



Village of Westchester

10300 ROOSEVELT ROAD, WESTCHESTER, IL 60154

(708)345-0020 FAX (708)345-2873

WWW.WESTCHESTER-IL.ORG

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GREG HRIBAL

Village Clerk
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NICOLE MOLINARO
MARIANA NICOLAE
NIKKI WAY
ELIZABETH WISEMAN-CHASE

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting MINUTES

February 1st, 2024 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

Attending Commissioners: Liz Wiseman-Chase (LWC), LeeAnn Kruszynski (LAK), Lee Kaufman (LK), Nicole Molinaro (NM), Mariana Nicolae (MN), Nikki Way (NW), Matt Downs (MD)

Village Representation: Evie Slavic (ES), Annie Canavan (AC)

Recorder: N. Molinaro

Absent:

Attending Resident: Leann Pettis (LP), Walter Wojcik (WW), Tina Nepomuceno (TN), Patricia Mitchell-Braxton (PMB), Jeanne Keane (JK), Fred Franzwa (FF), Kari Roberg (KF)

1. 6:30 - Call to Order - 6:30 pm

2. Pledge

3. Inspiration

- a. ~~Evie Slavic~~ LWC – Matt's last meeting with us, he contributed greatly to the forming of GROW as one of our founding members and will be missed in his current seat, but encouraged to join us as often as he'd like in the future. Matt organized the Village's first annual Pumpkin Smash prior to his work on the commission. The annual events have diverted tons of pumpkins and gourds from landfills and have resulted in great reductions in our villages methane emissions (from landfills). He also participated in representing GROW at last two July 4th parades helping to distribute 2019 Genuine Mardi Gras beads in 2022 for reuse, and displayed his EV in parade in 2023. As a token of your time with us, here is a reusable Whole Foods bread bag for the bread you bake at home, your very own set of 2019 Mardi Gras beads for your reuse, the paper signage from last year's July 4th parade where you drove your EV: "EVs ARE THE FUTURE", because they are the future, and a GROW bookmark featuring the leaves of the trees in our Village. Not saying good-bye, but see you again soon
- b. Next Month: Evie

4. Roll Call - Quorum established, 7 commissioners present

5. Review of Minutes – Nicole Molinaro

- a. Approval of 1-11-24 regular meeting LWC – Minor changes to “Air Pollution and Your Health” and “Climate Action Museum”. Remove 4/6

VOTE with minor amendments: LWC motions to approve LK seconds - All Approved

- b. Approval of 1-19-24 special meeting

VOTE: LK motions to approve LAK seconds - All Approved

6. 6:40 – Fiscal Year ending 4/30/23 Financial Report – Liz W-Chase \$623

- a. Request to purchase PurpleAir Monitor \$327.23+ (no taxes), nullifies shipment responsibility need cost. Loaner from EPA is only one month. Measure fine particular matter. Health or unhealthy levels. Commonly used app, EPA website. Community education on indoor and outdoor education. Childhood asthma on rise, idling vehicles, control burn awareness. Another Canadian wildfire FD can monitor and flags can be raised in schools for awareness at schools and fire stations. MN-Who would monitor and announce? LWC-Village kept and monitor and CodeRed. PurpleAir ES-Staff would be monitoring. Barry to decide how it's used. LWC-GROW education and citizen science and school projects. LAK-Not GROW, village to maintain LWC-Calibrated and useful life of 3 years. LK-Any devices employed? LWC-No, but other communities do use. Most common and used air sensor network in community. CA uses for wildfire. NW-Subscriptions? Can LK use monitor for lawn care equipment educational events. LWC-No and definitely yes. Also, can connect to network, indoor or outdoor. ES-What are we doing with the data? Just monitoring? Need more info on what expectations are after purchase.

NM motions to discuss PurpleAir Monitor MD seconds

TABLE VOTE: To Advise Village of Purchase

- b. Request to purchase Educational Insert from Minuteman Press LWC-Reuse x-frames we purchased from composting banners at events. Common Air Pollutants page to banner. Inserts with x-frame is \$100, will be less without x-frame, \$50 maybe. Not to exceed \$100.

