

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 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, Commissioners Kadlec, Hoyt, Beckman, Schaidler, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt (arriving at 7:02)

Absent: Commissioner Avalos

Also Present: Staff Liaison Seth Jansen

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Schaidler, to approve the meeting minutes from June 9, 2026.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Kadlec, Hoyt, Beckman, and Schaidler

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Avalos

Motion Passes.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Schaidler spoke with the Park District and shared information on new work being undertaken by a Park District contractor to maintain prairie grass and wetland and to prevent weeds and invasive plants on and around the Keystone Park sledding hill and retention pond. He indicated the Park District doesn't have any current plans for pollinator gardens, but he stated the Park District is currently seeking feedback for their new 3-year plan. Commissioner Schaidler and Co-Chair Charrette both suggested encouraging residents to completed the Park District survey. The Commission discussed and shared their thoughts and agreed that the Commission's role would be to share and promote the survey. The Commission further discussed continuing to build a relationship between the Commission and the Park District and finding opportunities for collaboration, particularly with regard to native and pollinator planting.

Commissioner Schaidler inquired about having a native plant installation in front of Village Hall. Mr. Jansen provided an informal update regarding the Heritage Square project at Park and Lake and indicated that the northwest corner would be filled with native and perennial plants. Commissioner Schaidler inquired about, and Mr. Jansen provided a more general

update regarding the square. Commissioner Schaidler inquired about use of the aggregation program funds to expand native planting at this location.

Co-Chair Charrette promoted Chicago Climate Week and the upcoming events that will be happening. Co-Chair Charrette also raised an issue she encountered regarding tree cover impact on homeowners insurance and indicated she wanted to raise awareness of the issue given the tree coverage of most homes in the Village. Commissioner Kadlec indicated that Commissioner Avalos, who was unable to attend the meeting, had suggested discussing the Madison St. Development from a Sustainability perspective, noting that the topic had been raised by a resident at the last public hearing. Mr. Jansen explained the specific approval process for planned developments and that any conditions for approval would be made by the Development Review Board. Mr. Jansen indicated that additional opportunity for public comment on the project would be when the Board considers the project. Co-Chair Lennon did note that the project aligned with what the UIC graduate students had provided with their climate plans for the Village, specifically having multifamily residential facility near public transit.

5. BIRD CITY ILLINOIS AND MIGRATORY BIRDS

Commissioner Hoyt stated that the previous week was the final week of nighthawk monitor and that he is beginning to compile and review the data. Commissioner Hoyt indicated he will try to have a review to share with the Commission for the next meeting, indicating that some volunteers had produced high-quality observations and information on nighthawks locally. Commissioner Hoyt stated that he intended to discuss the data with the Commission in August and decide what to do with it. Commissioner Beckman volunteered to review and provide analysis for the data. The Commission discussed the future of the project. Commissioner Hoyt noted that he had discussed keeping a gravel corner of the rooftop at Roosevelt Middle School where nesting nighthawks had been observed. Commissioner Hoyt discussed other potential rooftop locations that could be observed in the future and institutions who are interested in the project. Commissioner Hoyt stated the long-term goal is to inform the public and develop information on rooftops that can be used by nighthawks. Commissioner Hoyt stated there will be a meeting for all the volunteers and indicated some had indicated they'd like to participate in monitoring next year as well. Co-Chair Charrette suggested sharing the final information with Oak Park as well, since some of the observations occurred in Oak Park as well. The Commission discussed where and how to present the findings of the project, particularly if it offers insight in how to preserve the habitats nighthawks need. The Commission discussed how this project has raised awareness and can continue to raise awareness through communications, future actions, and potential policy changes.

Following the Bird City discussion, Co-Chair Charrette observed many milkweed plantings observed throughout the Village and inquired about a way to quantify it. Commissioner Kadlec explained the crowdsourcing effort done at Triton College using the iNaturalist app, where students counted the milkweed plants throughout campus. Co-Chair Charrette suggested doing a similar project in the Village and potentially engaging the Go Green and student groups. Co-Chair Charrette indicated it could then be mapped and repeated in future

years to see if there is any growth or expansion in milkweed planting; such a project could be incorporated into the Mayors Monarch Pledge.

Commissioner Beckman indicated he needed to depart.

6. GREEN BUILDING GUIDE

Mr. Jansen shared the draft webpage for the Green Building Guide for Electrification. Mr. Janse indicated that Commissioner Beckman had already provided some edits. Mr. Jansen indicated further edits to the heat pump and induction stove guides already on the Village website. Mr. Jansen shared the survey results sent out to HVAC and Mechanical contractors regarding heat pump installation, indicating few responded but did provide helpful information. Mr. Jansen outlined the permitting information and the benefits of switching to electrical appliances. Mr. Jansen summarized the draft graphics developed by the Department's intern to serve as a handout one-pager and a social media post graphic. Mr. Jansen solicited feedback on the graphics and webpage prior to going live with them and beginning to promote the guide in the newsletter and on social media. Co-Chair Lennon provided some feedback regarding the layout of the graphics on the one-page document and offered some suggested edits. Mr. Jansen indicated he would incorporate all the suggested edits and the ones previously emailed to him by Commissioner Beckman. Mr. Jansen raised the idea of continuing the Green Building Guides to include future guides for Weatherization and for Green Building Materials. Mr. Jansen stated that specific input and research would be needed for sustainable building materials. Co-Chair Lennon suggested including green roofing materials and adding sustainable building practices as part of the guide.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Jansen introduced the quarterly electric vehicle report, which shows the Level 2 charger at Village Hall being the most used charger but noted the increase in overall charging is tied to the increase usage of the Franklin Ave. fast chargers. Commissioner Schaidler had general questions on charging capabilities, the revenue generated, the funding used for installation of the chargers, and the charging fees for users.

Mr. Jansen outlined the updated solar energy report and the ComEd infographic, which included community solar enrollment and net metered solar installations. The ComEd data indicated more residents had enrolled in Community Solar programs beyond the Village program. There was a discrepancy in ComEd net metering solar data when compared to the Village permitting data on solar installations. Mr. Jansen indicated that the rebate and energy efficiency information provided by ComEd would be promoted on social media to highlight utilization and encourage more participation. The Commission discussed local solar projects and the discrepancy.

Mr. Jansen finally shared the infographic highlighting the Village's conversion to biodiesel for diesel-fueled vehicles and equipment in the Village fleet. Mr. Jansen provided brief general updates for the Public Works Garage solar installation project, the Village Hall permeable paver parking lot project, and the Heritage Square project.

Student Commissioner Stierwalt indicated he would be interested in helping find a new Student Commission as he will be graduating at the end of the forthcoming school year and

wanted to begin the search. Co-Chair Lennon suggested a newsletter article with Student Commissioner Stierwalt sharing his experience to encourage other students to apply.

Co-Chair Charrette suggested members begin thinking about other taxing bodies and local institutions that each member could serve as a liaison with in order to build relationships and create further community partnerships.

8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – AUGUST 11, 2026

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, August 11, 2026

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Kadlec, Hoyt, and Schaidler

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Avalos and Beckman

Motion Passes.



Seth Jansen, Secretary