



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – 7:00 PM
Village Hall – Via Remote Meeting, 400 Park Ave.,
River Forest, IL

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes
4. Aggregation Update and Next Steps
5. Response to Keeping Chickens
6. Parkway for Pollinators/Green Block Parties
7. Healthy Lawn/Healthy Family
8. Review of Areas of Responsibility
9. Tree Kit Progress Report
10. New Business/Old Business
11. Schedule Next Meeting – June 9, 2020
12. Adjournment



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday March 10, 2020 – 7:00 PM

MINUTES

River Forest Sustainability Commission March 10, 2020

Attending: Julie Moller, Susan Charrette, Shannon Roberts, Beth Cheng, Lisa Gillis (after 7:30 p.m.)

Not present: Andy Basney, Eric Simon, Ellie Raidt

Call to Order: 7:09 p.m.

Public Comment: None

Adoption of Meeting Minutes: January 14, 2020 minutes approved

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Charrette was unable to attend monthly PlanItGreen meeting. Oak Park Energy and Environment Commission is discussing what to do with about \$1 million they have received back from MC2 as part of energy aggregation. She sent three River Forest items (one from Trinity) to Dick Alton for the list of area Earth Week events that should come out in Wednesday Journal, April 8.

Commissioner Charrette also requested any comments on Beyond the Bin materials.

Commissioner Cheng attended the One Earth Film Festival launch party. Later in the meeting, Commissioner Cheng reported that she has been in touch with D90 regarding outreach from the Wednesday Journal on an Earth Day spread that will include what schools are doing. She directed the reporter to D90 administration and the current parent Green4Good liaison with the district. The district is working on a new strategic plan; sustainability curriculum has been under discussion but the district has many competing priorities.

Commissioner Roberts had no report.

Commissioner Moller spoke at the League of Women Voters forum this morning about River Forest Sustainability initiatives; it was attended by about 15 people. Oak Park is trying to pass ban of Styrofoam and single use plastics, with support from. Deno Andrews, Oak Park Trustee and Laura Derks from Environment and Energy Commission.

On February 24, Commissioner Moller presented the updated River Forest Sustainability Commission 2020 Plan ("2020 Plan") to the Village Board. Commissioners Cheng and Gillis attended. Commissioner Moller made two recommendations: (1) extending the waste contract with Roy Strom and obtaining additional services to replace the Recycling Extravaganza; and (2) to begin investigating aggregation for green energy. The Village indicated it will review the Roy Strom contract terms in the next sixty days and negotiate an enhanced contract that would include an extension for five years starting in 2022.

Commissioner Moller noted that the Recycling Extravaganza has become too large to handle; documents were just submitted showing that 48,000 pounds of electronics were collected.

Action Item: Work with village on renegotiating Roy Strom contract by mid May.

Commissioner Moller reminded all commissioners that everyone is responsible for highlighting pages in the 2020 Plan that contain programs for which they are the owner and to plan to update the plan once a year, and information on the webpage as needed. This document is the commissioners' workplans. Commissioners are also responsible for keeping up with their contacts. Commissioner Moller also noted that the relevant Action Matrix Goal from the River Forest Comprehensive Plan is listed on the first page of each major area of the 2020 Plan.

Action Item: Each Commissioner responsible for updating 2020 Plan once a year and website on ongoing basis with new information about programs they own.

Finally, Commissioner Moller reminded the commission that River Forest has signed the Chicago Climate Charter pledge and also signed the PlanItGreen pledge to be 100% renewable by 2050.

Commissioner Basney report, read by Commissioner Moller: Discussions are underway with Trinity Pierce, the Chicago Region Trees Initiative Stewardship Coordinator at the Morton Arboretum about planning the River Forest Tree Walk to be held May 8 or May 15. Commissioner Moller will share Commissioner Basney's proposed sample resolution. Commissioner Moller suggested combining the event with a Flamingo Friday.

Action Item: Commissioner Moller to circulate Commissioner Basney's proposed resolution.

Commissioner Raidt report, read by Commissioner Moller: Work on changing supply orders at middle school has support of PTO but Commissioner Raidt is working to resolve some concerns the Roosevelt principal Larry Garstki has. She is also reaching out to elementary school PTO presidents and learning how to move an issue through the system. For Earth Day, Commissioner Raidt is working on an Earth Day plan for OPRF. Composting launched in early February at OPRF and is going far smoother than expected; 74% of waste has been diverted from landfills this month.

Action item: Commissioner Raidt to continue working to resolve supply order issues at middle school.

Commissioner Gillis joined the Midwest Grows Green conference call today; a key person is on leave for a time so they asked for tabling support at Midwest Grows Green event in Naperville and one other location at end of April. They shared info about their Land and Lung toolkit. There is a lot of support by park districts. River Forest was not mentioned even though our park and school land is chemical free. Hopefully in future, we can see if our Park District can be more involved. The PR would bring more homeowners who want to move to a community where there is chemical free lawn care

Action item: Follow up to encourage connection between River Forest Park District and Midwest Grows Green.

Commissioner Gillis reached out to Dominican, Trinity and Concordia about Earth Day events. Dominican and Trinity replied. Trinity is dedicating edible garden and two pollinator gardens on April 20. Dominican has a full schedule; Commissioner Gillis is trying to connect with the new sustainability lead at Dominican, Mary Sadofsky.

Action item: Commissioner Gillis to connect with sustainability lead at Dominican.

Commissioner Gillis is working with the River Forest Public Library, Midwest Goes Green and Deep Roots on an event on Healthy Lawn – Healthy Family on Sunday, March 22 from 2 – 3:30. Commissioner Gillis passed around a flyer designed by the library and encouraged everyone to plan to attend and encourage friends to attend.

Commissioner Gillis also shared updated Commission tabling materials and an instruction flyer. Julie noted that the best way to sign up for composting is online or on the phone, rather than a paper application.

Metrics/Impact

Commissioner Moller reiterated that through the 2020 Plan we are focused on impact, doing a carbon emissions count, and understanding what the commitment to 100% renewable by 2050 mean. All of our programs should ladder up to reducing, sequestering or diverting producing more carbon.

Commissioner Cheng shared the discussions she and Commissioner Roberts have had. The first step is to complete the greenhouse gas inventory with all 2019 data, and the next step is to quantify the impact on greenhouse gas emissions of individual programs; for example, what the impact on greenhouse gas emissions will be if X additional square feet of native gardens are planted. Commissioner Cheng reiterated her concern that the actual numerical impact may be small, but having chosen this path we need to go through the exercise for each program. She and Commissioner Roberts can work together on running those formulas and on defining impact measures that we want to report on a year from now so that we can gather the information now; the impact measures may need to be broader than greenhouse gas emissions, otherwise we may be limiting ourselves.

Commissioner Roberts noted that we can measure greenhouse gas emissions but it's about telling the story, including economic, social or environmental impacts. She suggested doing a workshop or taking time in the next commission meeting to come up with the metrics we want to track. For example, we can say we educated 1000 students instead of saying that we tabled at 10 events. Commissioner Roberts also suggested setting up an Excel document for everyone to track progress during the year

Commissioner Moller agreed that measuring impact will be the main agenda item at the next meeting. Prior to then, Commissioner Cheng suggested Commissioner Roberts can work on completing 2019 data from John (electricity, natural gas); and she and Commissioner Roberts can try to work through developing impact measures for one program as an example.

A goal will be to work towards creating our own report card which Commissioner Gillis has identified as an item to be shared at tabling events.

Commissioner Roberts suggested translating reduction in greenhouse gas emissions into something like the equivalent of taking 180 cars off the road. Commissioner Moller said it will be exciting to be able to answer questions about what the village's plan is to reduce carbon.

Action items: Measuring impact to be main agenda item at next meeting. Commissioners Cheng and Roberts to do pre-work for the agenda item and work on creating a report card for the commission by next year.

Green Block Parties/Internship: Concordia interest in internship was discussed. An intern could support green block parties but need to address whether it's paid. If unpaid, need to meet certain requirements. Other internship possibilities include if the village could use an intern for sustainability related work; or Commissioner Roberts suggested an intern could re-do the carbon inventory to make it more robust.

Action item: Determine whether to pursue sustainability intern.

Energy: Commissioner Simon will work on FAQ document when he gets back. Village is working on green aggregation, including confirming whether there are any options other than MC2 which is used by Oak Park and LaGrange to obtain green energy. Residents would get a letter saying renewable energy is being supplied by MC2 unless they opt out; ComEd remains the distributor and rates will be the same or lower.

Action item: Commissioner Simon to develop energy FAQ document. Continue work with village on green aggregation.

Other Business:

Campaign signs can be dropped off for recycling in boxes on Central, one for metal stands and one for plastic.

Commissioner Charrette ask whether the village would have any Arbor Day activities. John Anderson said there is one every year but this year's is still being planned; the village is working on getting permission from a school to plant and a tree.

Commissioner Gillis asked if the village can bring back a program of buying trees in bulk and selling to residents. Commissioner Charrette noted it could be a good way to diversify species in the village.

Action item: Explore possibility of village buying and selling trees to residents.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Signature Line

John Anderson, Secretary

Signature Line

Julie Moller, Chairman
Sustainability Commission

Date: -----



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday April 30, 2020 – 4:00 PM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

- a. Julie Moller
- b. Eric Simon
- c. Susan Charrette
- d. Beth Cheng
- e. Andrew Basney
- f. Lisa Gillis
- g. Ellie Raidt

2. Public Comment – none

3. Commissioner Report and Updates

Julie Moller: She will be leaving RF, her house is sold and we will be looking for another commissioner. Lisa Gillis will be taking over as the chair of the commission. We will also be needing a new commissioner as well.

Beth Cheng: Did watch some One Earth film festival videos which were informative.

Andy Basney: No meeting updates

Eric Simon: Nothing to report for the commission.

Susan Charrette: Attending the PlanItGreen phone meeting. Many stores won't let you take your own bag into the store. You can take your food in your cart and then put it in your own bag at your car. Legislatively everything is on pause as far as the clean jobs act goes. Disappointed that the fact the we are a municipal arboretum this year wasn't mentioned in the Earth Day e-newsletter.

4. Urban Chicken Recommendation:

A resident had asked if our ordinance could be changed to allow for keeping chickens. President Adduci asked that the commission provide a recommendation for this issue.

Julie Moller: Asked the commission to give input on this issue. She sent the commissioners the ordinance from Oak Park for reference.

Eric Simon: One citizen coming forward asking about wanting chickens might be trying to fix a problem that doesn't exist. This could be a lot of work if not a lot of people want to raise chickens.

BC: When was the Oak Park ordinance adopted? Is there anyone there that has any insight on if it is a good or a bad thing?

JM: I agree with you Eric that we don't have to respond to one person. We should be prepared to address people and have a background on this type of issue. We promote these types of issues so people may want to know where we stand on these issues. The bee ordinance shows that it can become cumbersome and not many people are keeping bees anymore. The health of the chickens need to be considered for these situations as well, raccoons have been known to get chickens.

Susan Charrette: I know one person in RF that has pursued this type of change to the ordinance. Most communities that allow raising bees also allow raising chickens. We can start by allowing 12 permits for raising chickens as a way to respond to this type of request. There can be predators for other domestic animals as well, (cats, dogs, etc.). People are concerned by the quality of food so this may be a good time.

Lisa Gillis: We need to understand both sides of this debate since some people will not want to live next to chickens. We could do a survey, it could lead to a more informed decision.

Julie Moller: We need to look into this further before it is assumed that the sustainability commission thinks it is a good idea. This process would probably take about a year. We can provide an answer that yes we'll look into it, but it could take a while.

LG: We can look at the bee ordinance and see what has worked. This may go beyond the commission and we can do so in collaboration with the Village Board.

