

WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
February 12, 2020

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, February 12, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.; Voting Members present: Chairperson Chuck Dowding, Liz Kunkle, Mike Nielsen, and David Varca. Voting Members absent: Chris Foley, Barry Sylvester, and Rosann Park-Jones. A quorum of presently appointed members was present. Ex-officio Members present: none. Village Council Representative present: Jack Coladarci. Student Representative present: Marcus Buccellato. Staff Representatives present: Brendon Mendoza, Public Works Analyst, David Schoon, Director of Community Development, and Ann Klaassen, Senior Planner. Public present: Approximately 12 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.

2) Public Comment: Public comment is included under Agenda Item 6) New Business Item A).

3) Review and Approval of Minutes:

a) Approval of the January 8, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the January 8, 2020 minutes, which was moved by Commissioner Nielson and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle.

4) Communications:

a) Approval of February & March Communication Items:

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the February Communications Items which was moved by Commissioner Nielson, and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle.

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the March Communication Items, which was moved by Commissioner Nielsen, and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle.

b) Discussion of April Communications Items:

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the April Communications Items, which was moved by Kunkle, and seconded by Commissioner Nielson.

5) Commission/Staff Reports:

a) EFC Green Award Nomination(s):

Staff Representative Mendoza stated that included in the agenda packet is a nomination received for the Environmental and Forestry Commission (“EFC”) Green Award, for Jim Stier, the Village Forester for his service.

Staff Representative Mendoza mentioned that a copy of the EFC Green Award Nomination Application is included in the agenda packet and can be used if anyone has a nomination they would like to submit.

(Attached in the minutes is a nomination for Reprise Coffee Roasters (950 Green Bay Road) that was received at the meeting.)

6) New Business, Old Business/Updates:

a) Village of Winnetka Comprehensive Plan Discussion with the Lakota Group

Community Development Director David Schoon introduced the Lakota Group.

The Lakota Group introduced themselves to the Commission; Scott Freres, President, Becky Hurley, Senior Land Use Advisor, Siraj Asfahani, Project Manager, and Scott Ruhland, Senior Associate. Freres provided an overview of the Lakota Group comprehensive plan process.

Freres stated the Lakota Group is benchmarking the Village’s new comprehensive plan to ten other communities in the United States of comparable demographics. Freres stated many of the environmental recommendations the Commission has are similar to the other communities.

Chairperson Dowding asked if each Commissioner could discuss their goals with the Lakota Group.

Chairperson Dowding stated that a difficulty the Commission has struggled with is communication with the Park District through a staff liaison on the Commission. Chairperson Dowding mentioned the use of the GRC2 framework as a tool for incorporation of sustainability into the new comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Kunkle stated she is a fan of the Evanston “CARP” plan and how it is structured. Commissioner Kunkle mentioned that she developed a list that includes priorities within each GRC2 goal. Commissioner Kunkle discussed her list.

Commissioner Nielson stated that the Winnetka beaches are underutilized as they are often empty and that there can be improvements for use of the beaches. Commissioner Nielson discussed ideas of open space. Commissioner Nielson also mentioned that the Commission needs the ability to have action.

Commissioner Kunkle mentioned that a real issue is the jurisdiction of the EFC, and that the ordinance is very narrow. Commissioner Kunkle mentioned that the powers of the Commission need to be expanded and modernized. Commissioner Kunkle stated the Commission should change its name to the Climate Commission.

Commissioner Varca stated that representation from other commissions is important. He mentioned that a good idea would be to be able to assist the Village Council with items that the Commission can take action on, but also respect the Village Council. Commissioner Varca mentioned water and the landfill as important items to consider. Commissioner Varca also mentioned the long-term planning of the landfill as a point for consider. Commissioner Varca mentioned that he thinks incorporating environmental suggestions throughout the Comprehensive plan and as its own individual section with action items would be beneficial.

Student Representative Buccellato stated improvements to the Village bike transportation routes such as the bike path could really improve the community by making residents want to bike. Commissioner Kunkle provided background to Student Representative Buccellato’s involvement with environmental initiatives and his role at New Trier High School with the Environmental Club. Buccellato stated that they discuss a lot regarding composting and recycling in the Environmental Club.

Trustee Coladarci mentioned that the EFC should discuss if it is a policy and education or an implementation commission. Trustee Coladarci mentioned another important consideration is the storm water agreements between different governing bodies, and that a good idea is to have liaisons between governing bodies as it provides helpful insight during discussions.

Chairperson Dowding stated that the EFC is the only commission that is administered by the Public Works Department and all of the other Village commissions are through the Village Manager’s Office.

Trustee Coladarci asked Freres if the Lakota Group could compare if other environmental commissions are implementation or are advisory based.

Commissioner Kunkle mentioned that environmental and sustainability initiatives are not an “add-on” and should not be prioritized last when developing the comprehensive plan.

Chairperson Dowding asked for public comment.

Scarlett Harper, a fifth grader at a local school, wanted to mentioned that it is really important to consider where we are at now and to make changes now, and to include kids. She mentioned that kids are open to change and can bring change into action. Mrs. Harper mentioned a few initiatives of the local school she attends.

Jessica of 538 Meadow, is representing Go Green Winnetka and provided a brief background of Go Green Winnetka. She stated after reviewing the GRC2 framework and wanted to mention the important aspects. She stated that benchmarks are important. She went through each of the GRC2 framework objectives and provided feedback.

Craig Witty of 654 Ash Street, mentioned he is a member of Go Green Winnetka. Mr. Witty mentioned the GRC2 framework provided a good response to environmental issues. He stated the benefits of residents volunteering to accomplish goals and address environmental issues.

Rick Prohof, a resident of Wilmette, stated sustainability is the key to preserve the Earth. He mentioned how he in the past participate in recycling initiatives to save the planet, and that it is up to the younger generation to help sustain the Earth.

Lynn Sanders of 995 Pine Street, stated it is important to involve the youth with sustainability. She stated she is concerned with the lack of understanding with the Park District. She was concerned as there is a project to modify the local bluffs for concessions stands. She stated she is hopeful that collaboration takes place between different groups for sustainability.

Joan, resident of Winnetka, stated she became aware of the bluffs being modified for parking spots and was concerned. She stated that she attended a Park district meeting and found out that they are designing the bluffs in ways that she would be not prefer for environmental reasons. She stated its best to keep Winnetka in a way to use the Winnetka environment. She also mentioned that she wants the quality of water to be good enough where she does not have to use a filter system.

Dwight of 434 Berkeley, provided a brief history of Winnetka. He provided history on various environmental landmarks throughout the Village. He stated that bluff protection from a past plan “bluff protection” has not been achieved and stressed its importance.

Ted Wynnynchenko, stated he appreciates everything that the EFC does, he mentioned that the future pay to throw refuse program is exciting, and he mentioned the importance to do things now. He stated he is disappointed that things are not changing, and stated that if the EFC does not have “teeth” then it is not going to matter as people will not change.

Steve Huels of 804 Prospect Avenue asked that the Commission ask themselves why not lead as Winnetka with the best examples.

(Also included as Public Comment is an email sent by Elisha Gray and has been attached to the minutes.)

b) Village Recycling Guidelines Communications: 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 Nielson. The motion passed, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.