

WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
November 10, 2021

A record of a legally convened meeting of the Environmental and Forestry Commission of the Village of Winnetka, which was held in the Council Chambers at Village Hall, 510 Green Bay Road, Winnetka, Illinois, Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at 7:00 pm.

Call to Order:

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.; Voting Members present: Chairperson Chuck Dowding, Commissioners Roseann Park-Jones, Liz Kunkle, and Patrick Hanley. Voting Members absent: Commissioners David Varca, Ted Wynnnychenko, and Barry Sylvester. A quorum of presently appointed members was present. Village Council Representative absent: Kim Mancini. Student Representatives present: Scarlett Harper and Marcus Buccellato. Staff Representative present: Diana Puga, Public Works Analyst. Public present: Seven (7) members of the public were present.

1) Introduction & Chair's Remarks:

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and welcomed all Commission members and the public. Staff Representative Puga took roll call for attendance.

2) Public Comment:

No public comment was made on an item that was not on the agenda, all members of the public in attendance were asked to read their public comments during the interaction with the Lakota Group.

3) Review and Approval of Minutes:

a) Approval of the September Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the September 8, 2021, minutes. The motion was moved by Commissioner Kunkle and seconded by Commissioner Hanley.

AYES:	DOWDING, PARK-JONES, KUNKLE, HANLEY
ABSENT:	VARCA, WYNNYCHENKO, SYLVESTER
NAYS:	NONE

4) New Business, Old Business/Updates:

a) Update to EFC Contribution to Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan Discussion

Chairperson Dowding opened the agenda items discussion with general comments. He provided an overview of the timeline for the Sustainability Plan and shared how several agenda items all intertwine with one another. Three developments: (1) Drafted the

Winnetka Sustainability Chapter (draft) and was finalized in Spring of 2021 and accepted by the EFC, (2) in August 2021, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus finalized their Climate Action Plan and was adopted by several municipalities, (3) In September, the State of Illinois passed the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, which transformed the aspirational goals of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to legal goals.

The draft Sustainability Plan was developed from the Greenest Region Compact 2 (GRC2) which was adopted by the Village Council and synthesized by the EFC along with Public Works Staff.

i) Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) focuses on two focus topics: Mitigation and Adaptation, where mitigation is the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and where adaptation is the response to climate change.

Mitigation: Energy sources need to decarbonize the Illinois Plan for Zero Emission by 2050 is defined by CEJA to include large utility scale solar, wind, and nuclear power generation systems (GRC2 Focus Area). Other significant contributions: Decarbonization of transportation (Mobility) and reduction/optimization of building energy usage (Sustainable Communities) The remaining GRC2 areas contribute to decarbonization in minor ways.

Adaptation: While the goal of decarbonization is paramount to slowing climate change, its effects are already present requires timely action. Municipalities must adopt practices and policies to reduce the damage that climate change effects already bring to ensure a safer future. Winnetka's greatest local exposure to climate change includes but is not limited to flooding (both residential and transportation systemic), changing lake levels, and effects of unusual temperature events on flora and fauna.

ii) Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)

(1) Given Winnetka's Membership in the Illinois Municipal Electrical Agency (IMEA) and its operation of an IMEA supplemental power plant, the first two provisions of the Senate Bill 2408 (SB2408), or the Climate Equitable Jobs Act, are of particular significance to Winnetka. The Act requires municipal coal, including Prairie State, to be 100% carbon-free by December 31, 2045, with an interim emissions reductions goal of 45% from existing emissions by no later than January 1, 2035. If that emissions reduction requirement is not achieved by December 31, 2035, they must retire one or more units or reduce emissions by 45% from existing emissions by June 30, 2038.

Requires municipal natural gas-fired units to reach zero emissions by 2045, unless companies convert units to green hydrogen or similar technology that can achieve zero carbon emissions.

IMEA will finish paying off its 15% ownership of Prairie State in 2035. The City of Naperville consumes 35% of power, if anyone wants to leave IMEA they must notify IMEA by 2030. Winnetka lakeshore plant is excluded from the second provision as its natural gas turbines are too small to be considered in the act. The challenge is that Winnetka needs to continue to operate the plant to gain advantage of the capacity payments given by IMEA, which requires about \$3.3 billion dollars, over the next 10 years, to upgrade the plant.

A pyramid image was shared during the meeting that reflected the three areas of focus for the reprioritization of the GRC2 relative to the important and necessary areas of the CAP to reduce carbonization. The areas of focus within the pyramid reflect the importance, the three areas of focus are: the more important area being Energy, the second most important being Mobility, and the third most important being Sustainable Community.

iii) Working Draft: Winnetka Sustainability Chapter

There are six (6) areas and associated goals the EFC identified for the 2040 Plan Discussion. Energy and Mobility were included due to their importance in reducing carbonization and fall under mitigation plan. The remaining areas include Water, Land, Recycling, and Leadership all of which are related to adaptation, or a combination of adaptation and mitigation.

Chairperson Dowding read two important passages of the proposed Village Goals: (1) Stabilize bluffs and beaches to increase enjoyment of Lake Michigan and (2) Reduce to zero beach closures because of pollution. These goals are important to sustain the lakeshore brand Winnetka has.

iv) Municipal Resolution Endorsing the 2021 CAP for the Chicago Region

Commissioner Kunkle requested the EFC hold a discussion of the municipal resolution prior to the interaction with the Lakota Group. The resolution was drafted by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus in support of the CAP and allows governments to formally endorse the broad goals of the CAP. Before the resolution can be used as a framework for the Sustainability Draft, the resolution will need to be introduced to the Council and is in line with the request in 2018 to adopt the broad goals of the Greenest Region Compact 2 document. Commissioner Kunkle does

not believe there would be any opposition to adopting the resolution and would like the Commission to create a motion that they can recommend to Council for adopting or endorsing the resolution. Approximately 20 communities, including Highland Park and Wilmette, have endorsed the resolution.

Chairperson Dowding asked if Commissioner Kunkle would find it acceptable to amend 2030 to 2035, in the resolution, to be consistent with CEJA.

Commissioner Kunkle motioned that the EFC recommend to the Village Council that it endorse this resolution to express its support of the goals and objectives of the 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region and pledges to take strategic action to achieve these goals for a more resilient, equitable, and healthy future with the recommended edit by Chairperson Dowding. Commissioner Hanley seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor; the motion passed.

AYES:	DOWDING, PARK-JONES, KUNKLE, HANLEY
ABSENT:	VARCA, WYNNYCHENKO, SYLVESTER
NAYS:	NONE

b) Lakota Interaction with EFC and Audience

The Lakota Group began with providing an explanation of what Comprehensive Plans are. Comprehensive Plans is a policy directive looking forward 20 years. Need to let the process inform other components of the community, mobility and parking, zoning, etc. Needs to be easy to read and navigate.

The pillars provided by the Lakota Group are used as a benchmark amongst other communities. It was made clear that that the Board believes it is imperative that under each pillar is a clear definable mission goal statement that drives everything, and initiatives and implementation strategies over 1, 3, 5, 10 and 20 year horizons. The pillars can be modified if the EFC Commissioners feel they do not represent the right category or policy.

Student Representative Buccellato asked how they make the goals identified achievable? How do they know they've reached their goal?

Science suggests there are measurable metrics to get us to zero footprint, how are they projecting that specifically with new technologies and a growing world. Hypothetical algorithms.

Commissioner Hanley stated that it speaks to building in accountability and building in opportunities to refresh the language of the document and to see where we are, and if they do veer off course, whether because it was projected wrong or it's not being done, then this serves as a mechanism to re-evaluate.

Commissioner Dowding stated the biggest challenges for the Village are managing and monitoring, there needs to be budgetary items in the Village Budget that provide for monitoring. He states we need to be able to monitor how much waste is being diverted to recycling? How many driveways are not using coal-based sealants? There need to be policies that require little measurement as monitoring can become more costly. There may be more requirements in the future for monitoring.

