

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

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, September 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 7:00 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairperson Simon, Commissioners Charrette, Lennon Veazie, Cheng (arriving at 7:06), and Student Commissioner Stierwalt (arriving at 7:03).

Absent: Commissioner Drury

Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Louise Mezzatesta spoke in support of electrification, specifically use of HVAC electrification through use of heat pumps. Ms. Mezzatesta believes heat pumps are a good place to start to advance electrification goals along with the use of induction stoves in place of gas stoves and ovens. Ms. Mezzatesta also discussed the need to ensure the electric grid has the capacity to handle the increase in demand created by electrification before outlining the sources of electricity in the state of Illinois and their respective percentages of the electricity generated.

John Dzuryak raised the concern of plastic bottle littering in River Forest. He advocated for a bottle deposit program similar to those run in Michigan and New York as a way to prevent plastic bottles for being littered in the street. He also advocated for the local universities to reduce waste and set up a program to allow students to easily donate or recycle furniture and electronics for reuse by others when they move out.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Cheng made a motion, seconded by Chairperson Simon to approve the meeting minutes as amended from August 22, 2023.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Drury

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Charrette discussed a PBS documentary, titled Wild Hope, which highlights various environmental restoration projects happening across the world. She also plugged Refilleri in Humboldt Park that works to reduce waste by allowing people to refill existing containers rather than buying common products that typically come in plastic single-use containers.

5. WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Commissioner Veazie outlined the goals of the renewable energy working group. Commissioner Lennon explained that he wanted to better understand the relationship between the Village and MCSquared in order to get more residents enrolled in both the community aggregation plan and the community solar plan. Commissioner Lennon indicated he and Mr. Jansen would meet sometime prior to the next meeting to begin to discuss the various questions he has. Mr. Jansen provided a brief explanation of the various programs as well as the contracts for electricity for the Village facilities. Commissioner Lennon expressed the desire for the renewable energy working group to find quick wins that will produce tangible results. The Commission briefly discussed the SolSmart program and the designation levels available. The Commission provided further context to how the aggregation program works and who is eligible for the program. The Commission discussed having a possible refresher for the Commissioner on how the program works and requested that MCSquared provide updated enrollment numbers. The Commission also discussed the possibility of in-village energy generation, such as a solar site; Commissioner Veazie indicated that was within the goal developing other renewable resources within the Village but was not a specific item as of yet.

Commissioner Charrette indicated the electrification working group was looking to engage citizen volunteers like Ms. Mezzatesta, who had provided comment earlier in the meeting in support of electrification projects.

Commissioner Cheng indicated that she and Commissioner Drury have exchanged emails regarding the waste working group. She indicated that Commissioner Drury was looking to engage with the Library and Park District to partner with them to develop more public recycling and composting opportunities. The Commission discussed the best way to engage with the other taxing bodies and whether it was better to contact the administrative heads or the elected boards first. The Commission inquired about the Village's ability to set up recycling bins at public locations, Mr. Jansen sited that the Village has a limited provision in the contract with LRS to have a specified number of trash cans in the public right of way. The Commission decided that they should dedicate time in a meeting a couple months out to review which outside entities each working group was wanting to engage with and what the best approach would be for each entity, including the park district, library, school district, two universities, township, community center, and Trinity high school. Commission Cheng inquired about a provision in the LRS contract regarding LRS meeting with the Sustainability Commission on an annual basis regarding the composting program. The Commission discussed composting options and alternatives going forward.

Student Commissioner Stierwalt brought up the federal grants available for electrification and the resources he had regarding available grants from the GreenTown Conference. He also discussed posting the student commissioner application to the OPRFHS Environmental Club's virtual board for any interested students. He also said he would pass information along through his younger brother to interested Roosevelt Middle School students and would reach out to the River Forest student who received honorable mention at the One Earth Film Festival. Chair Simon stated he would provide the necessary info to Student Commissioner Stierwalt so that he could reach out directly to the student filmmaker.

6. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Mr. Jansen provided a brief overview of the Electric Vehicle Network Infrastructure Study Report and solicited feedback from the Commission. He also outlined the Electric Vehicle Readiness Cohort. Mr. Jansen indicated he would be providing monthly updates of cohort activities and seek the Commissions guidance on policies the Village will undertake in relation to the cohort going forward. Chairperson Simon indicated this item would be a standing agenda item over the coming months.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jansen outlined recent newsletter topics and solicited input for upcoming newsletters. Chairperson Simon volunteered to write the October monthly newsletter item on the polystyrene ban. Commissioner Charrette volunteered to write the final September monthly weekly newsletter on the Oak Park repair café. Mr. Jansen indicated there are number of seasonal newsletter items that can also be recycled. Mr. Jansen inquired about a contact with Roosevelt Green4Good regarding this year's pumpkin smash and that the Village would again promote that this year.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Prior to the discussion communications above, Chairperson Simon discussed the passage of the polystyrene ordinance at the previous night's Village Board meeting. Mr. Jansen discussed the next steps regarding implementation and providing educational notices to the affected food service businesses. The Commission discussed the survey of businesses and identifying which businesses have been impacted. The Commission further discussed the proposed state ban.

9. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 10, 2023

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, October 10, 2023.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lennon to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM.

Sustainability Commission Meeting September 12, 2023

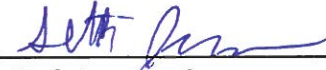
Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Drury

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary