

**WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**June 9, 2021**

A record of a legally convened meeting of the Environmental and Forestry Commission of the Village of Winnetka, which was held virtually via Zoom, Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.; Voting Members present: Chairperson Chuck Dowding, Commissioners David Varca, Ted Wynnychenko, Rosann Park-Jones, and Liz Kunkle. Voting Members absent: Commissioners Chris Foley and Barry Sylvester. A quorum of presently appointed members was present. Village Council Representative absent: Jack Coladarci. Student Representatives present: Scarlett Harper and Marcus Buccellato. Staff Representatives present: Diana Puga, Public Works Analyst. Public present: Two members of the public were present.

**1) Introduction & Chair's Remarks:**

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and welcomed all Commission members and the public. Staff Representative Puga took roll call for attendance.

**Oral Declaration Regarding In-Person Meetings**

Chairman Dowding stated pursuant to recently adopted amendments to the Illinois Open Meetings Act included in Public Act 101-0640, public bodies may, in certain circumstances, hold entirely virtual public meetings without a quorum physically present in any one location. On March 17, 2020, President Rintz issued a Declaration of Emergency pursuant to the authority granted by the Village Code, the Illinois Municipal Code, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act to address the health threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 29, 2020, Governor Pritzker issued a Disaster Proclamation that declared in-person attendance at public meetings of more than ten people at the regular public meeting location to be infeasible, in accordance the Open Meetings Act, as amended by Public Act. 101-0640. On June 16, 2020, Village President Rintz executed a written determination that given the on-going emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person meetings of the Village's Village Council are not practical or prudent at this time and until further notice. In accordance with the Governor's Disaster Proclamation and the Village President's Declaration of Emergency and Determination regarding meetings of the Village Council, I, as Chair of the Environmental & Forestry Commission hereby determine that in-person meetings of the Environmental & Forestry Commission are not practical or prudent at this time and until further notice.

**2) Public Comment:**

Two members of the public were present. Neither member of the public provided commentary. No public comments were submitted via email.

### **3) Review and Approval of Minutes:**

#### **a) Approval of the May 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the May 12, 2021 minutes. The motion was moved by Commissioner Kunkle and seconded by Commissioner Varca.

AYES: VARCA, PARK-JONES, KUNKLE, DOWDING

ABSENT: FOLEY, SYLVESTER

NAYS: NONE

### **4) New Business, Old Business/Updates:**

#### **a) Mayor's Monarch Pledge**

Chairperson Dowding provided a status update regarding the action items the Village has decided to undertake under the Mayor's Monarch Pledge:

1. Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat
2. Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location
3. Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan, or other city plans - Pending

The first action item has been completed and the third action item is still currently in progress.

Eagle Scout Troop 18 candidate, Michael Essig, has taken on action item 2, the planting and coordination to maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden in order to become an Eagle Scout. He has been working with Chairperson Dowding to coordinate the project and presented a PowerPoint outlining his plans for the project. He outlined four components of the garden: garden design and aesthetic, sustainability, information/education, and surroundings. The garden design and aesthetic consist of a garden with a natural design, Illinois native perennial plants, and to become a home for the butterflies. Sustainability consists of coordination amongst various groups to ensure the garden remains beautiful, memorandums of understanding, and a monthly maintenance schedule. Information/education consists of a link to a website using a QR code and the importance of the garden. Surroundings consist of a garden that blends with its surroundings and keeping natural grass. He also provided a sketch of the pollinator garden including placements of the native plants for the EFC to review. He concluded with a schedule outlining when the plans will be finalized and shared with the Village for approval and the planting of the garden.

Commissioner Wynnichenko inquired which Village staff would be reviewing and/or approving the proposed pollinator garden plans. Chairperson Dowding shared he received an email from the Village Forester Andrew Lueck that the permit application should be directed to James Bernahl. Staff Liaison Puga stated she would communicate with Andrew to confirm who will be reviewing and/or approving the permit and plans.

Commissioner Wynnichenko provided feedback regarding the semantics and verbiage of the presentation and the importance of the first two years of garden maintenance while the plants become established.

Commissioner Kunkle asked Commissioner Wynnichenko if in his experience a consistent commitment of a few hours a month at a time, in the first few years, is reasonable time allocated to maintain the garden. Commissioner Wynnichenko believes that it is and stated a variety of factors play a role in the ability of plants to become established, such as soil moisture. The commission also advised him that some plants will grow or take over more quickly than others, Michael stated that his sustainability plan should assist in mitigating over-growth.

Commissioner Kunkle asked Michael if he will be planning to use finished compost to prepare the soil or help with the plants. Michael responded that Chairperson Dowding had suggested he consider its use. Commissioner Kunkle also suggested it be something he consider and offered to discuss sources with him, she also informed him that our Public Works facility has a compost bin.

Commissioner Varca asked if Staff Liaison Puga can assist or be involved to ensure that the project continues to move along. Chairperson Dowding reviewed the proposed schedule by Michael which indicates that by the next EFC meeting, the project should be well underway and at the planting stage. He did suggest that the EFC use the meeting as an oversight internally. Staff Liaison Puga offered to speak with Village Forester, Andrew Lueck, and re-connect with Chairperson Dowding once there was clarity as to who should be receiving the application and plans and moving forward from there.