Student Representative Harper stated if there will be measurements, then they need to find very specific actions to take, even if its more complicated or difficult to implement.

Chairperson Dowding stated that Brian Keys will most likely need to have a consultant similarly to the consultant for water. Winnetka will have to decide if we stay or leave IMEA, and if we stay, which direction are we going to push them. Chairperson Dowding stated he received this information from Naperville who have read through the entire IMEA contract.

Lakota Group asked which low fruit initiatives, that can be rolled out at the beginning of the comprehensive plan, they could provide them. Initiatives that can positively impact a large number of people and is visible is ideal. The Commissioners provided the following additional initiatives: Village wide composting, bicycle path/routes to the high school, commit to transforming some parkways and right-of-ways into gardens, pollinator gardens, and community gardens.

The Lakota Group also asked the Commissioners to identify a community partner(s) to help move these forward. The Commissioners identified the following community partners: Park District, Go Green Winnetka, New Trier School District, Sustainability clubs.

Commissioner Kunkle stated that she would like to understand what the Council wants to do in this process. She believes they should be setting the vision and leading. One example she provided is Composting and the language that exists on the website which sounds like the Village does not care if the residents compost or not.

Commissioner Park Jones suggested the Village provide residents with ideas on how to make their homes more energy efficient.

The Lakota Group asked the Commissioners if they could identify any municipality or village the EFC admires based on its handling of energy and other related issues. Commissioner Kunkle replied that there is not one in particular, as they are all different in various ways, but Evanston and Highland Park are very forward thinking.

The Commissioners also identified the scale of Winnetka as a challenge. There was a discussion about a Sustainability coordinator that can share resources with residents, Village, Schools, and Library.

Other low hanging fruit initiatives: electrifying municipal fleet and establishing standards for homeowners and the Village replanting trees.

Chairperson Dowding opened the floor for residents to provide public comment for the Lakota Group.

Winnetka Presbyterian Church Employee and Volunteer, Robert Lewis, made a public comment regarding his interest in geothermal energy, the concern for geothermal energy, and is currently conducting research on how to implement it. Currently a church in Oak Park has transitioned to geothermal and solar energy. He is looking to visit the Church and would encourage someone from the Village to visit as well.

Resident Teri Cross made a comment regarding support, and increased support, for a circular economy, keeping as much waste out of landfills as possible, better education and communication of recyclables including Styrofoam and providing Village-wide composting.

Resident Stephen Huels made a comment regarding the impact of climate change and the impact of run-off Winnetka sends into the shed of Lake Michigan and the run-off we send to communities downstream. Should be taking steps now to deal with the most likely outcomes of climate change. Our water quality is also impacted by ongoing plastic pollution, and further compromised by water polluting chemicals used in manufacturing, industrial, and consumer products. While the EPA and IEPA standards are critical, they must be expanded to pick up new threats. Offered four recommendations for inclusion:

1. Need to focus on eliminating pollution output into the water shed
2. Protect delivery system for water system for safe water, remove lead from Village infrastructure and need to enhance chemical and biological monitoring to detect emerging threats
3. Identify and prioritize water conservation strategies that helps reduce the Village water footprint
4. Champion water capturing land use strategies, encourage private lawn conversion into water capturing native landscapes, and implement native habitats in public spaces such as parkways, Green Bay Trail

Resident Elijah Gray made a comment regarding the importance of coordinating responsibility between the Village and Park District in caring for the Green Bay Trail. Stated that there is nothing easier to understand, is measurable, affects a large number of people, is easy to implement, and is visible than improving the habitat, use, and beauty of the Green Bay Trail. Surveys done in the past suggest a wide majority of people approve allocating resources to improving the trail. Some ideas for improvements: remove alien plant species, plant more native species, improve drainage issues, install historical and educational signs, etc.

