous programs.

## **7. ELECTRIC VEHICLE READINESS COHORT UPDATE**

Mr. Jansen provided a quick overview of his most recent monthly memo on the EV Readiness Cohort that the Village a part of through the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Mr. Jansen explained that most of the items are Village operations items relating to permitting. He did indicate some of the items on new construction will come back to the Commission when needed. Mr. Jansen provided an outline of what the process will be going forward with the various zoning changes that a proposed through the EV Readiness Cohort. Mr. Jansen also indicated that the previous discussion of establishing an overstay fee at the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at Village Hall would require an ordinance and that he intended to bring something before the Commission next month. Commissioner Lennon indicated the need to codify parking access, limiting charging stations to those currently in use for charging, and having signage indicating so. Commissioner Veazie inquired about any plan to charge for access to the EV charging stations. Commissioner Charrette indicated this overstay fee is an intermediate step to continue to encourage EV usage but not have people taking advantage of the charging spaces.

The Commission discussed the Village franchise agreement with ComEd and how the franchise tax pays for electricity at Village facilities. The Commission discussed finding out what benefits ComEd is offering to other communities and potentially utilizing the Cross Community Climate Collaborative to have the various communities in the region look to leverage benefits together.

Commissioner Mezzatesta inquired about a new state law regarding electric vehicle charging stations and new construction of multi-family residential facilities and suggested using Village communications to inform people of the new law.

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Jansen outlined the planned Village weekly and monthly newsletters, using the information on induction stoves for the monthly newsletter and recycled annual posts for most weekly newsletters. Commissioner Haley volunteered to write an additional weekly post on the battery recycling program at Village Hall.

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jansen solicited waste recycling and compost questions from the Commissioners in preparation for the January meeting, in which a representative from LRS would attend. The Commissioners discussed various items concerning LRS and compiled a list of various questions:

- What is LRS's future thinking in terms of increasing recyclables and composting?
- What are some further recycling opportunities for the Village?
- Where do holes or gaps exist in the current collection system?
- How does River Forest's recycling and composting rates compare to our neighboring communities?
- What can LRS and the Village do in terms of providing more signage and education for what can be recycled and composted?
- What outreach efforts is LRS undertaking and what can the Village do to assist?
- What can we as a community improve upon with regards to recycling and composting?
- How can River Forest increase its composting participation rates?
- What are the top 5 things people do wrong in terms of recyclable items not being recycled and nonrecyclable items contaminating the recycling?
- Are there opportunities for communications campaigns?
- What are simple ways for individual residents to start being more sustainable in their waste disposal practices?
- What are ways that the Village can start marketing its successes in terms of waste diversion?

## 10. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JANUARY 9, 2024

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Veazie made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lennon to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM.


Roll Call:

Ayes: Commissioners Charrette, Drury, Hayley, Lenon, Mezzatesta, and Veazie

Absent: Chairperson Simon

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

  
Seth Jansen, Secretary