

**WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2024**

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, January 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Chair Hanley called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Voting Members present: Commissioners Elizabeth Kunkle, Peter Eck and Tim Ring. A quorum of presently appointed members was present. Village Council Representative present: Robert Dearborn. Student Representative Present: Scarlett Harper. Interim Staff Liaison present: Erik Jensen, Assistant Public Works Director.

1) Introduction & Chair's Remarks:

Chair Hanley welcomed the group and explained that tonight's meeting was to have a discussion on several topics related to urban forestry including hearing from the Friends of the Green Bay Trail and Openlands and to begin conversations about recommending a buckthorn nuisance ordinance.

2) Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

3) Review and Approval of Minutes

a) Approval of the December Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Kunkle, seconded by Commissioner Ring to approve the minutes as presented.

AYES: KUNKLE, ECK, RING, HANLEY.

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: ANDREW, FREZADOS, VARCA.

4) New Business/Old Business Updates:

a) Presentation by Friends of the Green Bay Trail

From the audience, Mr. Bryan Lammers introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the work of the Friends of the Green Bay Trail organization. He introduced members of the group in attendance and overviewed the group's efforts for trailside restoration along the Green Bay Trail. He further elaborated on the difference between the Friends group and the "Chainsaw Gang" which helps eliminate dead wood along the trail.

Mr. Lammers discussed the Friends group's desire to remove and replace the invasive species along the slopes of the trail with native plantings. He explained some of the factors that would need to be considered including working with neighboring residential properties. He briefly overviewed the group's current proposal which would be to complete a demonstration plot along the trail.

A brief conversation followed on the challenges posed specifically by the steep slopes along the trail.

Chair Hanley noted that he had also asked for Openlands, an open space preservation nonprofit, to speak briefly tonight on some of their programs.

From the audience, Mr. Hector Carrasquillo spoke about Openlands and specifically their Treekeeper program. He explained that Openlands could assist with education initiatives. He passed out materials for the Commission and stated Openlands would be very open to working with Friends of the Green Bay Trail.

A conversation followed buckthorn mitigation, both along the trail and in the Village. Mr. Lammers briefly discussed the Illinois Exotic Weeds Act, and the power for municipalities to regulate buckthorn within their jurisdictions. A conversation followed on whether other municipalities had passed any regulations as a result. Ultimately, Chair Hanley stated the Commission could complete a more thorough review of a potential ordinance recommendation later in the year.

Chair Hanley returned to the question of the Friends' proposal for a demonstration plot and stated that was the most likely path forward.

Representative Dearborn explained that the charge to the Commission was to propose a plan and develop a program in accordance with the Green Bay Trail plan.

A conversation followed on how to proceed at the given time. Representative Dearborn suggested appointing a point person for the conceptual plan side of the proposal. Ultimately, Chair Hanley stated that a draft proposal would be brought forward for additional consideration.

5) Communications:

A conversation was held on the Communications items for February. A brief discussion of potential candidates for the Green Awards was held.

6) Commission/Staff Reports:

None.

7) **Open Forum:**

Chair Hanley asked if there were any updates for that evening from individual Commissioners' initiatives. There were none.

8) **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Chair Hanley asked for a motion to adjourn which was moved by Commissioner Kunkle and seconded by Commissioner Ring. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote; the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.