

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, May 13, 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-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon (arriving at 7:03), Commissioners Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, Avalos, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt.

Absent: Commissioner Veazie

Also Present: Management Analyst Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hayley to approve the meeting minutes from April 8, 2025.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Commissioners Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos.

Absent: Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Mezzatesta indicated she was still drafting potential newsletter articles relating to misconceptions in the comments of the community survey. Co-Chair Charrette indicated she attended Commissioner Mezzatesta's Earth Month presentation at the River Forest Library. Commissioner Avalos stated he is on the steering committee for the Chicago Youth Climate Justice Summit, which will be held at DePaul in October. Commissioner Avalos also stated he would be attending the Illinois Environmental Council lobby day in Springfield and proposed discussing switching the Village facilities from paper towels to hand dryers. Commissioner Avalos also noted the Aspen Ideas Conference on Climate Change is occurring in Chicago May 22 to May 25. Co-Chair Charrette noted there is still some contamination at the pump station compost drop off location and requested an additional sticker on the compost cart and potentially adding a recycling cart at the location.

5. CONTINUED VILLAGE SOLAR EFFORTS

Mr. Jansen outlined the Switch Together Solar program. Mr. Jansen noted the only commitment for a community would be promotion of the program and that any residential participation would be completely voluntary. Co-Chair Lennon inquired about the use of the Village logo and if the Village attorney had any issue with use of the Village logo or the Village endorsing the program. Co-Chair Charrette expressed support given the participation of the Citizens Utility Board in the program. Commissioner Mezzatesta expressed support for the positions of both Co-Chair Lennon and Co-Chair Charrette

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Avalos, to recommend the Village become a promotional partner for the Switch Together Chicagoland solar program subject to the approval of the Village attorney for use of the Village logo.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos.

Absent: Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Mr. Jansen provided updates for ongoing solar programs and projects. The community solar farm, for which the Village pump station and street lighting accounts will serve as the anchor tenant, should be online later this year. Mr. Jansen stated expected savings is approximately \$8000 per year; Co-Chair Charrette indicated that, given the rising cost of energy, savings may be even more than that. Mr. Jansen indicated he has been in discussion with MC2 to coordinate another round of community solar sign-up post cards, which would come at no cost to the Village, and the Village would have new info in the Village newsletter and on social media to promote the residential community solar program. Mr. Jansen also noted the new fiscal year includes capital project money budgeted for a rooftop solar installation at the Public Works Garage to make IT a net zero facility. Commissioner Mezzatesta suggested further information on community solar to promote both the Village facility program and encourage residents to sign-up for the residential community solar program. Co-Chair Charrette also suggested tracking the metrics and savings for the Village's community solar accounts once they are up and running. The Commission discussed ways to highlight the savings in order to encourage residents to enroll in the residential community solar program. Co-Chair Charrette requested the Commission receive an updated report on Village rooftop solar permits.

6. MAYORS MONARCH PLEDGE

Mr. Jansen summarized the Village's commitments for the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors Monarch Pledge. Mr. Jansen outlined the draft proclamation and draft webpage. Co-Chair Charrette suggested the Village highlight the Forest Preserve's Monarch event that is held in the fall each year. The Commission suggested edits and revisions to the Monarch webpage on the Village website including preferred species of milkweed, recent population

growth of the eastern monarch, and Village efforts on the topic. Commissioner Kadlec suggested adding regional events to the website for Pollinator Week and that he would contact the Library about a potential book display for Pollinator Week.

Commissioner Mezzatesta made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Avalos to recommend the Village Board of Trustees adopt a Proclamation recognizing Pollinator Week June 16-22, 2025.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos.

Absent: Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. RIVER FOREST SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARD DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kadlec outlined the revisions he made to the proposed scorecard with the tiers still being how difficult the action is to undertake, as opposed to impact of the action. The Commission discussed potential changes to some actions and seeking clarity on the formatting of the scorecard and interdependence of the actions. The Commission discussed the best formats and actions to encourage people to undertake actions.

Mr. Jansen noted that the nomination form has not received any submissions, but he planned to plug the form into the weekly newsletter in a couple of weeks.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jansen outlined planned communication for the next month. Mr. Jansen briefly highlighted the info on materials collected as part of the EcoShip collection drive. The Commission requested the Village look into hosting a permanent drop off location or hosting another material drive during the winter holidays. Commissioner Hayley volunteered to draft an article for the shoe donation/recycling program at DSW. Commissioner Mezzatesta asked if any Commissioners had specific topics or categories that should be addressed to develop misconceptions from the resident survey. Commissioner Hayley noted she most frequently gets questions about what can and can't be recycled and suggested that be a topic.

9. STAFF UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jansen informed the Commission about the tree planting event with CN Railway and America In Bloom being held as part of the grant awarded by CN and AIB. The grant had also initially required a two-day tour of the community, but this will be replaced with a self assessment form, included in the packet, and solicited commission feedback for the self-assessment. Mr. Jansen requested any Commissioners who choose to complete part of the assessment send their scores back to him prior to the next month's meeting. Mr. Jansen also invited the Commissioners to the tree planting event on June 23rd.

Mr. Jansen briefly noted the plan to convert the Village Hall parking lot into a permeable paver parking lot in partnership with the MWRD. Mr. Jansen outlined the quarterly waste report. The Commission discussed further promoting the compost program. Mr. Jansen provided a brief update for the progress of the EV Charging Station installation project.

10. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JUNE 10, 2025

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, June 10, 2025.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Avalos made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kadlec, to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM.


Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Hayley, Mezzatesta, Kadlec, and Avalos.

Absent: Commissioner Veazie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary