

Environment Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
March 7, 2022

**Village of Homer Glen
14240 W 151st Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491
Community Room**

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Co-Chair Pazmino.

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

Members present were Co-Chair Jennifer Consolino, Co-Chair Ruben Pazmino, Joe Turrise, Gary White, Andy Panelli, Carina Cirillo, Staff Member Melissa King, and Staff Member Taylor Udarbe

Also, in Attendance was Fran of the Homer Glen Junior Women's Club.

Absent: Member John Walters, Member Chris Chiapetta, Member Nancy Carlson, and Member Bob Moses.

4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

No amendments to the agenda.

5. Minutes.**a) February 7, 2022**

Co-Chair Pazmino asked the committee if there was a motion to approve the minutes. Later in the meeting, he asked the committee to approve the minutes from February, as he read the wrong agenda previously. Co-Chair Consolino made a motion to approve the February 7, 2022 minutes. Member Turrise seconded. Motion passed.

6. Public Comment.

No public comment.

7. Old Business.**a) Community Solar**

Member Panelli told the committee that the video is complete and has been uploaded to the Village website. They will upload the FAQ tomorrow.

He explained to the committee that there seems to have been a miscommunication with Mark Hewitt, from MC Squared, about the program push out on their end and thought it had to be confirmed with the committee. Member Panelli then told the committee that Hewitt is going to send a poster that promotes going solar to save money and that the press release will go out tomorrow.

Staff King explained to the committee that any questions from residents will be directed to herself and other Village staff.

Member Panelli told the committee that everyone needs to drum up efforts to get businesses involved, too, and asked if someone had the contact information for the

Heritage Corridor Business Alliance. Co-Chair Pazmino said that he can get that information. He also said they should reach out to Home Owner Associations, and he will push this out to his DeBoer Woods subdivision HOA. Member Panelli told the committee that he was very optimistic about the process and urged that other members join themselves, as it is an easy process.

Member Panelli asked for clarification on the co-op advertising that was discussed a few meetings ago because Hewitt would like to see a proposal. He wanted to know if we would be accepting money from them so we can match funding for an ad.

Co-Chair Pazmino questioned whether the message is “Go Solar,” or “Go Community Solar,” as he has seen other similar companies.

Staff King explained that the choice is completely up to residents, but because this program is endorsed by the Village and other municipalities, they hope the message is that Community Solar is legitimate. She added that pushing out this program with all this information addresses many of the barriers that prevents people from signing up for these kinds of programs. Overall, this is a cost effective and eco-friendly way to utilize solar power without residents having to install solar panels on their homes.

At this time, Co-Chair Pazmino asked the committee to go back to approving the minutes.

Member Andy asked the committee what they want to do for advertising because he wants to take some kind of proposal back to Hewitt.

Co-Chair Pazmino suggested that social media is always the cheapest option but they can also do a page in the quarterly Village newsletter because it goes out to every resident anyway. He explained that mailers might just get tossed out after being mailed out. Co-Chair Consolino agreed and added that they can produce a very attractive page.

Member Panelli asked if MC2 would get a discount on the newsletter advertisement and Co-Chairs Consolino and Pazmino told him they do not usually do advertisements. They would simply talk about how the Village had partnered with the program in the Environment Committee section. Staff member King said that it doesn't cost anything, so they do not need to ask MC2 for money. The committee then discussed how they can have a table and pass out fliers at events like Homer Fest or the Farmers Market.

Staff King said they can just tell MC2 that the committee should have physical flier to hand out at these events because usually they would have a banner or poster. Member Panelli agreed that this can be their one ask to them.

Staff King then asked if they were asking for a monetary match? He replied and said they just wanted to see a proposal and see if they would make it work on their end.

b) Youth Program / Vegetable Garden Program

Co-Chair Pazmino told the committee that this was still wide open for ideas, but the first thing that came to mind was a community garden. He told the committee that he and Co-Chair Consolino will reach out to Trustee Rose Reynders to see if she is planning on planting the herb garden in Heritage park again.

Staff King told the committee that in addition to Rose's herbs, the planting beds had milkweed and they should plant more nectar source plants.

Fran added that they do still need to consider maintenance at this spot and Staff King confirmed that they will have to plant low maintenance and hearty plants. The Village has also hired a new foreman that will likely handle some of this.

Co-Chair Consolino asked if there is actually a water source at the park. Staff King recalled that they had to bring up trucks to the site for water and Member Turrise added that the golf course used to have wells. Staff King and Co-Chair Pazmino responded by saying that they believe that all the wells have since been damaged.

Co-Chair Consolino told Co-Chair Pazmino about the site at 151st Street and Bell Road from last meeting and mentioned that this site does have a sprinkler system already. Staff King reiterated many of the issues with maintenance and parking at this site which is why the native plant garden had been let go over time.

Co-Chair Consolino told the committee that she heard back from Trustee Reynders that she would like to plant the garden again and that she would allow kids to help her. The committee discussed the idea of allowing older kids to help, too, and they could maybe get community service hours. They generally agreed that younger kids would get more excited.

Fran adds that they should look at early May for native plantings because they are hearty.

Co-Chair Consolino asked the committee if anyone recalls who wanted to donate and plant a garden in the park last year. The committee members remembered talks of this, but nobody knew who it was about.

Staff King asked the committee if they wanted to do a make and take for the kids at the vent and the committee agreed. Co-Chair Pazmino added that he did 2-liter bottle plantings as a kid and Member Turrise said that he has seen similar bottle plantings with tomato plants.

Staff King asked Member Cirillo if she had school contacts. She confirmed and added that she will reach out.