VOTE to Approve Education Material on Air Pollutants banner not to exceed \$100: NM motions to approve LK seconds - All Approved

7. 6:45 - Old Business

- a. March Newsletter Submission due 2/10/24: Mariana Nicolae – 3 min. Newsletter about water quality in general and in Westchester. A couple of pollutants highlighted like lead especially for children most effected developmentally. NSF 53 filter necessary. Hexavalent chromium another to be aware. Forever plastics also a major concern with nano plastics. Water in bottles are not regulated EPA, only FDA and not required to publish. Includes good practices. NW-Add MN qualifications and experiences.
- b. April Newsletter Submission due 3/10/24: Lee Kaufman – 1 min. Electrical Lawn Equipment topic, take a look at draft LK sent over.
- c. 2024 Planning Calendar

- i. *Debrief: "Buckthorn and Healthy Hedges" with Dave Coulter - 1/18th @6:30pm – Nicole – 1 min. 20 participants, **recording on village website** under Board Meeting recordings by date labeled "GROW-Buckthorn Presentation" LWC-People wanting to attend got lost getting to board room or couldn't find. In future let's have signage directing or light with arrow, anything to make obvious where GROW event is. Will have more buckthorn events throughout year.*
- ii. *"Climate Action Museum Guided Tour" 2/16th & 3/15th @2pm - Liz – 2 min. Reminder of exclusive event, Board members and staff encouraged to join. Signup sheet available for attendance.*
- iii. *"Air Pollution and Your Health" with C. Patricia Macias, MD, MPH 2/24th @ 1:00pm – Liz – 1 min. Wonderful speaker with a wealth of worldly knowledge on topic, please join GROW in Village Hall Board Room.*
- iv. *April Event: "Electric Lawn Care"- Lee – 3 min. How to put something together and bring out examples of electric, end of April event. **Can we seek incentives for residents to purchase with demonstration event?** Naperville has program to take a look at.*
- v. *"Reuse A Palooza" 9/21st & 22nd – LeeAnn Kruszynski – 1 min. Confirmed dates of September 21st and 22nd.*
- vi. *GROW Education in Westchester Schools – Evie – 5 min. Educational events will go through Evie and then Staff. Teacher curriculum & budget set. Put outline together on one event for Staff to present to school. **Next meeting firm up at least one idea to pass along recommendation.** Need more information. Evie point person for ideas.*
- d. **7:05 - Proclamation: National Invasive Species Awareness Week – Nicole – 3 min.** *Week of 2/26-3/3, sample proclamation will be formatted to Westchester style, same wording as proclamation. Discussed in December meeting this was formal vote. **Toolkit with resources here: <https://www.nisaw.org/nisaw-toolkit>****VOTE to Declare NISAW Proclamation recommendation to Village Board: NM motions to approve LAK seconds - All Approved***
- e. *Climate Action Plan – Lee – 5 min. Cook County Bike Plan 2023, a great deal of value on complete street and how it. Aids community in livability and access to public transit to school and shopping areas. Request Village to embrace Complete Streets as there is an ordinance in 2023 with no action. ES-A means to obtain grants. LK-Should be reconsidered policy (not ordinance). AC-A resolution adopting a policy. MN-Approved with no action, what can we suggest on how to start. LK-Start with bike lanes on three street, Mayfair, Canterbury & Westchester Blvd would **connect entire community and get kids to school safely.** ES-No bike path on Balmoral due to a previous conditions of a grant. ES-First step to analyze plan with CMAP. **LK-Would like engagement with CMAP process.***
 - i. Complete Streets in Westchester
 - ii. Electric Lawn Care Equipment
- f. *2024 Tree Planting Grant – LeeAnn Kruszynski – 5 min. 2 components, hold tree planting demo and tree walk. Windows of time with Village staff are being looked*

at to plan as must be completed in 2024 as grant requirement. MD-Tie in with Earth Day? LAK-Looking into possibilities.

- i. Planting Demo
- ii. Tree Walk
- g. Commission Recruitment – Liz - 2 min. Two-3 year terms available. WW approved by GROW and should be Board appointed on 2/13. ES-Another resident submitted resume, another deciding interest.

8. 7:20 - New Business

- a. Staff/Trustee Liaison Protocol – Evie, Annie Canavan ES-Lots of changes, will have something formal put together in writing and distributed by Barry & AC. New ideas for agenda go to Co-Chairs. ES first line of communication, not staff or direct to other public bodies. ES a point of dispersion to connect us with staff who can then go to park district, library, schools, etc. Process and protocol will get passed on by ES. Newsletter won't change will be AC. Meeting minutes direct to Dave Kosir and AC.
- b. Sidewalk Shaving – LeeAnn **TABLED**
- c. Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) Abstract – Nicole After Buckthorn Presentation, presenter and SER board member, Dave Coulter, suggested we (GROW) submit abstract for presentation since we have done great work engaging our community in restoration topics at 15th Annual Chapter Meeting. Theme “Connecting for a Resilient Future: Restoration of Midwestern Habitat Mosaics” on May 17-19th at Purdue University in Hammond, IN. LAK and NM wrote abstract titled “Restoration of residential lands for sustainable ecology.” ES-Since this is something we've never encountered will ask BK. AC-GROW collectively agree to move forward with vote. **VOTE Motion to approve submitting abstract and request Village approval to move forward: NW motions to approve and LK seconds - All Approved**

