

Memorandum

TO: Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commissioners

FROM: _____
Andrew D. DeCanniere, Commissioner, Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commission

DATE: March 15, 2022

**SUBJECT: February 23, 2022 Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commission (SEAC)
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, this meeting is being held virtually. Members of the public who wish to comment as to an item on the published agenda must submit their statement or question in writing to Sustainability@skokie.org and all properly submitted statements or questions will be presented to Commission members and made part of the record. Written comments may also be submitted by mail to Village of Skokie, Attn: Sustainability Commission, 5127 Oakton St., Skokie, IL 60077, or via the Village's drop box located by the public entry. This meeting was streamed live on YouTube on the Village's YouTube channel, which can be found at www.youtube.com/user/thevillageofskokie. A recording of this meeting may also be viewed online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdt5QxFyk.

Present: Chairman Jennifer Grossman, Commissioners Christopher Buccola, Andrew DeCanniere, Michael Gershbein, Lisa Gotkin, Olivia Mahoney, Rick Moskovitz, Emily Okallau, Robert Render, Charles Saxe, Trustee Liaison Khem Khoeun, Trustee Liaison Ralph Klein, Director of Public Works / Staff Liaison Max Slankard, Assistant to the Public Works Director / Staff Liaison Elizabeth Zimmerman

Also Present: John Lockerby, Village Manager
Lauren Grodnicki, Skokie resident

Absent: Commissioner Alma Likic

I. Approval of January meeting minutes

Minutes from the January 25, 2022 meeting of the Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commission were unanimously approved.

II. Old Business

a. Endorsement of the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region

Chairman Grossman stated that the endorsement of the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region is on the agenda for March 7th meeting of the Village Board.

Staff Liaison Slankard stated that they do plan to take a resolution endorsing the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region, which was created by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, for approval to the Village Board, which will be on March 7th. The Commission endorsed bringing this before the Village Board during our November 2021 meeting.

b. Waste Sub-committee final report approval

Chairman Grossman stated Commissioners should all have received the memo from the Waste Subcommittee from Staff Liaison Zimmerman. Hopefully, all Commissioners have had the opportunity to review the memo since then. This memo takes what was previously presented to the Commission, and incorporates the findings from the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory and the UIC Capstone Refuse Study, and reworked it based upon comments from the Commission. This is what will be presented to staff and, hypothetically, to the Village Board.

Commissioner Okallau stated that one thing that they were conscious of when they were putting it together was they were trying to create recommendations for staff, in order to provide them with opportunity to have action items that they may explore. They were conscious that the recommendations have more to do with exploring than they do with directly adopting. These are the things that we think are worthy of further study or further consideration. Overall, they did not want to say that this is the way that we should move forward with waste reduction within the Village. It is more that these are good ideas, and we ought to take a look at how we can incorporate them.

Commissioner Saxe stated that there are four recommendations. One of these is the Village-wide curbside food scrap composting. The other is reducing refuse pick-up from twice weekly to once weekly. That's a very specific recommendation. He inquired as to whether there is any expectation there would be action on that.

Commissioner Okallau said that she believes they were careful to word it in such a way that it would be an exploration of doing that, and not necessarily just doing it outright.

Commissioner Saxe asked if there was any reason why we are not saying, outright, that there is no justification for a second weekly pick-up.

Commissioner Okallau said that was one of the things that was talked about. Maybe they should consider whether there is a justification for a second pick-up, instead of saying 'What's the justification for getting rid of the second pick-up?' However, they understand it is a little bit more nuanced than just dropping the second pick-up. It does require investment. Even just dropping the second pick-up does require an investment in infrastructure in order to be able to do that. Therefore, they do believe that dropping the second pick-up is a good idea, but they also recognize it is going to require data. The study was, of course, a small-scale study. It was not a large-scale study. Also, just recommending that it be dropped is not necessarily as simple as it may seem and does require that investment.

Commissioner Saxe asked whether there is a timeline for this, because there is another budget cycle coming up in April. Therefore, if we're going to act on these, isn't it correct that we would be looking at the next budget cycle?

Chairman Grossman stated that the working idea, since the beginning, was that any major programmatic change would come out in May of 2023, when the Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) contract with the Village would be up and big changes could be made.

Commissioner Saxe stated that it then sounds as though the issue of the second pick-up would be built into the next contract.

Chairman Grossman stated that would be her understanding.

Commissioner McNelis stated that he doesn't necessarily think it has to be, because garbage pick-up is done in-house. He doesn't think it necessarily has to be tied to a budget year.

Commissioner Okallau stated that she believes that the expectation is that these are things that will be worked on immediately, with the understanding that the outcome will come with the new budget year. Even if these things are worked on quite soon, the actual result or change might happen with the new budget year, and also with the development of the Village's next Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Staff Liaison Slankard stated that he thinks the Board, Village Manager and Mayor asked for the waste reduction recommendations to ultimately come to the Village Board in the context of the new Environmental Sustainability Plan, so that the Board would have the context of the sustainability goals for that discussion. Therefore, as has been said by the subcommittee members, he believes the drive is toward that May 2023 implementation, when those recycling program elements will change. There is also, of course, the recommendation with respect to consideration of an enhanced or expanded organics program, which would also lend itself to that same calendar of consideration for a program expansion. Therefore, he thinks that one of the imperatives from the staff's standpoint, in looking at the totality of these recommendations, in the wake of the discussions and presentation at the last two meetings of this Commission, is to identify and get reactions from the refuse and recycling study pieces in order to identify additional research or exploration that the Commissioners felt like they wanted to see the staff perform, in order to help finalize these thoughts or recommendations. So, that's certainly a part of this as well. It certainly is easier to consider a contraction of a service versus an expansion of a service, but May 2023 is certainly the date that we are looking towards.

Further discussion ensued.

c. Commission review of RFP for next Sustainability Plan

Staff Liaison Zimmerman stated that the draft of the RFP that she sent out to Commissioners is meant to be a working draft. One thing that she will say is that

the Village is trying to stay within the stated budget. They cannot go over the stated budget. So, they are open to any and all suggestions. They may reach a point, when the RFP proposals are received, where they may have to come back to the Commission to make some tough decisions as far as what may be kept in and what cannot be kept in. However, for now it is just a matter of Commissioners reviewing the RFP and then providing feedback. She's hoping to get everyone's feedback, and if there are thoughts after tonight's discussion, those should be sent to her by tomorrow or Friday morning, as she is trying to get this to the Purchasing Department by the end of the day on Friday. It will then go up to public bid next week.

Commissioner McNelis asked Staff Liaison Zimmerman whether she said that we could make recommendations regarding the RFP and then send those to her.

Staff Liaison Zimmerman confirmed this is the case. She said that she can take comments tonight, or she could be emailed directly.

Commissioner McNelis said that for "Scope of Work," Item Number 2, he was thinking that in terms of standards and codes and ordinances, perhaps those words could be added into that sentence.

Commissioner Okallau stated that she agrees. It should be something that has more actionable items, as far as passing ordinances that require this, that or the other.

Commissioner DeCanniere stated that in looking over the draft of the RFP, while he thinks that the previous Environmental Sustainability Plan was a good starting point, one thing that he is happy to see is the significant expansion in terms of what the plan will cover. As has recently come to light, the 2016 - 2021 Environmental Sustainability Plan may not have been quite specific enough in certain respects. For example, the new plan is proposed to include sections that address Land Use and Development, Open Space and Ecosystems, Food Systems, and Health and Wellness. He stated he believes these all to be very welcome additions, particularly given the recent debate over the Carvana tower, among other things. Hopefully, the addition of these items will go a significant way toward addressing issues within these various areas.

Commissioner Okallau stated that she felt there were a few things missing, though perhaps they are implied or else are sub-sections of these larger sections. However, she said she feels like housing is something that is not really something that is represented — though she doesn't know if that would fall under Land Use and Development. She said that, from her perspective, housing is one of the most important social aspects of sustainability and of climate change, and she isn't sure that is really captured explicitly within the proposed Environmental Sustainability Plan. Where you live is one of the greatest factors in terms of what kind of life you're going to be able to live. Where your home is located has one of the greatest impacts — and lifelong impacts — on what kind of life you are going to have. She just feels as though that is kind of missing. Perhaps that's kind of part of the greater Comprehensive Plan, but it

is certainly something that she thinks about when it comes to sustainability and the environment. Another one that is missing, but that can be implied and can be woven in, is equity. She said she doesn't even know how it could be incorporated, because it does need to be incorporated into each of these items in some ways, and in other ways environmental justice, on such a micro-level, is not necessarily all that applicable. Therefore, she's a little hesitant to call it "environmental justice," but on the other hand she feels there needs to be a consideration for equity for everything that is implemented. When we talk about open space and ecosystems or transportation, equity obviously must be a huge portion of those things.

Commissioner Saxe stated that the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region talks about adaptability and resilience and mitigation, and he thinks that we want to consider those three areas, though he thinks that the Environmental Sustainability, as proposed, Plan looks pretty good and is pretty comprehensive. He thinks he wants to make it aligned with what's happening with the Climate Action Plan, with the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, and with what is going on in the region in general.

