WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 12, 2025

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, March 12, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:
Chair Hanley called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Voting Members present: Chair Patrick Hanley and Commissioners Elizabeth Kunkle, Gregory Frezados, Tim Ring, David Varca, Peter Eck and Brandon Andrew. A quorum of presently appointed members was present. Village Council Representative absent: Bob Dearborn. Student Representative present: Scarlett Harper. Staff Liaison present: Elyse Steiner, Sustainability Coordinator.

1) **Introduction & Chair's Remarks:**
   None

2) **Public Comment:**
   None

3) **Review and Approval of Minutes**
   a) Approval of the January Regular Meeting Minutes
   A motion was made by Commissioner Frezados, seconded by Commissioner Kunkle to approve the minutes as presented.

AYES:	KUNKLE, FREZADOS, VARCA, RING, ECK, ANDREW, HANLEY.
NAYS:	NONE
ABSENT:	NONE

4) **Old Business Updates:**
   a) 2025 Green Award
   Elyse Steiner shared the Green Award nominations, and the commissioners discussed the merits of each one. They also discussed whether to choose a single winner or multiple winners in different categories. The consensus was to award the following:

   Sustainable residential building – Kaplan
   Sustainable residential yard – Collins
   Sustainable non-residential property – Potterfield

Commissioner Varca motioned and Commissioner Ring seconded approval of the awardees. Commissioners Hanley, Kunkle, Eck, Andrew, and Frezados voted in favor of the motion.

Elyse will work with Village staff to notify the winners and develop a communication plan to spread wider recognition in the community for these efforts. Village Council will present the awards at the April 15, 2025, meeting

b) 2025 Priorities and schedule
Chair Hanley asked that commissioners send him topics and volunteer to champion or invite speakers to engage in topics of interest.

c) Proclamations
Proclamations for the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge and Arbor Day are on the agenda for approval at the April 15, 2025, Village Council meeting.

d) Review of website changes
Commissioners were invited to peruse the Sustainability web pages and suggest any changes/ improvements.

5) New Business

a) Music Festival and other public events
Elyse communicated with Scott Meyers on plans to include sustainable practices in Music Fest planning. Scott responded that recycling and composting were already planned. Liz Kunkle suggested that more could be done to eliminate single-use plastic cups and other waste. She also raised the issue of promoting zero-waste for other public events such as the children’s fair, parades, etc.

Commissioner Varca volunteered to do further work on practices the Village could expect of public events and what the additional costs might be. Chairman Hanley volunteered to contact Scott about additional zero-waste measures for the Music Festival.

b) Dark Skies Initiative
The Commissioners viewed a brief video made by the community of Duck, NC explaining their Dark Sky ordinance to preserve the night sky and reduce nuisance artificial light at night. There is some interest in working with neighboring communities on standards. No further action was agreed to at the meeting.

c) Sustainability Advisory Group Regional Meetings

The Sustainability Coordinator from Highland Park reached out that the chair of their environmental commission is interested in networking and collaborating with other suburbs. Chair Hanley was supportive of the concept. Elyse will report back to Highland Park.

d) Commission name

The Village Comprehensive Plan recommends expanding the EFC's responsibilities "from forestry to a more comprehensive approach, including environmental initiatives, sustainability, and climate actions…Changing the name of the Commission to Climate Commission and expanding its scope and authority would give the Commission increased ability to recommend policy and implement its goals."

The Commissioners expressed interest in continued conversation about the EFC's mission, scope, and whether a name change is warranted. Chair Hanley offered to raise the issue with Council and Village leadership.

6) Communications:

None

7) Commission/Staff Reports:

Commissioner Kunkle shared information about the Recycle Coach tool that the Village will be incorporating into its website soon and her new role as a Recycle Coach client success manager.

Elyse Steiner summarized recent activity related to the IMEA contract extension deliberations.

8) Open Forum:

None.

9) Adjournment:

There being no further business, Chair Hanley asked for a motion to adjourn which was moved by Commissioner Ring and seconded by Commissioner Frezados. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote; the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.