



## VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Thursday, November 14, 2019 – 7:00 PM  
Village Hall – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 400 Park Ave.,  
River Forest, IL

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from the 9/4/2019 Sustainability Commission Meeting
4. Commissioner Reports and Updates
5. Go Green-Oak Park-Preemption
6. PlanItGreen Letter of Intent
7. Bike Plan Implementation and Bike Fix It Station Update
8. Clean Energy Jobs Act Programs
9. Goals for 2020-Matrix All American City Awards Discussion
10. Announcements
  - a. Holiday Lights
  - b. Climate Reality Nov. 20-21
  - c. Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> PlanItGreen Institutional Forum Breakfast
  - d. Municipal Arboretum Update
11. Schedule Next Meeting – TBD
12. Adjournment



**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, September 4, 2019 – 7:00 PM**

A regular meeting of the River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 7:00 pm. The meeting was conducted in the Community Room at the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Ave, River Forest.

**Roll Call and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. Present at the meeting were Commissioners Moller, Cheng, Basney, Simon, Charrette, Raidt, and Gillis.

**Adoption of Meeting Minutes from June 19, 2019 Meeting**

Cheng made a motion to approve, Moller seconded, and all approved.

**Public Comment**

None

**Welcome Student Commissioner**

We welcomed our new student commissioner, Ellie Raidt, to her first Sustainability Commission meeting.

**Commissioner Reports on Meetings**

- Commissioner Simon reported he is working on the best way to implement the bike plan.
- Commissioner Gillis attended her last PlanItGreen meeting on July 16, meeting notes attached. Susan Charrette will be attending going forward. She has also been in contact with the Trinity High School Gardening Club regarding the installation of an Edible Inspiration Garden and two Pollinators for Parkways gardens. David Murphy of Deep Roots is working with them on plans for installation. She also participated in a teleconference call with Gary Cuneen from PlanItGreen and the OPRF Infant Welfare Society regarding their desire to apply for a Sun Club grant to pay for installation of solar panels on the roof of their new building at 28 Madison St in Oak Park.
- Commissioner Raidt reported that she is a member of It's Our Future, the newly formed youth arm of PlanItGreen. She is also hoping to join the Environmental Club at OPRF.
- Commissioner Moller reported she had attended the Climate Reality Project in Minneapolis where Al Gore emphasized the need to move more quickly towards renewable energy by (1) electing new leadership, and (2) drawing down our emissions shuttering more coal plants.

- Commissioner Cheng did not attend any meetings, but learned three things working at the Food Truck Rally. (1) critical to have someone at the SIO station, (2) bring plastic gloves next time, and (3) talk to the Rotary Club about using a reusable cup for the beer vendors.
- Commissioner Basney met with Matt Gomez to discuss improving the Des Plaines River Trail, specifically the part running through River Forest from North Avenue to Madison Ave. \$10 million is needed to fund Phase 2. Basney also met with Eric Krzystofiak, the general manager of Wheel & Sprocket. located at 1118 Westgate Street in Oak Park. They have a foundation set up that could provide River Forest with a bicycle fix-it station (pump, tools) and they would maintain it as well. A possible location is Keystone Park west.

## **PlantGreen Report Card Presentations 2019**

- Overview of PlantGreen - A 10-year plan completed in 2011 is an environmental sustainability plan for Oak Park and River Forest and includes all major taxing bodies and institutions in its implementation.
- Purpose of the Report Card - the dual purpose is to give the community a snapshot of progress made and to encourage institutions in the two villages to align with the plan.
- Climate Crisis Context - The world's leading climate scientists have warned there are only 12 years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5c, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat, and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. Carbon pollution would have to be cut by 45% by 2030 and come down to zero by 2050.
- Nine Topic Area Grades and Key Factors
  - Energy (D- trend neutral) - per capita energy use since 2014 in OP has increased; renewable energy procurement for OP and RF has been at 4% for the past 6 years.
  - Transportation (B- trend positive) - OP's Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) has consistently decreased - 17% since 2007. OP walk score is at 78, RF at 38. Public transit ridership has dipped across the country, largely due to ride share apps.
  - Education (B-trend positive) - OEFF, Green Block Parties, Community Events - need for more systemic education about climate change and other pressing environmental issues.
  - Waste (C-trend neutral) - RF crossed the 50% diversion goal, OP at 42%. Total material generation has decreased in RF but not in OP.
  - Water (B- trend positive) - RF's water use has decreased 22% since 2009 and OP 19%. This is a very positive trend line.
  - Food (B - trend positive) - Food recovery collections and servings have increased, school and community-based gardens feeding kids and people in need, lots of choices for local, sustainable food.
  - Community Development (B-trend positive) - Green alley installations, RF Sustainability Commission providing more systemic focus and structure, infrastructure developments with an eye toward sustainability (Madison Street).
  - Economic Development (B-trend positive) - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) high rises (less cars, density, public transit, support downtown shops), new green developments.