Commissioner DeCanniere stated that is one thing that he included in his feedback, which he sent Staff Liaison Zimmerman via email. He inquired if we are also going to incorporate some of the elements/goals/objectives from the Greenest Region Compact (GRC). When they were going over some of the elements of the GRC during a recent Go Green Skokie meeting that he was able to attend, it seemed that there were some things in that plan that could be applied or incorporated into our next Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Chairman Grossman asked whether Staff Liaison Zimmerman will be sending out the updated draft RFP.

Staff Liaison Zimmerman said it is up to the Commission. She could just make sure that everybody's comments are incorporated, and then send it out for our information. If we wanted to delay by one week, she could send it back out to the Commission to get email approvals. Chairman Grossman stated that she doesn't want to delay getting the RFP out.

Staff Liaison Zimmerman stated that she will also be checking her email for the next day or two, and will make sure that suggestions get incorporated. She said that she cannot promise that everything will stay in at the end. We will have to take a look at it again as a group, and take a look at budget, and what the different proposals came back at, but we certainly want to get the recommendations in there for the purposes of the RFP.

Commissioner DeCanniere also inquired as to the community input component of the process of creating the next Environmental Sustainability Plan. He went on to say that he can only assume that we will not, however, have an exact idea of what the community input process might look like until we engage the services of a particular vendor.

Chairman Grossman stated that there is a community input component within the plan itself. This is just the RFP for the plan.

Commissioner Okallau said that the vendors should come back with information that includes what they are proposing in terms of community engagement.

Commissioner Saxe stated he thinks this is good enough for an RFP. When the proposals come back, they can then be evaluated in terms of these other aspects. He went on to say that he would echo Chairman Grossman's sentiment in that we should keep to the timeline and move forward. Commissioners Okallau, Mahoney and McNelis concurred.

d. Skokie's Spring Greening - Update

Staff Liaison Zimmerman stated that the recycling stations are going to be coming back to Skokie's Spring Greening this year. They're going to be in the lot north of Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center, near the green office building. Some examples include Simple Recycling, paint recycling, battery recycling, as well as recycling of fire extinguishers and things of that nature. The Skokie Park District updated the Skokie's Spring Greening website, and so now the volunteer waiver form is up on the site. She asked that the event be promoted, including via social media, and that Commissioners volunteer themselves. She said that the Village will also keep promoting the event via the Village's electronic newsletter (*SkokieNews*) and all of their social media outlets.

Skokie resident Lauren Grodnicki said that it seems to her that every year Spring Greening presents an opportunity to emit greenhouse gases by people just idling in their cars as they wait in line to drop off their recyclables. She inquired as to whether we could figure out a way not to have this happen.

Chairman Grossman said she doesn't know the answer. It's a great question, and it is a problem, but we do not have any involvement in terms of how the event is set up. So, at the present time, we don't have an answer.

Ms. Grodnicki then added that she is concerned there could also be a health hazard to the volunteers that are standing there, breathing in those emissions/fumes for the duration of the event.

III. New Business

a. New email address created for Commission

Staff Liaison Zimmerman spoke about how a new email address has been created for the Commission. Rather than emailing Staff Liaison Zimmerman, or emailing publiccomments@skokie.org or citizencomments@skokie.org, residents may now contact the Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commission directly, at our very own email address, which is Sustainability@skokie.org. She said that they had never really contemplated that a dedicated email address would be needed, until all of the comments that were received last month came in. She went on to say that she just wanted to be sure

that comments directed to the Commission are not being lost or mixed in with her email. She said that she thinks as we move forward with some of our new initiatives, and with the next version of the Environmental Sustainability Plan, coupled with how we will be soliciting community feedback, they just wanted to create an email for the Commission.

Commissioner DeCanniere added that he emailed Staff Liaisons Slankard and Zimmerman a couple of updates for the Sustainable Environmental Advisory Commission webpage, which included the new email address. He went on to say that he figures that placing our email address on our webpage should make it easier for people to contact us.

Staff Liaison Zimmerman stated that she had seen his email, though she hadn't had the chance to review it. She is also aware that he updated the Recycling and Disposal Programs brochure. They will definitely get around to adding / updating those items on the website as soon as they can.

b. Guest Speaker: John Lockerby, Village Manager - The Path Forward to Furthering Sustainability in Economic Development

Mr. Lockerby introduced himself, thanked the Commission for the work they have been doing, and gave a presentation that takes a look at how we can further sustainability in land use and development within our community. This included a look at the land use and development processes, talking about the processes as they stand today as well as some things that are on the horizon.

A question and answer session, in which Commissioners were able to ask questions, get answers, and give their feedback, followed his presentation.

IV. Next Meeting

Based upon the expected availability of Commission members, the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 22, 2022.

V. Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Saxe made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Gershbein. Meeting adjourned at 9:53 PM.