



1200 Wilmette Avenue
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

**MEETING MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY COMMISSION**

THURSDAY, December 17, 2020

6:30 P.M.

**VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – REMOTE MEETING
(VILLAGE HALL CLOSED DUE TO THE VILLAGE PRESIDENT’S DELCARATION OF
LOCAL DISASTER AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDER)**

Members Present: Julie Wolf, Chair
Arthur Haut
William Muno
Joel Feinstein
Amanda Ault

Members Absent: Kenneth Parkhill
April Cesaretti

Staff Present: John Adler, Director of Community Development
Kate Amoruso, Assistant to the Director of Engineering & Public Works
Kate McManus, Planner III
Alex Arteaga, Management Analyst

Guests: Linda Kurtz, Go Green Wilmette
Karen Glennemeier, League of Women Voters Wilmette

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Chair Wolf reminded Commissioners that due to the remote meeting, all votes would require a roll call. Ms. Amoruso provided a roll call vote to take Commissioner attendance, Commissioners Wolf, Ault, Feinstein, Haut, and Muno were in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Wolf directed the Commission’s attention to the draft minutes of the Environmental and Energy Commission meeting of October 26, 2020.

Chair Wolf called for a motion to approve the minutes, Commissioner Munro motioned to approve the minutes, Commissioner Ault seconded the motion, and Ms. Amoroso called a roll call vote on the approval of the minutes. All Commissioners in attendance voted in favor of approving the minutes, and the October 26, 2020 minutes were approved as drafted.

III. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Wolf informed the Commission about a Go Green Wilmette webinar that she attended relating to tree ordinances, and mentioned that it aligns with the Commission's plan of identifying this issue as a priority in the coming weeks.

IV. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Arteaga discussed the Village's Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan, noting that at previous meetings, Commissioners had discussed voting on to endorse the Plan. Mr. Arteaga provided a timeline for the approval of the Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan and informed Commissioners that it would be best to vote on endorsing the Plan at the next EEC meeting. Commissioner Haut asked to ensure that a link to the Master Bike and Active Transportation is included in future meeting documents.

Mr. Arteaga then discussed a Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Environmental Committee meeting that he had attended on December 15, 2021. The meeting covered a new Community Solar program that requires municipalities to formally enter the program on the behalf of their community, then residents would be able to enroll in the program and receive electricity supply from a renewable source. Mr. Arteaga mentioned that he needs to discuss this new program with Village leadership and will update the Commissioner as necessary. Commissioner Munro asked if this program is different compared to the various programs that are available now to individual residents, Mr. Arteaga replied that this program is different since it requires a municipality to endorse and promote the program to its residents.

V. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN UPDATE

Commissioner Feinstein discussed updates that he made to the Mobility chapter of the Draft Sustainability Plan. Commissioner Feinstein included mentions to the Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan where applicable, added language regarding electric vehicle charging stations being included in new commercial developments, and added current sidewalk ordinances information. Commissioner Haut asked Commissioner Feinstein what aspect of the current sidewalk ordinances he's looking to change, Commissioner Feinstein responded that current ordinances require 2/3rd's of residents in a given area to approve of a new sidewalk. Commissioner Feinstein sees this current ordinance being an obstacle and safety issue for Wilmette residents who walk, bike, and run. Commissioner Feinstein wants to see the ordinance changed to be more "pro-sidewalk." Commissioner Ault agreed that this current ordinance seems to be a detriment to average residents and as parkways are part of the public Right of Way (R.O.W.), she would support trying to amend this current policy. Chair Wolf added that sidewalk's and the lack thereof in certain areas of the Village is accounted for in the Master Bike and Active Transportation Plan.

Commissioner Feinstein then discussed the language he added regarding public education efforts to promote walking, biking, and running. And mentioned that the Village could take advantage of relationships with our schools and other community organizations to promote such messaging. Commissioner Feinstein also added more policy proposals that are designed to help serve the Village's disabled population.

VI. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Chair Wolf moved on to discuss the green and sustainable initiatives that the EEC will prioritize as the Commission moves towards finalizing the Draft Sustainability Plan. The first issue that Chair Wolf wants to prioritize is green energy programs (Community Solar, Renewable Energy Credits, etc.). Chair Wolf recalled some of the research and information that was presented to her when she previously served on Wilmette's Village Board, and noted that this topic has had community interest for a sustained period of time. Commissioner Muno agreed that this topic has community interest, and that with the new energy programs that are available, further research is warranted.

