

# Environment Committee

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Minutes of the Meeting on  
January 5, 2021

**Village of Homer Glen  
14240 W 151<sup>st</sup> Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491  
Community Room**

**1. Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Co-Chair Ruben Pazmino

**2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.****3. Roll Call.**

Members present were Co-Chair Trustee Sharon Sweas, Co-Chair Ruben Pazmino, Nancy Carlson (Conference Call Audio), Andy Panelli, Cynthia Rataj, Joe Turrise (Conference Call Audio), and Staff Member Melissa King.

John Lobick – Advisor, was also in attendance.

Absent: Bob Moses and Gary White

**4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.**

There were no amendments to the Agenda.

**5. Minutes.**

## a) September 1, 2020

Member Rataj made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 1, 2020 meeting; Member Panelli seconded the motion. Member Rataj clarified there was a change to the minutes that the homeowner who made public comment lives in Stonebridge and not in Marian Village. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting minutes were approved.

## b) October 27, 2020

Member Rataj made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2020 meeting; Member Turrise seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting minutes were approved.

**6. Public Comment.**

There was no public comment.

**7. Old Business.**

There was no old business.

**8. New Business.**a) 2021 Regularly Scheduled Committee Meetings

Members reviewed the meetings for the upcoming year. The April meeting will be the second Tuesday of the month, there is another committee on that night, so we'll have to see how that plays out. Members discussed whether or not there

needed to be a motion. Staff explained that due to the November and December Committee meetings being canceled, the Board needed to approve the meetings without a recommendation from the Committee (*required by law*).

b) 2021 Environment Committee Events and Activities

1. **Stargazing** - Co-Chair Sweas to contact the astronomers to get potential dates for the stargazing events.
2. **Big Tree Contest** – Application deadline should be close to beginning of May to get some school groups involved; late April would work too. Member Turrise confirmed he would spearhead this event.
3. **Community and Nature in Harmony Awards** – Co-Chair Sweas recommended to start taking applications early. The timing of year that we walked the properties last year was a good time to document the yards. The applications should be marketed end of May.
4. **Tree Plantings** – We usually do two tree plantings a year. One around Arbor Day in the Spring and one on Open Lands Day. Staff mentioned trees could be planted in front of the Village Maintenance Building and the multi-use path along 151<sup>st</sup> Street. Member Panelli asked if the tree planting should be tied to an event? Member Panelli, recommended that we could have this be a place where residents could plant, i.e. if they aren't able to plant in their backyard. Member Turrise asked if we still have a water truck? Member Carlson asked about the evergreen plantings at 151<sup>st</sup> and Bell. Co-Chair Sweas clarified that she went out with John Robinson and Roger Ross and that they had decided it really wasn't a good idea to put anymore large evergreens on that corner. No idea what will happen on that corner; now that the garden is not being maintained. Member Carlson recommend evergreen plantings should be included for each year. Staff mentioned all of the evergreens that were planted in front of the Village Maintenance Building in 2020.
5. **Earth Day Cleanup** – Co-Chair Sweas talked to staff member Steilen earlier in the week and learned that the kite event that was being planned/canceled in 2020 is being scheduled again for 2021. Co-Chair Sweas would like to do the virtual cleanup again and do it at the same time as the kite event.
6. **Plastic Free July Month** – Members discussed the insert and how it could be pushed out now that the Horizon is not in business. Members mentioned the website and the newsletter. Member Turrise recommended the Southland, a new paper that is being circulated. Co-Chair Sweas said that paper did run a few articles about the Village; we could ask them to put an article in for July. Member Turrise asked specifically about the insert. Co-Chair Sweas said we could ask; or they could publish the insert on the actual page of the paper. Member Turrise clarified that it comes weekly on around Wednesday. Maybe they could run more articles, i.e. stargazing, environment committee in general, Community Nature in Harmony awards, Big Tree, etc.
7. **Household Hazardous Waste Event or Paper Shredding Events** – Staff member Steilen called earlier in the week to verify if Will County is still doing these events. Some of the banks in town do the paper shredding already, so maybe the Household Hazardous Waste would be better. Member Panelli mentioned that getting these events into a routine is a

good idea. Member Rataj mentioned that the original intent was to switch these events back and forth on a yearly basis.

8. **Others** – Member Panelli asked if we would want to do anything more formal for Earth Day. Kite event is supposed to be May 3<sup>rd</sup>; Co-Chair Sweas and Member Panelli, discussed the combination of these two events as it was proposed in 2020.

c) Community Solar in Illinois

Panelli, introduced this topic. Member Panelli attended the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, in December of 2020, platform at the meeting was to discuss the CS2 Community Solar program. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is made up of 275 cities, towns and Village that work on public policy issues. Member panelli Indicated that the presentation was very interesting, especially for towns that are visionary and can move fast. Great that you can promote green energy and save money. Mark Pruitt was the keynote speaker at that event in December and will be presenting the Community Solar initiative tonight.