- Open Space/Ecosystems (A-trend positive) - Native plant/pollinator gardens have exceeded the projects 500 goal target, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at D97

#### Recommendations for Next Steps Moving Forward: Village of River Forest

1. Continue to work through the RF Sustainability Commission to prioritize and implement strategies that support community goals outlined in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest.
2. Explore feasibility of strategies for increasing compost program participation, including establishing an “opt-out” program.
3. Develop Energy Road Map toward 100% renewable electricity for the Village of RF that integrates with the PlanItGreen energy road mapping process and achieves 45% renewable energy procurement by 2030.

#### **Bike Plan Potential Funding Options**

Commissioner Basney gave an update on the Bike Plan. Phase 1 is to introduce bicycle friendly policy and programs. New construction should be friendly to bike riders. Need for a bike parking policy. Safety materials and bike parking at all community events. The bike system map will be added to the village website. Free bicycle registration events will be offered with a focus on policies, education, and enforcement. There will be some signage posted on routes, preferably added to existing sign poles. There is a \$30 billion transportation capital bill pending, the II Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) which grants up to \$2 million in funds. \$33,000 has been budgeted by Public Works to add lines for bike lanes.

Commissioner Basney had to leave the meeting at 8:20 pm.

#### **Green Block Parties/Parkway for Pollinators**

- We have formally distributed 19 of the 20 Parkways for Pollinator Gardens available during the 2019 calendar year including 4 to be planted and maintained by school sponsored clubs (e.g., 2 @ Lincoln School - Lincoln School Green 4 Good Kids Club and 2 @ Trinity High School - Trinity High School Gardening Club). We have also “spruced up” three P4P Shade Gardens on the west side of town that were not thriving due to the deer amongst other reasons. \$500 was approved to ‘spruce up’ the three P4P Gardens!
- We have 4 Edible Inspiration Gardens in place with 2 pending installation: 1) @ Dominican - Dominican has not yet determined the location for their garden and 2) @ Trinity High School - Trinity was just awarded a garden and is in the process of identifying the best location.
  - o We should consider rescinding the award to Dominican which has been wrestling with where to place it for over one year.
- 2019 YTD block party counts: 32 permit applications were approved for block parties (including one birthday party) with one cancellation.
  - o The 31 active applications include 25 requests for SIO Stations (81% of all active permits) of which 21 requests were fulfilled (86% of all SIO Station requests). Of those SIO request fulfilled, three were not fulfilled at the quantity requested by the resident. Reasons provided for not using a SIO Station include the lack of access to composting. The Village of River Forest is not always able to deliver SIO Stations per resident request because we only have five SIO Stations.
  - o The 31 active applications included 16 requests for a P4P Garden (52% of active permits) of which all requests were fulfilled either on the date of the Block Party or at a subsequent mutually agreeable date. The primary reason for not planting a P4P

Garden is the inability to identify someone to care for the P4P Garden long term with a secondary reason that the activity was part of a previous block party.

- We have 7 requests YTD in 2019 for SIO Stations outside of the block party process (e.g., private parties -- 2, RF Tennis Club Swim Finals, One Earth Film Festival Film Show at the RF Library, RF Library Touch a Truck Event, LemonAid 9/11 Fundraiser). All were fulfilled at the quantity requested.
- Note that there are times when demand for SIO Stations exceeds supply. We should consider the purchase of a sixth SIO Station!