Chairperson Dowding drafted a statement of support that endorses the project. Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the statement, Commissioner Varca moved the motion and Commissioner Park-Jones seconded the motion. Chairperson Dowding asked if there was any discussion. Commissioner Kunkle suggested acronyms be spelled out and suggested other grammatical edits. Wording of the endorsement is as follows

The Environmental and Forestry Commission (EFC) endorses Michael Essig's Boy

Scout Eagle project, Sustainable Pollinator Garden (SPG) on Village Right of Way (ROW) between the Green Bay Trail (GBT) and the Elm St. RR station to fulfill the Village's commitment in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. It enhances the both the Village ROW as well as the GBT and provides education through its strategic visibility and community involvement.

Members of the EFC agree to weed and maintain the SPG for two of the months during the growing season between planting in 2021 and cutting back in 2022.

AYES: VARCA, PARK-JONES, WYNNYCHENKO, KUNKLE

ABSENT: FOLEY, SYLVESTER

NAYS: NONE

b) Pyrethroid Pesticide Legislation: Executive Summary

The EFC agreed to table the Executive Summary discussion to the next meeting.

c) Sustainability Chapter for 2040 Comprehensive Plan Review

Commissioner Kunkle suggested the discussion be tabled to the next meeting to allow the Commissioners to review the plan in its entirety and to provide Morgan with feedback. The plan is meant to be a document the EFC adopts and a tool the Lakota group can use when the Comprehensive Plan discussions begin.

The Commissioners had a discussion regarding deliverables they were to receive for the meeting. Some Commissioners received all deliverables and were successfully able to provide feedback, while others did not receive all deliverables. The commissioners requested the documents be shared again prior to the next meeting.

Chairperson Dowding shared there are four steps in the process: (1) to become knowledgeable about the details of the plan, (2) to add or amend the plan to be used by Lakota Group during focus group meetings, (3) for the EFC to continue to present the plan as a possible way to organize the 2040 Comprehensive Plan (4) engage Community Development in the process.

Student Representative Harper inquired how some of the items within the plan will be measured and/or enforced. Commissioner Dowding responded by asking Commissioner Kunkle to speak on the leaf blower ban to provide some context. Commissioner Kunkle shared that to enforce the ban, Chief of Police identified various landscaping companies working within Winnetka, drafted a pledge asking each landscape company to abide by the Village's policy, and prepared a cover letter with context. Over 25 companies have signed the pledge and were included in the Village's e-newsletter.

d) Sustainable Materials Management

i) Battery Recycling

Commissioner Kunkle shared that battery recycling continues to be a topic of conversation within Go Green Winnetka. Commissioner Kunkle shared the history of battery recycling in Winnetka, leading to the decision to end the battery recycling program due to a lack of a market to recycle. Staff Liaison Puga followed up by providing context and history on battery recycling and confirmed the reason it ended was due to the lack of market and availability of vendors who recycled batteries. She also provided information on additional resources shared with residents who inquire about battery recycling.

Student Representative Buccellato is considering creating a newsletter for his surrounding neighborhood with recyclable information.

It was suggested to create a blurb for the communications items. Staff Liaison Puga offered to forward any information regarding battery recycling to create a consolidate guide. Student Representative Buccellato asked to be involved.

ii) Styrofoam Recycling

Commissioner Kunkle clarified that styrofoam should be referred to as polystyrene, styrofoam being one brand of polystyrene. She shared the changes to the Village's styrofoam recycling program and provided some context to the changes. Staff Liaison followed up by sharing context to the program changes, including the overflow of Styrofoam, lack of space to store high volumes, and the need for more frequent collections from Dart.

5) Communications:

a) Approval of July Communication Items

The Commission reviewed the July Communication Items which the Paper Shredding Event, Hosting a Zero-Waste Event, Recycling Tips for Plastic Silverware, Styrofoam, and Stormwater-Friendly Landscaping. Commissioner Kunkle requested the verbiage in Recycling Tips for Plastic Silverware be changed from "caterer" to "vendor" and the verbiage in Recycling Tips for Styrofoam be changed from "Styrofoam" to "Polystyrene". She suggested to table the Recycling Tip for Plastic Silverware for revision. Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the June Communications Items which was moved by Commissioner Varca and seconded by Chairperson Kunkle.

AYES: VARCA, PARK-JONES, WYNNYCHENKO, KUNKLE

ABSENT: FOLEY, SYLVESTER  
NAYS: NONE

b) Discussion of August Communications Items

The Commission reviewed the upcoming August Communication items including Recycling Tips for Paper Napkins, Towels, and Tissues, Pumpkin Composting Event, and Curbside Leaf Collection. Commissioner Kunkle shared that she has been in communication with an organization called S.C.A.R.C.E that hosts a “Pumpkin Smash” and would potentially like to change the language for the Pumpkin Composting Event. Commissioner Kunkle suggested that the August Communication Items be more back-to-school oriented and should potentially include communication regarding the leaf blower ban. Chairperson Dowding also suggested speaking with Andrew to include something regarding the current drought period being experienced in the Northern Illinois area, shared that his trees are starting to lose leaves and is concerned about the loss of trees in Winnetka. Student Representative Harper suggested a communication item regarding donations of old clothing to organizations such as Goodwill and offered to write a draft. Commissioner Kunkle asked if it was possible for Staff Liaison Puga to forward all recycling communication items so she can revise and reorganize them for consideration at future EFC meetings.

6) Commission/Staff Reports: None.

7) Open Forum: None.

8) Adjournment:

There being no further business, Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to adjourn which was moved by Commissioner Varca and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle. The motion passed; the meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

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