

**WINNETKA ENVIRONMENTAL AND FORESTRY COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**October 14, 2020**

A record of a legally convened meeting of the Environmental and Forestry Commission of the Village of Winnetka, which was held Virtual via Zoom, Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

**Oral Declaration Regarding In-Person Meetings**

Chairperson Dowding read the following 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

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.; Voting Members present: Chairperson Chuck Dowding, Liz Kunkle, Chris Foley, and David Varca. Voting Members absent: Barry Sylvester, Rosann Park-Jones, and Ted Wynnychenko. A quorum of presently appointed members was present. Village Council Representative absent: Jack Coladarci. Student Representatives present: Marcus Buccellato and Scarlett Harper. Staff Representative present: Brendon Mendoza, Public Works Analyst. Public present: One member of the public was present.

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

Chairperson Dowding called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and welcomed all Commission members and the public. Staff Representative Mendoza took roll call for attendance.

**2) Public Comment: None.**

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

a) Approval of the September 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the September 9, 2020 minutes, which was moved by Commissioner Varca and seconded by Commissioner Foley.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnychenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None

b) Approval of the September 24, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the September 24, 2020 minutes, which was moved by Commissioner Varca and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnychenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None

4) New Business, Old Business/Updates:

a) Village of Winnetka Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Chairperson Dowding stated Commissioner Kunkle and he contacted the Village Manager Bahan regarding the possibility of a Village sustainability intern through the AmeriCorps or Federal College Work Study Program ("FCWSP"). Chairperson Dowding stated the response received is that the Public Works Department is being reorganized into two (2) separate departments, Public Works, and Engineering, Public Works Director Saunders is retiring at the end of the year and that the timing of the request is not ideal as the Village is holding the line on new expenditures and the restructuring of the two (2) departments taking place.

Chairperson Dowding reminded the Commission that a staff member with sustainability responsibilities is a key recommendation for the Village's New 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Chairperson Dowding stated he still feels strongly regarding a sustainability intern and intends to have further discussions with Village Manager Bahan and Public Works Director Saunders as the cost is minimum for a sustainability intern through the FCWSP. Chairperson Dowding stated the details regarding cost were not shared in the original communications and plans to follow-up with Village Manager Bahan and Public Works Director Saunders to include the information. Chairperson Dowding stated he spoke with the FCWSP Officer at Loyla University, who is interested and enthusiastic to provide a student for this position.

Chairperson asked the group for comments. Commissioner Varca asked if an intern was to be hired now, when would they start? Chairperson Dowding stated it could be within a

month or so when a student is found. Commissioner Varca stated the reason why he is asking this is as the Village's New Comprehensive Plan has been put on hold until at least next year, that this sustainability intern would be tasked with assisting the EFC with sustainability initiatives, opportunities, and instrumental for the EFC for the new Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Kunkle stated she feels strongly regarding a point person for the EFC and its sustainability initiatives and has been advocating for this for years. Commissioner Kunkle stated she likes Commissioner Varca's point as now is the time to have a sustainability person to assist with the Village's new Comprehensive Plan and other initiatives. Commissioner Kunkle stated that the bigger issue regarding the sustainability intern is while the departments are being organized, that a new intern is being proposed and may be difficult to include during the departmental transitions.

Commissioner Kunkle stated that she recently received an email from Edith Makra of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus regarding the next round of AmeriCorps volunteers who are sustainability focused and could be involved with Village sustainability initiatives. Commissioner Kunkle stated the application for the next round of interns (2021-2022) is due November 10, 2020 and stated it is a long shot for next year but does not see a downside of filling out the application to express interest and declining if there are not funds available. Commissioner Kunkle stated there are options available for the sustainability intern, such as the AmeriCorps Intern, which would be slightly more costly, or the FCWSP intern which would be less costly. Commissioner Kunkle stated these options and demonstrating the value of the intern need to be presented to Village Manager Bahan, and Public Works Director Saunders and that the Commission should continue to present options. Commissioner Kunkle stated she appreciated that Staff Representative Mendoza was mentioned as available to assist the Commission in the interim as deemed appropriate.

Chairperson Dowding asked Staff Representative Mendoza about the status of the Public Works Forestry Intern. Staff Representative Mendoza stated that the intern is included in the proposed 2021 budget, and the 2021 budget has not been adopted yet.

Chairperson Dowding asked Commissioner Kunkle to put together a one (1) to two (2) page document of additional information for the AmeriCorps sustainability intern and collectively be presented to Village Manager Bahan, Public Works Director Saunders, and Director of Engineering, Jim Bernahl and Village Manager Bahan, as the sustainability intern may be even through the Village Manager's office instead of Public Works.

Commissioner Foley stated it is conceptually a great idea, but stated the communication to Village Management should be subject to the financial and administrative discretion of the Village and does not want to usurp Village authority. Commissioner Kunkle agreed but to continue the discussion with the Village, and does not want to appear to ignore the concerns mentioned by Village Manager Bahan regarding bad timing, cost, and logistics and with that in mind, request reconsideration of the request. Chairperson Dowding stated he hopes that a sustainability coordinator be incorporated in the Village's new comprehensive plan, but an intern would be steps towards that goal.

Commissioner Varca suggested that as part of the motion that the Commission include the further conversation with Village Staff subject to financial and ability to manage the position so that the intent is understood by anyone reading the motion.

Commissioner Kunkle moved that the Village Council create a position whether full time, part time, intern, or other, to act as a sustainability coordinator for the Village, subject to Village Management consideration and was seconded by Commissioner Varca.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnnychenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None

Commissioner Kunkle moved; that the Village submit an application to express interest in possibly hosting a GRCorps member for the 2021-2022 internship year with the note that this is not a formal commitment, but allows the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to request a position that an intern be available, and if local funding become available that the Village enter a formal agreement with the GRCorps member in August of 2021. Commissioner Foley seconded this motion.