### Healthy Lawns / Healthy Families (HL/HF)

- We now have one spreadsheet with a list of all HL/HF pledges going back to 2015 inclusive of 2019 pledges.
- An email requesting pledge reconfirmation was distributed in June 2019, with two follow-up reminder emails going out in July and August.
- We should consider re-inventing this program as we have no new pledges sourced from Block Parties in 2019 because most block party attendees are at their event year over year. As a result, they have been exposed to the HL/HF Program repeatedly. Those who want to participate have already signed up. Note that there are many residents who abide by the pledge but prefer not to display a sign in their yard.
- Program statistics to date:

Category	Count as of June 16	Count as of July 9	Count as of September 1
# of Unique Residential Households that Pledged from 2015-2018	137	137	137
# of 2019 Online Pledges	0	3	6
# of 2019 Block Party Pledges	0	0	0
Total # of Original Pledges	137	140	143
# of RF Institutions in Program (Schools & Parks)	13	13	13
# of Households Who Pledged but Have Subsequently Moved Out of Town	3	3	4
# of Households that Pledged in 2015-2018 & Reconfirmed Their Ongoing Participation	32	52	66
# of Households that Pledged in 2015-2018 & Informed RFSC that They No Longer Adhere to Program Criteria	0	7	7
# of Households with No / Bad Email	23	24	23
# of Households that Pledged in 2015-2018 Who Have Not Replied to the Reconfirmation Email	79	51	37

### New Business

#### Climate Victory Garden Map

- All village, park district, and P4P native plantings have been input to the Green America Climate Victory Garden for easy access to the information in support of future grant applications. Only the above mentioned native gardens have been included, gardens on residential properties were not added to the map. As of today, over 27,000 square feet of edible and/or native gardens have been planted by the Village. The following gardens are included on the map:
  - **River Forest Park District:** 12 native gardens @ 17, 656 square feet
  - **River Forest Public Works:** 4 native gardens @ 779 square feet plus 14 rain gardens @ 7,947 square feet for a total of 18 gardens @ 8,726 square feet
  - **River Forest Sustainability Commission (through The Deep Roots Project):** 15 P4P Gardens planted in 2018 @ 40 square feet per garden for a total of 600 square feet plus an expansion of one of those gardens in 2019 for an incremental 40 square feet
    - The remaining 2019 P4P Gardens will be input in Q4 2019
- Green American has requested that the River Forest Sustainability Commission submit to them our “story;” in other words, how the village has put it place over 27,000 square feet of native plantings within a two-year period. Julie Moller is working on that article complete with visuals to be featured prominently on the [www.greenamerica.org](http://www.greenamerica.org) website.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm

**Next Meeting: October 8, 7 pm.**

## APPENDIX A

**PlanItGreen July 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes** submitted by Lisa Gillis

- Lots of new faces
  - Ellie Raidt (the new student commissioner for the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission as well as a member of “It’s Our Future”)
  - Jess Senger (a senior at OPRF and a member of “It’s Our Future” who will be pursuing a BS degree in environmental science upon high school graduation)
  - Doris Davenport (radio host involved in the “It’s Our Future” initiative)
  - A representative from Concordia (I did not get her name)
  - Laura Maychruk representing D90’s Green4Good Program

### Bees

- The Oak Park Library Bee Hive is established and doing well. Library Trustees are contemplating the installation of a “bee cam” because there are no visitors allowed on the roof due to the absence of railings. Some things to note about bees in the area:
  - o Many bee hives across the state of Illinois are having trouble establishing and remaining strong. The OPRF Park District has reached out to more than 15 park districts around the state to learn why.
  - o Honey Bees are not native to this area; they are used to support agriculture, traveling from location to location to aid the pollination process.
  - o Honey Bees are plagued by pesticides, herbicides and mites; need to go chemical free as well as plant green space and native flowers to give them a fighting chance.
  - o Honey Bees might actually negatively impact native bee species in the area.

### Community Works

- Community Works provides the funding for PlanItGreen.
- The PlanItGreen Guidance Committee is meeting on July 17 to determine the future of PlanItGreen given that the ten-year plan will be complete at the end of 2020.

### “It’s Our Future”

- “It’s Our Future” is the youth arm of PlanItGreen.
- Goal is to equip OPRF youth with the knowledge and information that the need to fight climate change.
- The deadline to apply is September 7; thus far, there are 22 applicants from D90, D97, D200 & Concordia. All applicants will be welcomed to participate!
- Expect to have much support from the OPRF HS Environmental Club, D90 Green4Good and D97 Green Clubs at Brooks and Julian Middle Schools.
- Cassandra West is leading the Media Workshops; Doris Davenport is providing training in radio and podcasts.
- “It’s Our Future” monthly meetings will start on September 22 at 7pm.

