

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2022

Conducted Remotely

Commission Members Present: Laura Derks (Chair), Lisa Boone, Carly Provost-Rizor
Ramona Blaber, Liz Lukehart.

Commission Members Absent: Cassandra West, Darryl Baker.

Staff Present: Erica Helms, Sustainability Fellow

Guest Present: Sheila Wesonga, CIC Liaison.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Derks at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Approval of Agenda:** A Motion was made to approve the agenda and it was unanimously approved with no revisions.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** A Motion was made to approve previous meeting minutes, it was unanimously approved with none opposed.
3. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
4. **Agenda Items:**
 - **2023 Work Plan:**
 - Chairperson Derks starts this agenda item by stating she would like to finalize and vote to approve the 2023 work plan at the November meeting so it can go to the board.
 - Ramona Blaber discusses the status of her and Darryl Bakers' project. Chairperson Derks suggests that they work with Village staff to find the most impactful area to get involved. Lisa Boone describes how she identified her project. Ramona Blaber and Chairperson Derks explore some potential ideas.
 - Erica Helms shares her screen with the draft 2023 work plan while Liz Lukehart describes her and Cassandra West's Energy Ambassador project. Erica Helms and Chairperson Derks discuss the reoccurring projects on the work plan such as events and green awards. The final draft of the work plan will go out to commissioners for review before the November meeting.
 - Carly Provost-Rizor gives an overview of and her and Lisa Boone's Community Waste Reduction project and the Smart Waste system. Chairperson Derks suggests partnering with the Park District on this project. Erica Helms mentions that an annual review of the new hauler contract should also be included in this project.

- **Leaf Blower Ordinance:**
 - Erica Helms begins sharing a 25-minute recording of the Leaf Blower Ordinance Working Group Meeting #1.
 - Chairperson Derks asks for clarification on what the commission's role is on this topic? Erica Helms states that the consultant would like to incorporate the commission's feedback into the next meeting on October 21st. After the recording Chairperson Derks asks the commissioners to give their comments.
 - Lisa Boone doesn't think we need leaf blowers in Oak Park at all. Liz Lukehart agrees and says that there was not enough discussion of the ecological benefits of not removing leaves at all. Ramona Blaber says it would be good if the consultant interviewed more small landscapers. She continues on to say that the reasons to not have a ban are slim. Sheila Wesonga asks if the health impacts on the operators of leaf blowers has been investigated? Chairperson Derks responds yes, it has been raised as an issue but they didn't talk about it very much in this recording. She goes on to say that the commission would like to ban leaf blowers all together and eventually ban other gas-powered equipment like lawnmowers.
 - Erica Helms mentions the open-ended discussions from the meeting including how to define the size of landscaping businesses and eventually include other equipment in the ordinance. Carly Provost-Rizor brings up the fact that it is not only landscapers that use leaf blowers, some general contractors and construction companies use them too for site cleanup.
 - Erica Helms asks the commission if there should be any exceptions in the ordinance, like schools for example? Chairperson Derks and Lisa Boone say no, schools should not be exempt from the leaf blower ban, but they should be allowed to use snow blowers.
 - Chairperson Derks brings up the equipment exchange option and asks what would happen to the gas-powered equipment that gets exchanged? Erica Helms responds that this challenge was brought up at the working meeting and will require further discussion.

- **New Business:**
 - Chairperson Derks mentions that the Health Department recently released the draft version of their 5-year strategic plan (IPLAN). The plan incorporates some goals from Climate Ready Oak Park so the commission should review it.
 - The commission will decide whether or not to meet in December at the next meeting.

- **Adjourn:** At 7:00 p.m. a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

The next EEC meeting is scheduled for November 15th at 7:00pm.