Resident Jessica Bollhoefer has been working in Real Estate and Sustainability for 15 years and assists corporations and clients with their path to net zero carbon. She shared an IPCC effort that reports there is nothing we can do about the next 10 years; we must adapt and must figure out how to live with what we've done, and what do we do now to impact the next generation. She agrees and believes it is critical that the Village integrate sustainability in every aspect of the plan and believes incorporating accountability and measurability is super important. Low hanging fruit she identifies is water testing and water recapture. On behalf of Go Green Winnetka, they believe it is important that GHD Emissions baseline is measured, and we study options for net zero carbon pathway.

Winnetka Park District Board Member Cynthia Rapp stated the Park District is interested in partnering on environmental issues and have undertaken projects with mindfulness, such as paperless registration that help support environment. They are reviewing the GRC2 documents to see how they can be more supportive. They have taken advantage of the IMEA grant and are transitioning to LED lighting at the A.C Nielsen Tennis Courts and had Geothermal installed. One area that needs attention but is unsure how to pursue is the Waterfront, which is a key focus for the Park District.

Resident Pat Collins submitted the following comment via email: Urges the Village institute and subsidize Village wide composting. She and her husband have been composting with Collective Resources Composting for about two years and has reduced the garbage that goes to landfills by about 1/3. Also, composting reduces the amount of garbage going into the landfill, is a reusable resource and easy to do. Winnetka should support and subsidize convenient reasonable cost composting. If the Village reduces the cost, I believe many more Winnetka families would be composting. This would be an easy, immediate, and cost-effective initial reduction of Winnetka's carbon footprint. It would also bring Winnetka in line with other nearby communities which have already instituted convenient cost-effective composting, such as Evanston and Skokie.

Resident King Poor submitted the following comment via email: When the village decided to participate in the Prairie State plant in 2007, neither natural gas nor wind or solar were

then practical alternatives to the generating capacity that Prairie State could provide. And there's no sense now debating that good-faith decision in hindsight. But Winnetka's role in building and now continuing the operations of Prairie State provide further reasons for our village to become a leader in promoting sustainable energy and conservation. And it may do that as part of its 2040 plan. Below we offer five areas where the village may provide such leadership: Public Education on Energy Use and Conservation, Target Renewable Energy Sources, Permit Community Solar Like Most Other Towns, Green Building Code. These five ideas are the start of a conversation about how our village may become a leader in sustainable energy and conservation. And our 2040 Plan should play a key role for Winnetka to demonstrate that leadership.

5) Communications:

a) Approval of December Communication Items

The Commission reviewed the December Communications Items which included Holiday Tree Pick-Up, Holiday Lights Recycling, Commercial District Business Lighting, Use of natural light during winter, and Styrofoam Recycling. The Commissioners inquired about the Pumpkin Composting Event, Staff Liaison Puga informed the Commission that within the first 30 minutes, Public Works staff loaded the truck at minimum three times. Commissioner Kunkle inquired if there are reports on volume of pumpkins collected and asked if there could be a comparison for previous years. She also shared that some communities host two separate composting events: one being a regular drop off and the second being a pumpkin smash. Commissioner Kunkle also requested the communication items from the canceled October meeting be included in the next month's meeting agenda for discussion. The Commission requested the Green Awards Application be included in the Winter Winnetka Report. Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the December Communications Items which was moved by Commissioner Park-Jones and seconded by Commissioner Hanley.

AYES:	DOWDING, PARK-JONES, KUNKLE, HANLEY
ABSENT:	VARCA, WYNNYCHENKO, SYLVESTER
NAYS:	NONE

b) Discussion of January Communications Items

The Commission reviewed the December Communications Items which included the EFC Green Awards Application Reminder, Reduce Energy Use & Costs in Your Home & Business, Make the Switch from Incandescent Bulbs to LED, Holiday Lights Recycling, Ways to Avoid Using Poisonous Mouse Bait. The Commissioners discussed including the EFC Green Awards Application and Holiday Lights Recycling communication items in February as well.

6) **Commission/Staff Reports:**

Student Representative Harper informed the Commissioners and audience of an individual who is offering to switch out residents' current lights to LED lights.

7) **Open Forum:** None.

8) **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to adjourn which was moved by Commissioner Park-Jones and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle. The motion passed; the meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.