- The annual Interfaith Climate Committee Breakfast is taking place on October 17 from 8am to 9:30am; they would love to have participation from “It’s Our Future” students.
- PlanItGreen is working to support student participation in national and international Climate Change meetings both logistically and financially.
  - o Youth Climate Summit at the UN in NYC on September 21, 2019 (<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/youth-summit.shtml>)
  - o Santiago (Chile) Climate Change Conference in December 2019 (<https://unfccc.int/Santiago>)

A word on the Climate Crisis – PR experts have stated that in order for the general population to believe that we have a problem, they need to hear the words “we are in a Climate Crisis” over and over. With this in mind, keep saying it!

#### PlanItGreen 2018 Report Card Presentations

- D90 completed at the Green4Good meeting on July 15, 2019
- VRF on July 22, 2019
- RFSC on September 4, 2019
- D97 on July 16, 2019 - there will be residents in the audience who will passionately advocate for D97 to develop and implement a sustainability plan
- Need to schedule VOP and D200

#### More Information on the Green4Good Meeting on July 15, 2019

- Shared the PlanItGreen 2018 Report Card including the following additional context and messaging:
  - o Any school district in the country needs to include information on climate change as part of the standard curriculum.
  - o Schools must stay involved in the energy road mapping exercise as well as define their own mapping plan to 100% renewable energy.
  - o Schools are encouraged to pursue 100% renewable energy through installation of solar panels or the purchase of community solar.
- Presented the Green4Good Status Report.
- Completed leadership transition to a new team composed of parents with students in D90.

#### Solar Energy Update

- What is the Future Energy Jobs Act? This policy passed the IL State Legislature two years ago. It provides funding to solar developers to incentivize them to build more solar with an eye toward benefitting low income families. It has taken some time to get things off the ground, but progress is being made at a glacier pass; we will soon see that progress!
- One megawatt will power 150 homes or 250 apartments.
- Funding for consumer installation of their own solar panels is pretty even in terms of supply and demand; however, consumer installation is not viable for all due to roof characteristics and/or tree cover.
- Community Solar is the most popular source of solar because it does not require residential solar installation. Community Solar is way over-subscribed. Demand is now 10x the amount funded.
- Community Solar installers are working with others for distribution; there is a ton of partnering and purchasing across state lines.
- Solar farms generating 75 megawatts across IL will be built in 2019.

- Seven Generations Ahead is working with “Power Market” to distribute Community Power in IL
  - o The online registration portal is not yet created.
  - o The primary purpose of the online portal is to gauge consumer interest. The secondary purpose is facilitating subscriptions.
  - o We have a “chicken and egg” situation as Community Power will only build the solar farms if they have a subscription rate of 50%.
  - o A question was asked about the pricing for Community Power: Will it be a competitive price? It will be less expensive than the ComEd default price, but consumers could find a cheaper price on their own.
- Community Faith Outreach will meet in October to make sense of all of the energy legislation in Springfield that has not yet become law.

#### Green Mountain Energy (Texas) Sun Club

- The ribbon cutting for the updated Oak Park Conservatory took place on June 22 with Don Harmon as well as 40 to 50 other guests in attendance.
- A representative from Green Mountain Energy in Texas was also in attendance; Green Mountain Energy gave the Oak Park Conservatory a Sun Club Grant of \$300,000 to put in solar and other sustainable features.
- Green Mountain Energy wants to do more in Illinois! It will take a year or two for funds earmarked for Illinois to be replenished.
- The Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society will be pursuing a Sun Club grant to put solar on their new building at 28 Madison Street in Oak Park. Toward this end, they are meeting with Gary Cuneen from PlanItGreen at the end of July to define a path forward in pursuit of a large grant like that received by the Oak Park Conservatory.
- The criteria for a project to be funded by a Sun Club Grant are: 1) push down the cost of energy, 2) have a positive impact on the environment; 3) drive community engagement.

#### SEIN Energy Roadmap

- There was a meeting during the week of July 8 to move things forward.
- There are four committees, all looking for resident participation.
  1. Education and Communication Strategy
  2. Community Choice Aggregation Analysis
  3. Energy Efficiency Strategy
  4. Energy Road mapping Project Scope, Data Needs, Funding and RFP Development
- Committees will start meeting in early to mid-August.
- The next cross-committee meeting is September 18 from 12noon to 1:30pm.

