

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, May 16, 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: Chairperson Simon (arriving a 7:31) Commissioners Charrette, Cheng, Lennon, Roberts, Veazie, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt.  
Absent: Student Commissioners Raidt  
Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**3. COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Commissioner Charrette spoke at the Township's Monday Coffee at the Library and discussed the Solar for All program, which offers income-qualified community solar with a total reduction of 50%.

No other Commissioners had reports.

**4. 2023 COMMISSION INITIATIVES AND GOALS**

Commissioner Charrette provided history on sustainability plans for the Village, including the PlanItGreen Sustainability Plans that started in 2011. Commissioner Charrette noted that, while the PlanItGreen plan was a 10 year plan, they had goals that extended beyond that timeframe and suggested it could serve as a potential starting place. Commissioner Charrette also provided a brief overview of the 2020 Sustainability Commission Plan, which had many programs outlined, could serve as another starting place. Commissioner Charrette highlighted the grades given in the 2019 PlanItGreen report and suggested those that did not already have high marks could be the topics to focus on as a commission.

Commissioner Roberts provided a brief overview of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory that she put together in 2021 and suggested focusing on the top 5 or 10 goals for things that need to improve and identify actions to take to reach those goals.

Commissioner Cheng stated that the first plan when the Commission began in 2017 outlined six areas of focus: energy, transportation, water, waste, green ecosystems, and education and

that those main categories largely align with the PlanItGreen topics. Commissioner Cheng also suggested focusing on a few items where the Commission can have the biggest impact.

The Commission discussed how to tie objectives back to the most recent Village Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Veazie also referenced the charter/mission statement for the Sustainability Commission and making sure the focus relates back to that. Mr. Jansen also outlined the topics that Trustee Gillis had suggested to Chair Simon and Mr. Jansen for the Commission to focus on.

Commissioner Lennon asked to what end the Commission is pursuing programs or focuses and figuring out what actions the Village and the Commission can actually take to accomplish those goals. Commissioner Lennon suggested the approach of the Commission be to first decide where to focus, then identify a small number of actions the board can take within those focuses, and then establish a measure to monitor the outcomes and effectiveness of those actions. Commissioner Lennon suggested a focus on greenhouse gas emissions and possibly one other item of focus and then identify no more than five actions the Commission can take.

Commissioner Roberts also suggested a focus on preparedness and resiliency of the impacts of climate change as the other goal for the Commission, though she indicated the Village may have a broader strategy with regard to preparedness for flooding and similar issues. The Commission discussed what steps the Village has already taken to address these issues and suggested the Commission highlight such actions.

Commissioner Cheng suggested the other goal be increasing participation and engagement of residents and entities in the Village. Commissioner Cheng said such a goal could be used to highlight various events and programs in the Village but could still focus on the substantive areas of waste and energy. Commissioner Cheng suggested this goal could be measured through number or percentage of residents participating in certain programs or in any sustainability program.

Commissioner Charrette said she wants to goals to have a metric and that the Commissioner measure the progress being made, even if the goal is not met. Commissioner Cheng also noted that many issues relating to greenhouse gas emissions are also influenced by things at a much larger scale, including state and federal policies. Commissioner Veazie stated that, while progress will be made because of larger state and federal policies, the Commission could focus on making adoption of new programs and technologies easier locally. Commissioner Veazie specifically cited electrification and SolSmart as examples of what the Commission and the Village can do. Commissioner Lennon suggested the biggest opportunities and resources for the Commission are through the Commission's communications. Commissioner Lennon suggested tying communications to the focuses or goals of the Commission and noted that some items may not be measurable in that regard. Commissioner Lennon suggested that communication can be used to aid the community to help inform residents on broader goals such as reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and waste. The Commission discussed ways to communicate and highlight things like electrical

vehicle ownership in the Village to encourage greater uptake. Commissioner Veazie suggested each Commissioner have ownership of a specific item within the goals.

Commissioner Cheng stated she'd like communication to be more of a two-way engagement or outreach with communication just being one component of it. The Commission transitioned into a broader discussion on the various topics which the Commission covers and to potentially create tiers of priorities. The Commissioners noted that various programs, particularly those focusing on green ecosystems, can continue on their own, and the Commission can instead focus its collective energy on things that are not working as well during the monthly meetings.

Chairperson Simon suggested walking through the priority categories and reviewing some specific items within specific items. Commissioner Cheng suggested the Commission develop a one-pager that outlines the high-level goals of the Commission and from there potentially develop a more comprehensive workplan.

Commissioner Roberts provided a more detailed overview of how her greenhouse gas emissions inventory compares to the CMAP greenhouse gas emissions inventory. She noted that CMAP had great calculation approaches and data for electricity use, natural gas use, and passenger vehicle use. Commissioner Roberts did note their waste calculations were based on regional modeling rather than direct local data, so locally available information serves as a better resource. Additionally, Commissioner Roberts noted that CMAP did not count for the carbon offsets created by forest land, which her Village inventory did take into account. The Commission further discussed how the CMAP data can be used to compare local greenhouse gas emissions to other communities and to the county overall. Commissioner Roberts further outlined her updated data for keeping up with the greenhouse gas inventory. The Commission further discussed how to continue to track locally available data and information.

The Commission discussed strategies to engage other stakeholders within the Village and how engagement can relate to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Commissioner Lennon noted that the engagement component is not separate from the other goals but instead runs across all other goals and focuses. The Commission discussed the best ways to break the list into buckets by topic and figuring out a way to go through each item to determine which ones would be the highest priority items and biggest impact on the respective goal. The Commission decided that the respective focus buckets would be greenhouse gas emissions and engagement/outreach as the tier 1 priority buckets with others being resiliency, nature, waste, and water. Commissioner Veazie stated that each action item needs to be reviewed to determine if there is an engagement component within that specific item. Commissioner Charrette suggested including a time component to note which items can be done immediately and which require several smaller incremental steps. Commissioner Roberts also noted the Commission should identify items that can be handed over to the Village to be incorporated into standard operations. The Commission suggested reviewing items within a few of the buckets at subsequent meetings and think of ideas for what can be established as the top few priorities within the respective focus areas, such as greenhouse gas emissions or waste. Commissioner Roberts framed the issue as identifying

what topics the Commission needs to lean into versus what the Commission just needs to continue managing. Chairperson Simon suggested dedicating a portion of each upcoming meeting to continue to work on planning out goals and initiatives.

#### **5. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JUNE 13, 2023**

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, June 13, 2023.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lennon to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Chairperson Simon, Commissioners Charrette, Cheng, Lennon, Roberts, and Veazie

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

  
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Seth Jansen, Secretary