“Located in central Cook County, the Village of Westchester is uniquely positioned with adjoining areas representing a variety of ecosystem types: Wolf Road Prairie to the west, Forest Preserves of Cook County to the south, and Addison Creek to the east. Because of the Village's geography, Westchester recognizes its pivotal role in helping to preserve and support the diverse natural areas that surround it. At the same time, turf grass lawns dominate the residential landscape and cannot be sustained without significant continued impact to local ecosystems. The 2020 Chicago Region Tree Initiative Urban Forestry Summary for Westchester justifies the need to increase canopy coverage through increased tree planting, but improvements in all layers of the landscape are necessary to return our surrounding ecosystems to pre-settlement levels of health and biodiversity. One challenge faced by the Green Residents of Westchester (GROW) Ecological Commission is to bring awareness to the many ecosystem services that are provided by the adjoining prairie, forest, and riparian areas, and to empower residents with the knowledge and tools needed to ensure that more private property in the Village functions to unite and support each of these distinctive environments. At the same time, GROW works to educate and advise elected officials and staff regarding policies and programs that “...improve the quality of air, water, and land; reduce greenhouse gases; minimize waste; and reduce energy consumption...” Through this top-down and bottom-up engagement, GROW has an opportunity to encourage favorable conditions for the development of optimized urban ecosystems that serve to sustain multiple facets of Illinois 'natural heritage.” - Oral Presentation Abstract by NM & LAK

- d. Community Canopy Tool – Nicole This is an Arbor Day Foundation Program I just learned about and would love to **sign up for a free demo**. Not sure if there is a cost though we have been a Tree City USA member for last 8 years so maybe it's included with no cost. Program is designed to offer a turnkey approach to providing education and trees to community to ensure the right tree is planted in the right spot for maximum benefit. **Send info to AC & ES.**
https://www.arborday.org/programs/community-canopy/?utm_source=fb&utm_medium=paid-social&utm_campaign=est-cc&utm_content=cc2&utm_id=6508742870918&utm_term=6508765205918
- e. Illinois Alliance for Clean Transportation Green Truck Summit – March 5th – Liz **TABLE**

9. 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.*

PMB-Complete streets interest what happens next? ES-Look to different department heads and figure out what's next.

TN-Bike Group, here to support GROW and bike lanes in Westchester. Start small and what does funding look like? Great if Village as a whole starts discussing including grants and any restrictions/past requirements. Maybe go to original grant donor and ask permission to revise any grant conditions?

VOTE to recommend 3 streets (Canterbury, Mayfair & Westchester Blvd) to be considered for bike lanes: NM motions to approve LK seconds - All Approved
 (See above discussion under 7.e.i.)

KR – Background in Community Resources and Sustainability, considering becoming a commissioner. Wanted to introduce herself

FF-Submitted resume for Commissioner. Had perception that leadership wasn't taking ecology seriously in the past and there wasn't any leadership support. Has seen this change in last several years since GROW began. Software engineer and interested in helping communicate our mission and sharing education with residents so we collectively care about these topics.

10. Adjournment - 7:49pm MD motions to approve, NW seconds - All Approved

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.

2024 Goals: Education and Engagement, Advisement, Climate Action Plan

Matt Downs	Pumpkin Smash, Natural Lawn Care
Lee Kaufman	School Bicycling Event, Electric Powered Equipment for Natural Lawn Care
LeeAnn Kruszynski	Tree Walk, Planting Demonstration, Arbnet, Reusa Palooza, Climate Action
Nicole Molinaro	Bee City USA, Composting, Natural Lawn Care, Buckthorn
Mariana Nicolae	Water Quality/Sustainability – Composting, Climate Change Awareness
Nikki Way	Reusa Palooza, Commission Marketing support, Green infrastructure/solar/rain and native garden/ecological interest walk, painted rain barrels
Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase	Climate Action Plan, Air Pollution/Health, Incentives for Electric Appliances, Solar Education and Solar Walk, EV Car Show