#### Oak Park Energy Contract

- The contract with MC2 (e.g., MC Squared) is up this year; discussion about renewal is taking place at the next Oak Park Village Meeting.
  - o The contract with MC2 was put in place in 2013 when the Village of Oak Park walked away from a 100% renewable energy contract to save money.
  - o Energy purchased from MC2 is only 3% solar with most of it from coal and other fossil fuels; hence, the term “dirty” energy
  - o The expectation from the Village of Oak Park Board is that those residents who wanted 100% renewable energy would purchase it on their own.
  - o The Village of Oak Park gave up their leadership position in sustainability with the move away from 100% renewable energy.



- PlanItGreen recommends that the contract be renewed on a short-term basis to give Oak Park time to figure out a plan to transition from “dirty” energy back to 100% renewable energy.
  - o Need to “go big or go home” with regard to the purchase of clean energy. In other words, must pursue 100% renewable as the exclusive source of energy for the village over an extended time period to realize the benefits of renewable energy.
  - o The Oak Park Energy & Environment Commission will meet on Thursday July 18 at 7pm at Village Hall to discuss appropriate action.

UPDATE: The Oak Park Energy & Environment Commission did not attend the Thursday July 18 meeting due to logistics and the fact that nothing new was being put on the table. At the meeting, the MC2 contract was to be extended and permission requested to explore utility scale solar through the aggregation contract.

## APPENDIX B

### **Plastic Free July** - submitted by Lisa Gillis

- Many towns across the US have banned plastic gas; the ban of Single-Use Plastics has only been achieved in 16 countries and/or large cities across the globe.
- The Village of River Forest has initiated a dialogue with retailers with an eye toward eliminating the use of Single-Use Plastics across the village; our goal is to bring together retailers, residents and the village to align on a way forward.
- Laura Maychruk believes that it is most effective to have “retailers talking to retailers”: with this in mind, she has offered to meet with local restaurants and retailers in River Forest to share with them the positive economic impact of a sustainable approach on her business.
- D200 is doing absolutely nothing with regard to sustainability which is a disconnect for the students given all of the focus on sustainability (e.g., recycling, reusing, composting, elimination of Styrofoam, single-use plastic, etc.) at the elementary school and middle schools across Oak Park and River Forest.
  - o Perhaps the “It’s Our Future” student run organization can create the change necessary at the high school.
  - o What is happening at Trinity and at Fenwick? At Dominican University and at Concordia?
- We should include a ban on Styrofoam as part of our focus on the elimination of Single-Use Plastics across both Oak Park and River Forest.
  - o Note that Trader Joes in Oak Park is working to eliminate Styrofoam from its stores.
- National Geographic has a site dedicated to exploring the impact of Single-Use Plastics on the environment and garnering support for global action to ban Single-Use Plastics. See the link here: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/plastic/>
- Ideas for moving forward with regard to the Single-Use Plastics and Styrofoam:
  - o Target institutions that are not sustainable like D200
  - o Drive dialogue across residents, retailers and local government to establish a shared vision
  - o Charge for the bag! Oak Park has seen an 80% reduction in the use of Single-Use Plastic Bags; however, it is not clear if those bags are now acquired elsewhere like at River Forest Jewel!

- These strategies will be refined and organized into buckets for discussion at the next Core Team meeting and will be part of the discussion of the It's Our Future Youth Arm of PlanItGreen. Gary summarized these options and distributed them under separate cover.
  - o Convene retailers, restaurants and VRF representations that may move toward a single use plastic ban like what River Forest is doing
    - Need to address the issue at the corporate level of chain retailers
    - Need to have retailers talk to retailers
  - o Increase general awareness of the issue and alternatives to single use plastics and bags through education
    - Educate students at the schools and engage It's Our Future youth in advocating for policies at their schools related to Styrofoam, single use plastics, etc.
    - Curriculum units at schools around plastics and zero waste -pledges - like the Nat'l Geographic pledge
    - Showing the movie "Plastic Ocean"

Respectfully Submitted:

*Signature Line*

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John Anderson, Secretary

*Signature Line*

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Julie Moller, Chairman  
Sustainability Commission

Date: -----