Chair Wolf proposed the idea of utilizing working groups to approach these green initiatives. So that work can be equally share amongst Commissioners and so the Commission can research and explore a multitude of topics. Chair Wolf also mentioned that the Commission has a variety of partnerships that we can utilize when researching these topics like Go Green Wilmette and surrounding community Commissions. Commissioner Ault asked for clarification regarding the Draft Sustainability Plan and if these selected green initiatives are being chosen from the Draft Sustainability Plan, Chair Wolf replied that Commissioner Ault was correct, Commissioner Ault supported recognizing green energy as an initiative for the Commission. Mr. Arteaga added that he has some prior research prepared over green energy topics, and that he will send these materials out to Commissioners.

Chair Wolf then suggested urban forestry as another topic the EEC could prioritize, noting the existing strong policies that are already employed in Wilmette, but that there is room for growth. Chair Wolf recognized the valuable forestry team that Wilmette has, in which she has previously worked with. Chair Wolf suggested that further private property tree protection ordinances could be explored, and that there are other policies that have been implemented in the Chicagoland area that could prove beneficial to Wilmette. Commissioner Muno mentioned that this initiative fits into our Climate chapter of the Draft Sustainability Plan and as such, supports this topic. Commissioner Ault added that the data collection aspects of this topic, regarding a tree inventory, would also prove beneficial.

Chair Wolf moved to suggest gas-powered lawncare equipment as another topic that could be prioritized by the Commission. Chair Wolf noted that this topic has received more interest as of late, and that there are current issues with enforcing Wilmette's seasonal gas-powered lawncare equipment ban. Commissioner Ault added that she thinks gas-powered lawncare equipment also negatively effects pollinators and insect populations, so she supports prioritizing this topic as well.

Last, Chair Wolf suggested the EEC prioritize issues surrounding habitats, including pollinators, native species, and dark skies initiatives. Chair Wolf requested Commissioner feedback on this possible topic. Commissioner Ault responded that the topic of habitats and surrounding issues fits well into our Sustainable Communities chapter of the Draft Sustainability Plan, and as such, supports prioritizing this topic.

Commissioner Munro suggested that an item from each chapter of the Draft Sustainability Plan should be chosen as possible topics to prioritize in the future. Commissioner Munro added that he would be glad to review the Draft Sustainability Plan, send recommendations to Mr. Arteaga, then have Mr. Arteaga forward these recommendations and applicable materials to the rest of the EEC. Mr. Arteaga mentioned that he's happy to help distribute materials to Commissioners as necessary.

Chair Wolf addressed the next EEC meeting, noting that Ms. Amoroso would send out a Doodle Poll to plan a meeting date and time that works for a majority of Commissioners.

Mr. Arteaga added that Village staff have until January 15, 2021 to provide feedback on the Draft Sustainability Plan. And that a target date for our next meeting sometime in the third or fourth week of January would be preferable. Mr. Arteaga also mentioned an email that he had received from Linda Kurtz of Go Green Wilmette, Mrs. Kurtz asked if Commissioner's would be willing to record a brief video pertaining to the Draft Sustainability Plan, these videos would be included in Go Green Wilmette's regular 2021 programming, and that the videos would be filmed once the Wilmette Sustainability Plan is finalized and adopted by the Village Board.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Karen Glennemeier noted that she supports a municipal aggregation program that includes automatic enrollment of all Village electrical accounts into such a program, noting that a green energy program that relies on individual sign-ups will not be as effective.

Linda Kurtz commented that she agrees with Karen Glennemeier regarding a municipal aggregation program. Linda thanked the Commission for all of their work and noted that Go Green Wilmette would be happy to assist however needed regarding the upcoming working groups for green initiatives. Last, Linda mentioned that the annual Going Green Matters Fair will not occur in 2021, so that the Draft Sustainability Plan videos filmed by Commissioners would be appreciated.

Mr. Arteaga noted that no public comments had been received at publiccomment@wilmette.com and no public comments were provided through YouTube Live.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Munro moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Feinstein seconded the motion. Ms. Amoroso provided a roll call on the motion to adjourn the meeting, all

Commissioners present voted in favor of adjourning the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alex Arteaga
Management Analyst, Village Manager's Office