Fran told the committee that she and the Women's Club will be available to volunteer and supervise the event.

Staff King said they should look for a weekend to do the event and maybe aim for a Saturday. She will check the Village calendar and look at months and days and if there are any potential conflicts with other Village Events. She then asked the committee if everyone would be okay, tentatively, with May 14th or 21st from 10am to 2pm time frame. Co-Chair Pazmino requested it be a little later because kids might not want to be up that early and he stays late at his restaurant on Friday nights. He said maybe 11 to 3.

Member Cirillo added that they would need to consider providing snacks to kids depending on what time they choose. Staff King said that they can do this.

The committee continued to discuss what time they are looking to do Trustee Reyner's herb box garden planting and the take home event and agreed it can to happen after the last frost. They agreed also that they would need to obtain the plants in late April before the stores run out.

The committee clarified that these events should happen at the same time, so they are looking at May 15th a Sunday, from 1pm to 4pm.

Staff King asked to make sure the Women's Club would be okay with this date, and Fran added that she is okay with this time. Staff King also asked if they could brainstorm other plants.

The committee discussed how excited kids will be and they agreed that they should include 2nd and 3rd graders.

c) 2022 Environment Committee Event / Activity Dates

Co-Chair Pazmino asked staff member King to go over events.

Staff King explains that the Arbor Day proclamation is coming up. She also told the committee that she has spoke with nurseries and they will accommodate whatever they require. Member Turrise said he would like to see Juniper trees because they have many benefits, like being hearty and drought resistant.

Staff King explained that they will purchase the trees in the spring and the nursery agreed to keep the tree on the lot until they are ready to plant it. She asked member Turrise if he would be okay with two of the same trees, and he confirmed that he would like it if they could get them.

Member Cirillo asked the committee what kind of events they would like to see with the Star Gazing events, as it had to be decided before next meeting so they can book them. She then told the committee that she and Sue Steilen were thinking they should book someone from the past. Member Cirillo told the committee that she knows the daughter of the guy that used to do the presentations from the Wolf Ranch and that she has taken a larger role in the operation of the ranch and events.

Co-Chair Consolino said this sounds like a win-win situation, as they are also local, and Member Cirillo added that she loves wildlife education because it will help engage residents with nature.

Staff King told the committee that they will post the Community and Nature in Harmony along with the Big Tree applications soon. She said they did not have to go over the rest of the events, but asked the committee if anyone has an idea for other events that had not been done before.

Member Turrise asked Member Panelli if he needed any more time to prepare for the plastics event. Member Panelli asked what had been spent in the past on these events and Staff King said a couple thousand and added that it was a lot of money to get an ad for this event. Member Panelli agreed and explained that they had it published in the Southland Times, but it was an ad instead of an article that they wanted. She added that Member Panelli will reach out before the next issuance and he will get a proposal together for plastic free July.

Co-Chairs explain that it has been awhile since the last newsletter - before the election in March maybe.

Committee members discussed the global issues with plastic production and consumption. Member Turrise said he would like to see more reduce and reuse incentives, because it is too late once it needs to be recycled or picked up during clean up days. He asked Co-Chairs about implementing a plastic bag fee. Co-Chair Consolino said that she is aware that the City of Chicago does this, and staff Udarbe confirmed that they charge 10 cents per plastic bag used. Co-Chairs agreed that this would be a lot to impose right now after the new municipal taxes.

Member Turrise reiterates that it is important to get ahead of the issues through reducing rather than cleaning up after it is too late.

The committee moved on to talk about Community and Nature in Harmony awards. Staff King explained to the committee that they have had a hard time getting award nominations this past year compared to when people were home during the pandemic.

Member Cirillo asked how to nominate and how people know about this event. Staff King told her about how the committee uses social media primarily.

Co-Chair Consolino suggested that maybe businesses can promote the awards and Staff King said they could make a poster to promote it, too.

Staff King also told the committee that the Village engineer found a huge tree on the Stately Oaks retention pond. She said she hasn't gone out to verify what kind of tree it was yet.

Member Turrise suggested they could offer kids community service to help measure trees for the big tree contest. Member Cirillo offered to help out. Staff King added that member Walters has a high school contact.

8. New Business.

Co-Chair Pazmino announced that Fran, or any representative from the Women's club, should join the committee and sit with them going forward.

9. Announcements/Committee Member Communication

Co-Chair Pazmino told the committee that the Meadowview sign that won a Community and Nature in Harmony Award last year had been hit by a car. He asked the committee if they could give them another award for the recognition for trying to enhance their community.

Member Cirillo asked about the chicken and bees ordinance. Staff King and Co-Chair Consolino explained that when the concept updates were taken to the Village Board, that the Board had no issues with the proposed changes at the workshop. Co-Chair Pazmino suggested they could take it back during a special meeting maybe.

Staff King explained the process of code updates to the committee; how staff has to research and rewrite the code before it goes to the plan commission and then to the Board for approval, which all takes a few months. Member Cirillo wanted to make sure residents weren't still concerned about it and she was told that nobody has heard anything else about it. Co-Chair Consolino said that this is an important aspect of the rural characteristic of the Village and we are ahead of other Villages in this sense.

Member Turrise added that the ordinance should include all types of bees, and the committee discussed that the code does not restrict people on what kinds of bees people are allowed to have.

Member Panelli asked how many fliers the committee needs from Hewitt to pass out at events, so he can tell them a number. The committee thinks 500 is a enough to ask for.

10. Adjournment/ Committee Members Communication.

Member Turrise motioned to adjourn the meeting and Member Cirillo seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Melissa W. King/Taylor Udarbe
Director of Planning and Zoning/Assistant Planner