Commissioner Varca & Commissioner Foley both stated they would like to have discussion to learn more about this item before proceeding to vote. Commissioner Kunkle stated there is a deadline of November 10, 2020 to submit an application to express interest in committing to an intern in 2021 and that the submission is not a formal commitment but allows the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to request a position on the Village's behalf and if funding is available from AmeriCore and the Village approves the position, then the parties enter into a formal agreement regarding the GRCorps member in August of 2021.

Commissioner Foley stated his concern that the motion was previously passed, which requires further discussion with Village Staff and stated this additional motion may be a bit much at once. Commissioner Kunkle stated this is a function of presenting the information and keeping the opportunity of having a GRC member for 2021-2022 season which would go along with the previous motion as an option. Commissioner Foley stated he thinks this option can be included as part of the discussion with Village staff instead of being approved as a separate motion through the EFC. Chairperson Dowding stated there

is an application for the Federal Work Study Program and suggested to complete both, and stated the cost structure and hours allocated to each option is significantly different.

Commissioner Varca stated that what if the previous motion was amended to empower Chairperson Dowding to explore the options with Village Staff and make the appropriate decision. Commissioner Varca stated the Village Manager's email was clear regarding cost and staff resources and stated that it could be a little much to still follow-up with an option that is not low cost.

Student Representative Harper stated that filling out the form is more of a way to keep the opportunity open and not lose the option, but something that would need to be done soon. Commissioner Kunkle stated she made the motion as the deadline is prior to the EFC's November meeting.

Chairperson Dowding and Commissioner Kunkle stated that they will follow-up with this opportunity as an option to Village staff as part of the motion made previous to this. Commissioner Kunkle withdrew her motion.

b) Village Recycling Guidelines Communications

Commissioner Kunkle stated she does not have an update at this time, but the edits were submitted at last month's meeting. Chairperson Dowding asked if the Village likely to update the Recycling Guidelines. Staff Representative Mendoza stated he can work on updating the Village's Recycling Guide with the submitted edits. Chairperson Dowding asked Staff Representative Mendoza to include updating the Village's Recycling Guide as one of the items the Commission would like Staff Representative Mendoza to work on.

Commissioner Kunkle stated that as the Village's recycling contract expires in early 2021 and there could potentially be a new hauler, and the information in the guidelines may be different depending on if a new hauler is awarded the contract that a large overhaul is not necessary right now as the guidelines may change. Commissioner Kunkle mentioned to make sure the current information is accurate and leave it on the website until the new recycling contract is awarded, and then work on and distribute the updated recycling guide following that.

c) New Village Website Discussion

Chairperson Dowding asked if the Commission had any suggestions for the sustainability page. Student Representative Harper stated the Village's Recycling Guide should be promoted on the Village Website.

d) Deerfield Climate Resolution

Commissioner Kunkle stated that she is the Champion to move forward with reviewing the GRC2 and Deerfield Resolution and incorporate them as deemed appropriate in preparation for when discussion resume for the Village's new Comprehensive Plan.

e) Mayor's Monarch Pledge

Commissioner Kunkle stated that the language of the pledge was provided in the agenda packet. Chairperson Dowding stated the action portion of the pledge does not seem to specifically say what actions are required but to commit to support the monarchs. Student Representative Harper stated that this is a pledge that could be referred to during discussions of other topics that includes monarchs. Commissioner Varca stated that to supplement the pledge, that the Commission could possibly undertake additional actions besides posting this on the Village website. The Commission discussed presenting this pledge to the Park District at a later date.

Commissioner Foley motioned that the Village Council and Village President adopt the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and was seconded by Commissioner Kunkle.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnynchenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None

f) Pesticides Discussion

Student Representative Harper presented a written article for the Village's communications in Spring related to her pesticides presentation from the September EFC meeting. Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to add this item in the next year mosquito season, which was moved by Commissioner Kunkle and seconded by Commissioner Varca.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnynchenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None

**5) Communications:**

a) Approval of November Communication Items

The Commission reviewed the November Communication Items. Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to approve the November Communications Items including modifications to the leaf collection article which was moved by Commissioner Kunkle and seconded by Commissioner Varca.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnynchenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None

b) Discussion of December Communications Items

The Commission reviewed the upcoming December Communication items. Commissioner Kunkle mentioned to move the EFC Green Awards Application Reminder to the January Communications. Student Representative Harper stated she would draft a communications article regarding mouse traps/bait. Chairperson Dowding and Commissioner Kunkle agreed that an article regarding Styrofoam recycling could be included in December's communications.

6) **Commission/Staff Reports:** None.

7) **Open Forum:**

Commissioner Kunkle stated a friend of hers who uses a private composting bin service, that a Public Works Refuse Staff accidentally collected the composting bin and emptied the container. Commissioner Kunkle mentioned that the container was not near her friend's normal refuse collection area. Commissioner Kunkle wanted to make sure Public Works Refuse employees are aware of what the containers look like so they are not accidentally collected moving forward. Staff Representative Mendoza stated he will follow-up with the Refuse Supervisor to address this.

Commissioner Kunkle stated that she spoke with Beth Drucker of Go Green Wilmette and that Wilmette modified their gas powered leaf blower ban last summer. Commissioner Kunkle stated in the future that she would like to revisit this topic. Student Representative Harper stated that there should be more education of why there is a ban.

8) **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Chairperson Dowding asked for a motion to adjourn which was moved by Commissioner Foley and seconded by Commissioner Kunkle. The motion passed, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

AYES: Foley, Varca, Kunkle

ABSENT: Park-Jones, Wynnychenko, Sylvester

NAYS: None