

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 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 7:04 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Commissioners Charrette, Drury, Hayley, Lennon, Mezzatesta, Student Commissioner Stierwalt and Student Commissioner Avalos.

Absent: Chairperson Simon, Commissioner Veazie

Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Commission introduced the new student Commissioner Manolo Avalos, a Senior at Oak Park River Forest High School who also serves as President of the OPRFHS Environmental Club. Manolo briefly introduced himself to the Commission.

One written comment was submitted from resident Caroline Loring concerning the River Forest Park District's plan to install artificial turf at two park locations as part of their 2024 Master Plan. Mr. Jansen indicated it is generally the policy of the Village to defer the decisions of other taxing bodies to those respective elected boards but to ensure that all required ordinances and permits are being met in these instances. Commissioner Charrette provided background on the previous installation of turf at one of the parks and noted that the Sustainability Commission had discussed the environmental impact of that proposal at that time. Commissioner Charrette further noted that it is important that this has been brought to the Commission's attention and that this is important to share with people who feel strongly about the matter. Commissioner Charrette also encouraged everyone to respond to the Park District's survey. Commissioner Mezzatesta stated the Commission should object to the use of artificial turf at any location in the Village. Commissioner Charrette stated any action by the Commission would be a suggestion to the Village Board, and the Board would decide if they had any jurisdiction. Commissioner Charrette further indicated that the Commission could have the most impact by focusing on the sustainability aspects of such issues.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated one typo in the minutes that needs to be corrected. Commissioner Lennon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta to approve the meeting minutes as corrected from January 9, 2024.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Commissioners Charrette, Drury, Hayley, Lennon, and Mezzatesta

Absent: Chairperson Simon, Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. PROPOSED EV CHARGING STATION OVERSTAY FEE ORDINANCE

Mr. Jansen briefly summarized the previous month's discussion on the proposed charging station ordinance. Mr. Jansen indicated that the ChargePoint system cannot support a tiered fee system and that he instead put together a draft ordinance based on the alternate suggestion. Commissioner Charrette provided quick comment for those in attendance on what is trying to be accomplished by establishing a fee to encourage users to not leave their car parked at the charging station. Student Commissioner Avalos inquired about signage to ensure that it is only being used by electric vehicles. Mr. Jansen indicated that current signage indicates only electric vehicles can utilize the space and that the ordinance will provide further clarity, though the Village has authority to enforce the Illinois Vehicle Code, which states only electric vehicles can utilize charging spaces.

The Commission discussed the cap on the fee and ensuring any fee for overstaying at the charging station should be consistent with a parking violation in the Village. The Commission discussed what the hourly fee rate should be, indicating that it should be set at a rate to encourage people to move their vehicle. Mr. Jansen indicated most communities were \$1 or \$2 per hour but begin charging immediately, while one community charged a rate of \$20 per hour after three free hours to encourage people to move their vehicles. The Commission decided to establish the free charging time as a set time, rather than to full charge, to ensure all users have fair access to the charging station, and decided upon 2 hours, which can provide up to 50 miles of charge to a vehicle. Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated that EV owners should not be solely reliant on this charging station but that it should be able to give them enough charge to get to their next location. The Commission decided on two free hours followed by a fee of ten dollars per hour with a cap equal to the amount of a Village parking violation.

Commissioner Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta to recommend to the Village Board of Trustees to approve an ordinance establishing a fee for the Village's Electric Vehicle Charging Station.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Commissioners Charrette, Drury, Hayley, Lennon, and Mezzatesta

Absent: Chairperson Simon, Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

5. UIC PLANNING PROJECT

Mr. Jansen indicated that he had shared the progress reports from the UIC student sections with the Commission and inquired if the Commission had any questions. Commissioner Lennon inquired about when the final report would be produced; Mr. Jansen indicated that would be April 30th. Mr. Jansen indicated a midterm presentation would be the evening of February 27th if any Commissioners were interested in attending virtually or in-person. The Commission indicated they would like to have the zoom link sent to the entire Commission.

One UIC student, Jake, in attendance provided brief comments about the on-going work of his group, as they are narrowing down their focus and action items. He indicated that he is open to any questions from the Commission. Commissioner Lennon indicated interest in electrification in general and not simply limited to electric vehicle charging. Commissioner Charrette indicated one of the progress reports discussed extension of the electric aggregation program and indicated hesitancy about the viability of the electric aggregation program after the current program ends. Mr. Jansen briefly outlined how that process will go following establishment of new Illinois Commerce Commission electric rates in May.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Mezzatesta discussed her communication with the Wednesday Journal and that they would be open to a regular column or letter to the editor. Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated it would be great to also include the Village of Oak Park in the future. Commissioner Mezzatesta stated she wants to take a broad approach, taking some information shared in the newsletter but applying it so residents of any community can use the information. Mr. Jansen stated that, if articles are being submitted by the Sustainability Commission, that the Village communications consultant would need to review prior to submission. Commissioner Mezzatesta further discussed how she would like the tone and format of the articles to be. Student Commissioner Avalos stated it would be good to bring in resident contributions for both Village newsletters and the submissions to the Wednesday Journal. Commissioner Charrette stated that the Commission could use the backlog of articles previously published in the Village newsletter. The Commission further discussed the format and content of potential columns for the Wednesday Journal.

The Commission discussed the Village's social media accounts. Commissioner Drury indicated interest in having active links on the Instagram account. Student Commissioner Avalos indicated that short videos such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts can be very engaging for younger social media users.

Commissioner Mezzatesta stated that the Village should publish relevant metrics in the newsletters and social media. The Commission specifically discussed Electric Vehicle ownership rates in the Village and to how best compile and share that information. The Commission further discussed compost and waste metrics, other electric vehicle metrics, and metrics relating to the ComEd and Nicor efficiency programs. Commissioner Charrette requested a further discussion of annual and quarterly metrics at next month's meeting. Commissioner Lennon discussed some of the energy metrics that he and Commissioner Veazie had previously discussed and noted that its important to discuss the actions being undertaken because some metrics can take years to be realized.

The Commission further discussed reorganizing the Sustainability information on the website and would like to continue discussing it at a future meeting. Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the upcoming planned newsletter and social media posts. Commissioner Charrette volunteered to submit the March monthly newsletter regarding recycling contamination and appropriate ways to dispose of items that cannot be recycled.

7. WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Commissioner Hayley stated that she and Commissioner Drury had met with the River Forest Library about potentially expanding drop off battery recycling at the library. She also indicated that she had compiled several more general questions relating to sustainability and waste; Mr. Jansen stated those questions could be sent to him. The Commission further discussed promoting reuse and recycling of textiles and drop off facilities recycling plastic bags.

8. ELECTRIC VEHICLE READINESS COHORT

Mr. Jansen explained that next month's meeting will discuss potential zoning changes relating to the EV Readiness Cohort and outlined the process for zoning code changes.

9. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – MARCH 12, 2024

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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


Roll Call:

Ayes: Commissioners Charrette, Drury, Hayley, Lennon, and Mezzatesta

Absent: Chairperson Simon, Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary