



Village of Westchester

10300 ROOSEVELT ROAD, WESTCHESTER, IL 60154
(708)345-0020 FAX (708)345-2873
WWW.WESTCHESTER-IL.ORG

Village President
NICK STEKER

Village Clerk
JENNIFER HALL

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CATHY KURATKO
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Village Manager
GREG HRIBAL

Village Attorney
MATTHEW WELCH

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting

January 12, 2023 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. Call to Order @ 6:35

Attending Commissioners: Liz Wiseman-Chase (**LWC**), Lee Kaufman (**LK**), Nicole Molinaro (**NM**), Matt Downs (**MD**), LeeAnn Kruszynski (**LAK**), Diane Scott (**DS**) & Evie Slavic (**ES**) VB liaison

Recorder: N. Molinaro

Absent: Nikki Way (**NW**) & Steve Crowley (**SC**) PW liaison

Attending Residents: Leann Pettis, Rob and Julie Orr, Jim Lewandowski & Julie Schilf

2. Pledge

3. Inspiration

a. Rob Orr - Hermann Hesse

"For me, trees have always been the most penetrating preachers. I revere them when they live in tribes and families, in forests and groves. And even more I revere them when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche.

When we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: Be still! Be still! Look at me! Life is not easy, life is not difficult. Those are childish thoughts. . . . Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you, or home is nowhere at all.

So the tree rustles in the evening, when we stand uneasy before our own childish thoughts: Trees have long thoughts, long-breathing and restful, just as they have longer lives than ours. They are wiser than we are, as long as we do not listen to them. But when we have learned how to listen to trees, then the brevity and the quickness and the childlike hastiness of our thoughts achieve an incomparable joy. Whoever has learned how to listen to trees no longer wants to 'lbe a tree. He wants to be nothing except what he is. That is home. That is happiness."

b. Next Month: 2/2/23 Leann Pettis

4. Roll Call - 6 commissioners present, DS celebration of 1 year service term - 2/2 last meeting

5. Public Participation - In order to give as many visitors as possible an opportunity to speak and in the interest of adjourning the meeting by 8:00 p.m., please limit your comments to 3 minutes in length, unless further time is granted by the Commission.
No Public Participation.

6. Review of Minutes

- a. Approval of 12-1-2022 minutes
LK motions to approved, LWC seconds - All Approved

7. Old Business

a. Waste Reduction

i. Reusa-Palooza (LeeAnn)

Yes to having Reusa-Palooza again this year. Solicit volunteers, have in newsletter to assist LAK with planning of event and make larger. Start planning now and form a Reusa-Committee. Will have one this year in Fall again with the hope that we have enough volunteers to amp up to twice a year, once in Spring and Fall. NM - Possible to add in some Waste Management Recycling information ES shared recently in newsletter that pairs well with R-P. ES - Central dumpster or pick-up possibilities after event? LAK - Have Vets or aggregator that circulates what's in need of recycling and finds who wants it. Julie O - In Riverside Salvation truck goes around. ES - Drop off location may be better. What day of week? Sunday vs Saturday vs Monday maybe if R-P extended two days in one weekend. ES - See what residents want. NM - Stress room props to bash. ES - Still trying to get WM representative out. Recently updated our website to reflect what WM website has. Specific to Westchester details. Julie S- Got information @ WM to share with neighbors on proper recycling. ES - WM contract up in 2024, not this year. LK - Other vendors should be considered. ES - Service levels must stay up to par. LK - Survey for what residents want. Including adding composting. Julie S- WM should be offering two Household Hazardous Waste events a year. The WM Pick-up service didn't take what resident needed removed from property even in the sealed bags. We are in the middle of the two major HHW drop off centers. This is a service that is included in other municipal contracts. Lots of planning involved in getting event together due to the sensitive nature of what is being handled. DS - Will use HHW services in Oak Park and they have Lakeshore Recycling. Will let us know how it goes on the pick up quality. LK - How often some residents put garbage out and we all pay at the same price. LAK - Pay As You Throw concept. Julie S- Open dumping could become an issue. NM - Opt in choice for those who want an incentive to reduce waste. Julie S- Like composting is opt-in, similar. Evie - Hazardous Household Waste event important so residents aren't putting in regular garbage. Jim - how is trash/recycling separated and how much HHW is actually getting dumped. Julie S- enough to cause fires at many facilities at least once a week. Evie - if not WM then look into outside HHW vendor.

b. Tree Canopy (LeeAnn)

i. Update: CRTI Grant Opportunity for Tree Inventory (LeeAnn)

We received the grant! 15k for tree inventory and management plan for public trees only, no school or park district and will include buckthorn. Plan for species diversity and health of trees. Tree Management Ordinance will need to be updated. Steve Crowley assigned to lead project. NM - how long do tree inventories take to complete? LAK - Usually contracted out but depends. Grant term two years, Aug 1, 2024, have completed. ES - Village will complete and pass a Tree Preservation Ordinance. Steve has been keeping informal tracking in 2007-08. LAK - typically have less participation in the grant, team is small and access and resources are minimal. EVENT: CRTI Annual Partner Recognition Celebration Morton Arboretum FEB 9th @ 6-9p <https://chicagorti.org/program/annual-partner-recognition-celebration/> - Heat Island and Climate Change speakers.

ii. Amendment to Illinois Exotic Weed Act: Buckthorn (Nicole)

Spoke with Jim Novosel and provided knowledge and have plans to set-up a program on identifying and killing buckthorn. Partner with Park District, Forest Preserves and Wolf Road Prairie. Julie- Helpful to have pictures at each stage of buckthorn. DS/LK - Maybe not March, LAK - May is Invasive Species Month. LK - Preserves by Sunnyside and 31st, full of buckthorn though its Forest Preserve property now, was Westchester. Good place for a demo. ES - Educate on buckthorn earlier than May as a primer into the month. LAK - First that turns green in Spring, education in March and April and then event in May. NM - Newsletter article in July as there is a window in Spring when you should cut buckthorn as it may spread more when in bloom. Best to cut early, winter, or out of bloom July, weather dependent. Jim - Use Garlon on buckthorn, licensed to apply. Forest Preserve and Autobahn Society use this chemical. NM - Triclopyr (Ferti-Loam) with a paintbrush. Educating and communicating the right information and not digging up and disturbing soil. Event in March. Could we start a program in community to help residents clear buckthorn from private properties. Our grant could be more effective if paired with a buckthorn removal program. Julie O - Got rid of buckthorn with black bag around stump and rocks. NM - Provide knowledge for residents to complete on their property. Municipality has more legislative rights with the new State Bill to remove buckthorn on private property. DS - Educational opportunity, we must persuade residents on the why to

remove. Most residents don't have time and will need a good argument. ES - Residents treat buckthorn as great privacy being green the longest. NM - Have Replacement Shrub pamphlets at village hall.

c. FEMA (CRS) Community Rating System (Nicole)

i. Dig Right-In Update

NM - Meeting with Jeff Swano going over what Chief Mavrogeorge gave us regarding Westchester's 2012 & 2019 score for FEMA CRS. We are one of two communities in Proviso who are scored, the other is Melrose Park. Provide residents savings on flood insurance in or out of Special Flood Hazard Area. Westchester a 7 of 10, with 1 being the best possible discount. Looking at each sections activities to gain more points. Even before commission Westchester has implemented more water infiltration projects since 2019 to mitigate flooding. Would like to request a re-evaluation to see if we have more points than 1,686 and maybe get to a 6 or better. ES - Are there examples of things that can be done to raise score? NM - Activity 330 is Outreach Projects regarding distribution of materials on water infiltration and how to mitigate flooding through ISO Insurance Services Office, understanding where aquifers are and knowing where water goes and how to infiltrate. Open Space Preservation is an activity. ES - Can water retention ponds we've completed increase score. NM - Yes. More points lower class discount. 2019 points 1,686 - MAX Points 12,654 - AVG Points 2,537 (is class 6) See more here: <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/community-rating-system-overview-and-participation>. Flyers specifically in SFHA regarding buckthorn removal in a "hot" zone.

ii. Natural Lawn Care Solutions for Flood Mitigation/Heat Island Reduction

NM - Looking into Rain Ready Program like OakPark through CNT Center for Neighborhood Technology. Can we connect with MWRD rep to start a program through them with a grant program since we are a permit municipality with them anyway? ES - What is this program? NM - Program on parkways that may include dry wells, rain gardens and other ways to infiltrate water, like mini reservoirs to increase water capacity in severe weather. Jim - Bellwood has many of them the village installed, may not look pretty but are effective. ES - Being aware of placement of trees to avoid buffalo boxes and lines. NM - Can cater to the need of community in the height of native plants, they are resilient and can be easily moved. ES - Have 100% Separate Sewer Storm System in Westchester which is unusual. Save money and prevent flooding are the top concerns. LAK - Who is responsible for upkeep. NM - A contract signed for maintainable level and is resident responsibility. Over-seeding to prevent weeds and natives can be less upkeep in long run. ES - Low growing needed with height concerns. ES - Talk to Steve and other villages, cost to maintain.

d. Vehicle Sticker Contest: Nature in Westchester (Evie)

Winners will be announced, likely February 14th, 3 first prize winners within each grade group. All winners very excited. Will only produce one vehicle sticker. Thank you to Diane for idea, research and efforts pushing this wonderful initiative forward. It will be her legacy in Westchester. Have this each year and change the theme utilizing our kids creativity.

e. Climate Action Plan (Liz)

i. Nicor Energy Efficiency Events: Sat. 1/21 & Sun. 1/22: 9:00 am – 10:00 am

LWC - Will need assistance to have FB events by David, ES will complete. Nicor will send email blast regarding the events. Add to village webpage and calendar. Text events through CodeRed. Hand-delivered invites, 100 homes Liz will hit, invites others. Power Point will need technological assistance with NM being unavailable on Sat. There will be four reps from Nicor. Would also like assistance from GROW, sign-in/greeter in addition to tech. Use FB responses to gauge refreshment need. LAK/LK on Saturday, MD/NM on Sunday. Look into a commissioner obtaining a key? Post event number of kits and energy assessment sign-ups. Have similar event for ComEd in summer.

ii. Citizens Utility Board Solar for All Events (*for residents @ 80% of the mean income level for Cook County*): Tentative Dates: Sat. 3/25 & Sun. 3/26: 9:00 am – 10:00 am

CUB returning for presentation to residents meeting income qualifications for rooftop solar or solar farm subscription. NM - Promote in other villages to increase awareness. LWC - Share with C4 folks. Confirmed dates, will have two events in month with buckthorn event and promoting 50/50 in earlier part of month.

iii. Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution (CS2)

ES - With the attorney. EWC - Turn key project from the power bureau and they facilitate. Solar farm/operator is responsible to sending postcards out to community for the opportunity. Upcoming information sessions and pair with individual options. Could save 20% off bill and go green with electricity.

f. 2022 Board Report (Discussion)

LAK - Two documents floating around and have locked access to edit. Looking for a template or existing report from ES. Handle quarterly moving forward.

g. 2023 Calendar (see working document attached)

DS - April 28th Arbor Day and will send email to Forest Preserves, like last year, to have unit come to school that day and provide fun stuff to share and distribute not only this but other GROW initiative. ES - Kids educational program and send kids home with ecological project or tips. LK - Bicycle event, Bike to work event in June.

Snippet with Rules of the Road in newsletter. DS - September Prairie Fest & Reusa-Palooza. ES - Westchester Fest in August GROW have a booth. Fourth of July Parade. Pumpkin Smash November. Julie S - Food Waste Prevention Week is April 10-16 and 1st week of May through IFSC.

8. Financial Report (Diane)

a. Budget (\$1,500 for GROW booth materials and community outreach events)

b. Expended (\$0)

DS - Never turned in receipt. ES - Get to her to handle.

c. Requests for reimbursement/accounting of out-of-pocket expenses incurred:

i. Diane (GROW banner, outside printing of bookmarks)

ii. Nicole (GROW event shirts) (\$72)

iii. Liz (July 4th GROW signage, outside printing of leaflet event invites)

ES - Discuss before purchase and have Commission approve beforehand. LWC - other expense not turned in just to get credit for what was incurred for future budget considerations. Turn in as they occur. LWC - SCARE has a used poster board on top of table or standing up for \$20-\$40 bucks we can put materials on. Julie S - Has old pull up stand we can re-use and she wants to get rid of. LK - \$150 bucks generally. LWC - Use for educational events. ES - Easels an option also to have the visuals. Does Westchester have anything to re-purpose. LK - May have some resources. LWC - Permission to approve, ALL Commissioners APPROVED

9. New Business

a. Recruitment of current and upcoming Commissioner Vacancies. (Evie)

No response as of date. LWC - FB post for David K. LK - Bring to Library ES - Bring to Prairie.

b. Transition Planning, Upcoming vacancy of Commissioner, Diane Scott (Diane)

i. New keeper of the banner with bonus twine and scissors - Matt Downs

ii. DS - Offer to create a new bookmark for 4th of July 2023 parade showing the 5 most common trees being planted - Will speak with Steve. Cost \$90 bucks for 800 bookmarks and gave them all away. Have all newer trees that we are planting in Spring. ALL Commissioners APPROVED.

iii. Contact person for League of Women Voters LaGrange Area (LWVLGA) sustainability committee projects. (Meetings may be on Zoom and/or open to the public.) Their tentative plans for this year include:

1. Feb - Lead Pipes (Krista?) introduces topic and local public works departments may present their plans for replacement
2. Mar - Morton Arboretum presentation on tree equity. Michele to contact Arboretum staff in January
3. Apr - Walk in Bemis on weekend of Earth Day (Apr 22) - Michele to coordinate
4. May - Presentation on resources (solar, EV, etc) for IL residents - need one or more presenters.

LWVLGA has sustainability group and they are planing events for spring as mentioned above. Wanted to see if we want to participate, support and publicize. NM - Can we participate at events as needed? DS to serve as Advisor for LWVLGA to share the information with GROW via LWC and NM email.

- c. 2023 Goal(s) & Priorities MD - Lots of events planned throughout most of year month-to-month has a plan. Community outreach, education and engagement status quo for year . Don't over saturate and keep as priority for foreseeable future. ES - Really proud of what GROW accomplished, involvement and passion in last year. NM - Leann P and I working on infiltrating Park District and have meeting with Derek Gordon on ecological things.
- d. Commissioner interests/participation
 - i. Downs – Waste reduction, restoration, reduction in pesticide usage particularly to lawns
 - ii. Kaufman – Alternative transportation, energy, landscaping, land use (placemaking), community engagement for change and improvement
 - iii. Kruszynski – Trash/waste, Trees, Flooding
 - iv. Molinaro – Pesticide awareness and pollinator habitat. To reduce heat islands and make better use of our commons which includes Park District and Schools. Overall environmental literacy and ecological restoration. Flooding and reviewing FEMAs Community Rating System for Westchester.
 - v. Wiseman-Chase – Clean air, Clean energy, Climate Action Plan
 - vi. Vacancy - seat previously held by Commissioner Jasmine Pope
 - vii. Vacancy - seat to be vacated by Commissioner Diane Scott

10. Adjournment - LK motions to adjourn - DS seconds @ 8:27pm

The Village of Westchester will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Village of Westchester, should contact the office of the Fire Chief, 10300 W. Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL, (708) 345-0441, as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.