

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, July 9, 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 7:00 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, Mezzatesta, and Kadlec

Absent: Student Commissioner Stierwalt

Also Present: Commissioner Avalos (attending virtually); Management Analyst Seth Jansen

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Former Commission Co-Chair Eric Simon provided remarks about his time on the Commission and the work the Commission has accomplished. Eric offered his help with the transition and on-boarding of new members. Co-Chair Charrette thanked Eric for his service on the Commission and explained the changes to the Commission make-up over the past 7 years. The Commissioners thanked Eric for his work on the Commission.

**3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Veazie to approve the meeting minutes from June 11, 2024, with a typo correction identified by the Co-Chair Charrette.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, Mezzatesta, and Kadlec

Absent: None

Nays: None

Not Voting: Commissioner Avalos

Motion Passes.

**4. PROPOSED LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the comments provided by the survey sent to the landscape contractors regarding the proposed ordinance. Co-Chair Charrette stated that we should not assume these companies are making the transition already because of Oak Park's ordinance and that the Village should act independently. Co-Chair Charrette suggested a slower adoption timeline and providing incentives to landscape contractors, rather than a punitive

approach. Co-Chair Charrette suggested waiving the annual contractor license fee and promoting companies who use electric leaf blowers on the Village website. Co-Chair Charrette further suggested that the Commission and the Village should look at further ways to help promote adoption of new battery powered technologies and continue to revisit the issue.

Commissioner Mezzatesta expressed desire to explore other issues raised by the landscapers last month. Co-Chair Lennon agreed with taking a different approach but stated that some of the ways to address the issues raised should come from the landscapers. Co-Chair Lennon also suggested taking a seasonal approach initially, while still allowing gas-powered blowers in the spring and fall clean up times. Commissioner Hayley says the Commission and the Village should take into consideration the need to dispose of the batteries in the future.

Commissioner Veazie stated an incremental approach should be taken and tangible progress should be made before further revisiting. Co-Chair Lennon said this could be helpful in learning from early adopts but that a set date should be established for revisiting it. The Commission further discussed the noise issues related to gas-powered leaf blower use. The Commission discussed a potential revised draft to include a license fee waiver for voluntary transition and incorporating in a seasonal ban. The Commission agreed on desire to recognize those who switch to electronic and suggested reaching out to locally based contractors for feedback. Co-Chair Lennon stated the need for further clarity before the Commission votes on it and offered to meet with staff to discuss what the language should state in the ordinance. The Commission discussed getting further feedback from landscape contractors but also discussed getting feedback from residents. Co-Chair Charrette suggested that a survey of residents should also include other sustainability items.

## **5. UIC CLIMATE ACTION PLANS REVIEW**

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined previous discussions and the spreadsheet he had shared with the staff. Commissioner Mezzatesta liked the focus on engagement and education and express support for exploring ways to take those recommendations from the report and incorporate them into communications and community events, potentially partnering with other local groups, such as the library. Commissioner Hayley supported the bus shelter suggestion in one of the reports as a potential way to bolster use of public transportation. Commissioner Hayley suggested that the bike parking suggestion would likely not be utilized as similar existing structures in Oak Park are not regularly utilized. Commissioner Mezzatesta suggested incorporating a public transportation question to the potential survey. Co-Chair Lennon also suggested getting public feedback through a survey to help guide what items to take from the reports and how to best go about engaging with residents on sustainability practices.

Commissioner Hayley offered to draft a survey for the Commission to review further. The Commission discussed potential questions for such a survey, suggestions included use of heat pumps and convection ovens, average miles driven for EV owners, and the previously mentioned leaf blower usage, potential topics of interest for newsletters and communications. The Commission making sure the questions are targeted so that the results

can produce actionable items and results for the issues residents care most about. The Commission discussed ways to engage with other groups and across a diverse age range, including potentially with the universities and the high school environmental club. The Commission inquired about how the survey can be constructed and distributed. Co-Chair Charrette asked about getting feedback from Village staff about what can and can't be implemented from the UIC reports and using that feedback to further narrow the focus of the actions the Commission should take.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Jansen outlined the planned communications calendar for the coming month. Commissioner Mezzatesta said she would continue to provide sustainability articles tied to various national recognition days. Co-Chair Charrette suggested resharing the LRS postcard on social media or in the newsletter.

Co-Chair Charrette inquired about compostable cups and similar materials not being accepted in the Village composting program and requested information be put out for residents explaining which types are and are not accepted. Co-Chair Charrette further inquired about how potential contamination is further processed out at compost facilities.

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the new quarterly EV report he provided to the Commission. The Commission inquired about the overstay fees at the charging station and about further feedback from the public.

Co-Chair Charrette discussed the composting issues raised by the Village Board and wanted to emphasize that cost and cart sharing is a way to further reduce costs and participation when the Village transitions to universal composting. The Commission discussed potential cost estimates for universal composting.

Commissioner Hayley said she had reached out to LRS and has two potential dates for tours of an LRS facility and will email the rest of the Commissioners with those dates.

Co-Chair Charrette introduced the newly appointed Commission Kadlec who briefly provided some background about himself.

## **7. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING - AUGUST 13, 2024**

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, August 13, 2024.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta, to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chairs Charrette and Lennon, Commissioners Veazie, Hayley, Mezzatesta,  
and Kadlec

Absent: None

Nays: None

Not Voting: Commissioner Avalos

Motion Passes.

  
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Seth Jansen, Secretary