Mark Pruitt is the Principal of the Power Bureau, Adjunct Associate Professor at Northwestern in the Master of Science in Energy and Sustainability (MSES) program, Former Director of Illinois Power Agency and Advisor to the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. MMC is the sponsor for this Community Solar Program, they don't sell anything, don't install solar panels, or own any farms, they are involved in Community Solar because many communities wanted to provide opportunities for municipalities to be better involved in alternative energy. The MMC is working with 12 communities right now to bring community solar to the residents and also the municipal facility buildings.

**Big Benefits:**

1. Pull together municipalities and their residents to support green energy right here in Illinois.
2. Cost Savings for small Comed customers (residential and small commercial accounts)

**Synopsis:**

Below is a synopsis of the presentation. A copy of the powerpoint presentation has been included in these minutes as an attachment.

***What is community solar?***

*Community solar refers to local solar facilities shared by individual community members, who receive credits on their electricity bills for their portion of the power produced. Can also be called a Solar Garden or Solar Farm. Comed has a number of projects underway. To be eligible, you don't have to live in the community where the solar farm is located so long as you are a residential or a small commercial Comed customer.*

***How does community solar work?***

1. *Sunlight hits the solar panels in the community solar field, generating electricity*

2. *The electricity generated flows through an on-site meter to the electrical utility grid*
3. *The utility company measures the electricity generated, calculates a dollar value for the power, and distributes this dollar value proportionately to the members of the community solar program (residents, businesses, municipalities, and institutions)*
4. *The value of the solar electricity produced from the array is applied as a monetary credit to each member's electric bill*

### **Community Solar for Illinois Communities**

*The Community Solar Clearinghouse Solutions (CS2) program was created by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to assist Municipalities in subscribing their public facilities.*

*“Nine communities in the CS<sup>2</sup> purchasing pool have jumped in to the first community solar project in Illinois. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus created the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solutions (CS2), a purchasing pool to help municipalities subscribe their public facilities to new community solar projects to be built in Illinois. While waiting on the next 111 community solar projects to be completed, Rainy Solar cut the ribbon on its 1.2 MW community solar project in Elgin, allowing Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Oak Park, Park Forest, and Elgin to be the first in this pool to subscribe their municipal facilities to community solar. This both saves municipalities money and addresses the consensus Greenest Region Compact goal to advance renewable energy.” – Mayors Caucus Website*

*The CS2 Program is the largest municipally sponsored Community Solar program in Illinois and is available to all residential and small commercial accounts in the Consortium communities receiving default rate service from ComEd. To protect consumers, the CS2 Program does not require a credit check and will not charge any enrollment or termination fees.*

### **Questions from Staff/Members:**

#### **How many have been commissioned and where are they locate?**

- 2 projects fully commissioned and delivering electricity to grid (Plainfield and outside of Rockford)
- 5 coming online in January
- 8 coming online in February

#### **Do you need to be near the solar farm to subscribe?**

Customers do not need to be near these facilities; so long as you are a ComEd customer you can benefit from the savings.

#### **What is the makeup of the Solar Arrays Companies that are providing/building these arrays? Small companies like Sun Run?**

It's a mix, they all have to be registered in Illinois and they have to be qualified by the Illinois Power Agency.

- Large national companies, i.e Clearway Energy.
- Small install companies like Sun Run, they might to one small project.
- Full range of other companies in between

**What are the solar credits based on? wholesale rate?**

Solar credit calculation is 714 kwh; community solar project monthly output was 714kwh; not the full 800kwh that the consumer, consumed. Yes, based on the wholesale rate. The powerpoint slide referred to as “typical solar billing procedures”, needs to be corrected.

**Discussion:**

Member Panelli indicated to go into this alone as a resident you have to do a lot of research. Utilizing this program would be much easier, is packaged nice, lots of marketing available. Downsides is that it will take some time to sign up and the subscriber will receive two bills instead of one. Member Panelli to see if he can get a copy of the contract.

Advisor Lobick indicated that we are already paying into this; the financials are there. Would be great if solar panels could be integrated into all new developments. Curious if you are tapping into a single array or if you can pull from different companies.

Co-Chair Sweas opened up discussion about sending this item to the Board.

Member Panelli made a motion to share info (presentation on CS2 Community Solar) with Board to see if there is interest and get examples of potential cost savings. Member Pazmino seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**9. Announcements/Committee Member Communication**

Member Rataj asked if the electric aggregation was still ongoing. Co-Chair Sweas indicated no.

**10. Adjournment.**

A motion to adjourn was made by Co-Chair Pazmino; seconded by Member Turrise. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



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Melissa W. King  
Senior Planner/Project Manager