

WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 9, 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, April 9, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Chair Hanley called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

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

1) Introduction & Chair's Remarks:

Chair Hanley remarked that EFC should look for ways to promote sustainability in other areas and incentivize residents to change behaviors.

2) Public Comment:

None

3) Review and Approval of Minutes

a) Approval of the March Regular Meeting Minutes

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

AYES: KUNKLE, FREZADOS, VARCA, ECK, HANLEY.

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: RING, ANDREW

4) Old Business Updates:

a) 2025 Green Award

Elyse shared the slides to accompany the award winner presentation. Commissioners Hanley, Kunkle, and Frezados plan to attend and will each present an award at the April 15 Village Council meeting. Elyse will work with Josie on: communicating awards in the weekly email to residents, including a summary in the summer Winnetka Record, and updating the Green Award web page with this year's winners. Elyse will ask winners if addresses can be revealed.

b) Making Music Festival and other public events zero-waste

Chair Hanley will reach out to Scott Meyers on ways to include sustainable practices in Music Fest planning (refillable water bottle stations, compostable cups, etc.). Could also talk with SPACE about their practices and suggestions to do more. Commissioner Varca reported that Village has no mention of sustainability in public event permit applications.

Fourth of July festivities managed by Park District. Steel drums used for trash and recycling are indistinguishable in the dark and no effort to avoid comingling/ contamination. Some better waste management practices could be adopted and possible grant money could be found to help pay for them.

Children's Fair coming up Jun 6-7 is another opportunity to reduce waste. LRS, GoGreen Winnetka, and Public Works support this event. Elyse to meet with Commissioner Kunkle in a follow up meeting to brainstorm ideas.

c) Commission name change

Commissioners discussed and voted to expand commission name to reflect Sustainability as a priority and within its purview. Unanimously agreed on Environmental, Forestry, and Sustainability Commission (EFSC) as the new preferred name. The recommendation will be brought before Village Council for consideration.

AYES: KUNKLE, FREZADOS, VARCA, ECK, HANLEY.

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: RING, ANDREW

5) New Business

a) Chicago River Day and Earth Day

President-elect Dearborn will give remarks at the Chicago River Day event taking place at the Skokie Lagoons on May 10. EFC Commissioners were invited to participate in the clean-up project.

No Earth Day events were planned by the Village for this year, but will consider doing something next year or support/ promote other events in the Village.

b) Lawn equipment take-back or rebate program

Trustee Dearborn said the Village is still working on enforcing the leaf-blower ban. Unsure how this type of program would work or how to fund. Naperville has started their own rebate program, so could possibly learn more about how theirs is run.

c) Additional environmental partnerships or designations

Commissioners expressed interest in other certifications or partnership programs like Tree City USA and Mayors' Monarch Pledge. Elyse mentioned some others such as Bee City and EV Ready and offered to send out a more comprehensive list.

Andrew Lueck will give a forestry update at the May EFC meeting. Elyse will invite Friends of the Green Bay Trail representative to also present an update of their plans at the May meeting.

6) Communications:

EFC Commissioners would like to resume adding sustainability-oriented communications to the weekly Village emails. Commissioner Eck proposed drafting a blurb to promote biking/sustainable mobility alternatives for June. Elyse said she would find out if Josie keeps a list of seasonal items and what type of communications would be acceptable.

Elyse also said she would develop a list of ideas raised by the EFC for further reflection. She will also attend Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus Environmental Committee meetings and give read-outs to the EFC.

7) Commission/Staff Reports:

With the elections finished and seats filled, Trustee Dearborn said the Caucus may be looking to conduct another Village survey.

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 Varca and seconded by Commissioner Eck. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote; the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.