SC: I can take the lead and research this further. I can respond to this resident to see if they know of anyone else that may be interested.

Eric Simon: I've lived in two places that went through this chicken ordinance and both places removed them. This can be a very contentious issue. It was only allowed in the more rural areas.

Lisa Gillis: I want to avoid the rumor mill. We need to make a fact gathering decision by asking residents without people thinking.

Andy Basney: This is the responsible way of approaching this topic. We are responding to a resident's request.

JM: It benefits us to learn about these types of issues as well. It is information gathering that we can do.

5. Green Block Parties:

Julie Moller: We have money that can pay for the pollinator gardens this year. Open Lands and PlanItGreen will be contacted about ideas for doing the pollinator gardens (20) in a different way since block parties may not happen this year. Looking for ideas on this topic.

We could have people still sign up for these and possibly film it. Could we do these along the UP tracks as well?

Lisa Gillis: We have given these to Lincoln, Trinity, and other institutions as well. Maybe we can promote this to other institutions going forward. We need to check with the grant providers and see if they are ok with that. We may also look at expanding existing gardens. We could lose the educational component by not having this with a block parties.

Beth Cheng: Gardening right now is one of the ways that people are coping with the situation right now. So I think that it can be a very relevant topic and program for people. It could be a logistical challenge with the social distancing requirements.

Julie Moller: We can promote the planting after the fact as an educational component as a story to tell.

Susan Charrette: Willard may be a good candidate for a garden, and there are other institutions that can be looked at as well. We can also have families be "host" families for these. Planting these along the tracks could be good to add a mural behind it as well.

Lisa Gillis: Have the Park District turn it into a program that they can sign up for so they can use it as an education planting event.

Beth Cheng: Are people fatigued from this since it is affiliated with the green block parties? Or do we think it is a property ownership issue?

Lisa Gillis: Green block parties need to be refreshed every few years since there are people that do a new green block party every year. People that are host homes need to know that tending to the garden is important. There could be a tree tour to go along with the green block parties in the future.

Beth Cheng: The consensus is that we still intend to plant these in some way. They can be scheduled at a time of their convenience. These could create some more demand if it isn't tied to a block party. It may make scheduling easier as well.

Julie Moller: This could also buy us some time to decide what can be the new program for next summer as well. There could be a new standard for any green block parties in the future.

Andy Basney: We have a great relationship with people at the Morton Arboretum

Ellie Raidt: We were going to be a part of the tree tour which may happen next summer now.

Lisa Gillis: We can look at a tree tour type of program for the Village trees. We can make it more interesting for people walking down the street to be able to identify the trees on their block.

Julie Moller: The new budget year begins tomorrow and our open lands grant is for the 2021 budget year.

Lisa Gillis: Is there a tree map that can be shared with google that can give them the tree data and be able to see what tree is on each street?

Beth Cheng: Shannon and I were supposed to work on metrics, but I'm not sure where to go with that now. Maybe I can pick up where she has left off. Since everything is on pause and I wanted to know if this is something that is still productive. Are these measures something we still want to pursue.

Lisa Gillis: Yes, it would be something we'd like to pursue.

Beth Cheng: If there is anyone that would like to share info about their particular program, I'd be open to share.

Julie Moller: It's hard to get people to work on these things right now. It's hard to get people to focus on the metrics right now. Beth, you can tell us how you'd want to do it to pursue what the biggest impact will be for the group. Get people to connect the individual act that they are doing to the overall carbon footprint.

Julie Moller: Thanks to Public Works for offering to deliver compost.

Susan Charrette: The community gardens are moving forward so that is a good thing. Are there edible gardens available?

Lisa Gillis: Yes, they are still available on a per garden basis.

Susan Charrette: Please let the Park District know that they need to weed their wild flower areas.

6. Next meeting May 12th at 7pm

7. Meeting adjourned 5:14 PM

Respectfully Submitted:

Signature Line

John Anderson, Secretary

Signature Line

Julie Moller, Chairman
Sustainability Commission

Date: -----