

## Quarterly Report January – March 2024

***“A vibrant fair and regenerative future is possible not when thousands of people do climate justice activism perfectly - but when millions of people do the best they can.” - Xiya Bastilda Patrick***

### Events:

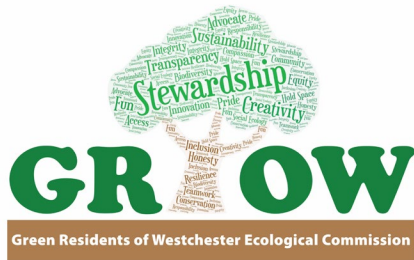
- January 18 - [“Buckthorn and Healthy Hedges”](#) with Dave Coulter, Horticulturist
- February 24 - [“Air Pollution and Your Health”](#) with C. Patricia Macias, MD, MPH
- March 15 - Climate Action Museum Guided Tour field trip

### Newsletter Articles:

- January 2024 - [GROW Ecological Commission: Two Years of Environmental Action](#)
- February 2024 - [A New Year, a New Garden: Your Late Winter Growing Guide](#)
- March 2024 - [Drinking Water Quality](#)

### Commissioner Changes:

- Commissioner Nicole Molinaro left her term early in February 2024. Nicole served with distinction and is celebrated for recruiting commissioners and volunteers, hosting events and plant sales, and planning numerous educational events over the past three years.
- Lee Kauffman, a current commissioner, was approved to serve out the final year of Nicole’s term and advance his goals for building a more bike-friendly community.
- Several candidates came forward to fill two open positions, and after a round of interviews, we voted for the Village Board to appoint two commissioners:
  - Dr. Walt Wojcik brings a background in neurology and a passion for the GROW mission by way of promoting electric vehicles, plant-based meals, and ideas for education and events.
  - Kari Roberg has experience in building community engagement and advancing research initiatives around sustainability. Her understanding of how to make the case for sustainable initiatives will continue to advance GROW’s mission to educate the public and recommend policy changes to the Village Board.



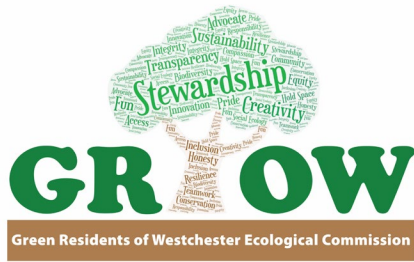
## Accomplishments:

- **No Mow May 'Til Mother's Day** - The Village Board voted to suspend the enforcement of the lawn ordinance request based on Commissioner recommendation. This effort will promote the flourishing of flowers, thereby supporting early-season pollinators that are crucial for our ecosystem.
- **Tree Inventory website Launched** - GROW member LeeAnn Kruszynski found and assisted the Village with a grant application that resulted in a \$25,000 award for a comprehensive tree inventory and management plan for Village-owned trees. The tree Inventory was launched in March and will enable the Village to more efficiently build and maintain the canopy with an eye to age and species diversity.
- **Waste & Recycling Services Contract RFP Recommendation** – GROW provided recommendations to the Village as it moved through the RFP process. The new service contract includes (1) 95-gallon garbage toter and (1) 95-gallon recycling toter, with an option for residents to downsize to a 35- or 65-gallon toter at no charge within 90 days. This gives residents who produce less waste the option to scale their toter according to their usage.

## Discussion topics/ future considerations:

### *Policy and infrastructure:*

- **Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution timeline:** Continuing process Barry began last year and completed the initial steps by submitting a letter of interest and passing a Resolution for Village participation. The next step is scheduling a consultation with Mark Pruitt from The Power Bureau to establish terms.
- **Relevant grant opportunities:** Grant writer is currently in the process of preparing our application for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Funding would be used to hire a consultant to develop a climate action plan.
- **Climate Action Plan Special Meetings:** Events and education are the focus of our regular meetings, still have climate action plan planning discussions in addition. Separate planning meetings are needed to help form and have residents weigh in on the discussion. The commission and village are in the process of seeking a grant opportunity to help with this plan.
- **Status of recommendation for bike lanes on Westchester Blvd/Canterbury/Mayfair:** Westchester joined a consortium with four other towns in July 2023 to collaborate with CMAP to improve bike path safety and access. The consortium will discuss plans in 2024, finalize them in 2025, and implement them in 2026. Each town will contribute staff and determine which safety improvements (e.g. 31st & Mannheim/Cermak crossings) and



accessibility features (e.g. bike lanes, racks) they can implement based on resources and grants.

*Education and events:*

- **Concerts in the Park:** Host during one of the concerts in the park. The village is already helping with these events and GROW would need to present details so the proposal can be presented. A point of discussion is where it would be held and where the cars could be parked, the number of cars, etc.
- **Education in Schools:** GROW will forward on curriculums for Westchester schools to consider for their school year 24 – 25 planning.
- **Metropolitan Water Reclamation District:** organize tours at Stickney site tour in fall.
- **Sidewalk Shaving:** Though essential, cement production creates significant greenhouse gases due to CO<sub>2</sub> released during limestone heating. To address this, sidewalk shaving offers a more sustainable solution. It tackles safety concerns, reduces costs and waste, and lowers emissions from both transportation and new cement production. Quantifying the Village's sidewalk shaving efforts could highlight this environmental benefit.