

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 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 Mezzatesta, Kadlec, Avalos, Veazie (arriving at 7:03) and Student Commissioner Stierwalt.

Absent: Commissioner Hayley

Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mezzatesta, to allow Commissioner Hayley to participate remotely pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/7).

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Commissioner Hayley

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Commissioner Hayley added to the roll.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Patrick Hosty of Clinton Pl spoke in support of the proposed leaf blower ordinance and expressed concern of the noise generated by gas-powered blowers

Ray McDonald of Jackson Ave spoke in support of the proposed leaf blower ordinance. He stated he practiced as a physician for 52 years and discussed the health and hearing impacts of exposure to even short amounts of exposure to high decibel sound. He provided some informational material to the Commission and noted that other communities and states have already enacted such bans.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Co-Chair Charrette to approve the meeting minutes from December 10, 2024.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Mezzatesta stated she had outlined a list of National and International Days that relate to sustainability and that some of these days can be incorporated into the weekly and monthly newsletters articles from the Commission. Commissioner Mezzatesta briefly highlighted some items on the list as ideas for future newsletter articles.

Commissioner Avalos attended a food waste webinar and suggested finding ways to highlight how food waste is generated and ways to eliminate food waste even before diversion from garbage to compost. Commissioner Avalos also commended the River Forest Police Department for their purchase of the Village's first Electric Vehicle.

5. PROPOSED LEAF BLOWER ORDINANCE

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the updated draft leaf blower ordinance following feedback from the Board and staff. Mr. Jansen also stated the Board had requested that other communities be analyzed, specifically those who formed a regional working group on the topic in the north suburbs. Mr. Jansen outlined that report and explained the input provided by staff.

Co-Chair Lennon requested further clarification to specifically state that the ban on generators being used to power electric leaf blowers is fuel-powered or gas-powered combustion engine generators. Co-Chair Lennon did raise concern about the existing definition of what qualifies as a contractor. Co-Chair Lennon wanted to ensure that the ban applies to all and there is not a loophole relating to who qualifies as a contractor. Mr. Jansen explained that only the rebate portion of the draft would apply to contractors, and the ban would apply to all users of gas-powered leaf blowers.

Co-Chair Charrette had asked about the dates that seasonal bans take effect was consistent with the other communities. Co-Chair Charrette requested the draft ordinance be amended by changing the end date of the initial seasonal ban from September 1 to September 15. The Commission agreed to these changes.

Commissioner Veazie requested clarification on what has been changed since the most recent previous draft the Commission reviewed. Mr. Jansen summarized the changes. Co-Chair Lennon asked about the process for adoption after their recommendation, and Mr. Jansen explained the subsequent steps. Co-Chair Charrette requested that a provision be added to one of the whereas provisions in the ordinance stating that the timeframe is subject to change based on technological advancements.

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Veazie to recommend the Village Board adopt an ordinance regulating the use of gas-powered leaf blowers within the Village and to incentivize the use of electric leaf blowers by landscape contractors operating within the Village.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Commission discussed how to notify contractors upon official passage and suggested highlighting the first company to voluntarily make the transition within the Village newsletter.

6. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MEMBER RECOGNITION DISCUSSION

Mr. Jansen briefly outlined the memo he provided to staff. Commissioner Hayley outlined the list of draft recognition topics she had created that was included in the memo. Commissioner Hayley solicited Commission input for how to simplify the list by reducing the number and making the list more tangible for households to achieve. The Commission discussed how to best track and measure the achievement of the draft goals outlined in the list. Commissioner Veazie inquired about Oak Park's program for community recognition. Commissioner Avalos indicated he would reach out to the Chair of Oak Park's Environment and Energy Commission to understand what their program and process is. The Commission discussed that the list be a pledge for residents to take and work towards specific benchmarks for each item. The Commission discussed establishing set criteria and have it be self-driven or an honor system for residents to undertake the actions. The Commission further discussed finding opportunities to highlight residents and businesses for their sustainable actions. The Commission discussed some sort of visual recognition, like a yard sign or window sticker, to recognize the residents. Commissioner Hayley stated she would look into what other communities are doing. The Commission recommended developing some small basic steps first and then have the Commission add more complex or advanced items over time. Commissioner Kadlec suggested developing a form for residents to self-report. The Commission discussed ways to promote participation, make things as easy, voluntary, and self-paced as possible. The Commission suggested use of the online surveys to solicit input for residents who wished to share or promote their sustainable actions. The Commission discussed potential formats to make it easier for residents to respond to.

The Commission discussed the compost rates by block and the plan to recognize the 900 Block of Bonnie Brae in a weekly newsletter as the lead composting block with 11 households, or 65% of the block, being subscribed to the Curbside Composting Program.

7. UIC CLIMATE PLAN - RESILIENCE RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION

Mr. Jansen outlined the memo he had drafted on the UIC Climate Plan resilience-related recommendations. Commissioner Mezzatesta suggested the waste diversion recommendations be tied in with the existing newsletter and communications process. Mr. Jansen jumped ahead to the Communications part of the agenda and noted the LRS trip the Commission had taken as the monthly newsletter and that the weekly articles for the month would also focus on recycling-related topics: effective curbside recycling, plastic bag and film recycling drop off locations, textile recycling, and promotion of the Cook County Center for Hard to Recycle Materials Center. The Commission discussed further communications to promote sustainable actions. Commissioner Avalos suggested also sharing the One Earth Collective's sustainability calendar for additional events. Commissioner Lennon suggested merging the resilience related items within the UIC Climate Plans into the list of sustainable actions and goals for residents. Commissioner Veazie suggested finding people within the community who are knowledgeable on the various sustainability topics within the Climate Plans and engaging with them to share information through the Commissions communications channels.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jansen briefly summarized the upcoming communications plan for the Commission newsletter articles, and the Commission made further topic suggestions. Mr. Jansen summarized the Quarterly EV Charging Report provided to the Commission. Mr. Jansen provided an update on the ongoing EV Charging Station Installation Project and indicated that a discussion on fee structures for the new charging stations would come to the Commission in the coming months.

Commissioner Kadlec stated he was interested in discussing light pollution. The Commission discussed a previous meeting in which a resident presented on the issues surrounding light pollution and previous communications put out on the topic. The Commission suggested reusing those communications in the near future.

Commissioner Avalos raised interest in filling the vacant student commissioner position. The Commission discussed potential ways to fill the vacancy.

9. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING - FEBRUARY 11, 2025

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Avalos, to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None
Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary

