

# Environment Committee

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Minutes of the Meeting on  
April 3, 2023

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

**1. Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Co-Chair Pazmino.

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

Members present were Co-Chair Pazmino, Carina Cirillo, Joe Turrise, Gary White, Chris Chiappetta, Fran Perveiler, Staff Member Melissa King and Staff Member Taylor Udarbe.

Member Andy Panelli arrived after roll call and after the minutes were approved.

Members Absent: Co-Chair Jennifer Consolino, Member Bob Moses and Member John Walters.

Trustee Fialko was also present for the later half of the committee meeting.

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

There were no amendments to the agenda.

**5. Minutes.**

## a) March 6, 2023

The motion was made by Member Turrise seconded by Member Cirillo. Motion passed.

**6. Public Comment.**

There was no public comment.

**7. Old Business.**

## a) Consider for approval the funding of a component of the Memorial Tree and Marker Program with Environment Funds.

Co-Chair Pazmino stated that they had discussed this already, were on the same page, and that this had gotten Village Board input.

Staff King said, as she understood it since she was not at the board meeting, that this idea was brought up during the environment budget workshop and she wanted to update the committee on this discussion. One resident had been interested in the memorial program for a long time and had exchanged emails with the Co-Chairs and Staff King about how our pricing was more expensive than other communities. She explained that the reality is that their committee had not touched on alternative pricings while other programs seem to be subsidized with foundations, which we do not have yet.

Staff King explained the idea is to use the money that they receive from the environment surcharge, as they do not use all of their budget and the access gets swept into the general fund. She asked the committee if they want to

sweep access funds in to separate environment budget, which will be renewed/continued yearly for as long as they are running the Memorial marker program, to cover the tree replacement if it dies. Staff King added that the point is that this committee wants trees to live and thrive and last and make sure they can replace the trees that do not. She explained that they are proposing to cover up to \$300 for the tree warranty/contingency.

Co-Chair Pazmino said the person asking for the subsidy should apply for it and the application can be looked at by the environment committee and then they recommended to the board for final decision. Staff King said they should not make it complicated because every resident will request it and every case will be the same.

Co-Chair Pazmino asked if the resident would have to meet certain requirements or hardship but also wondered how they could prove this. Staff recommended that they just offer it, no application, if the committee wants to support this.

Member Turrise thought they were on the same page last meeting and they should not change anything but Staff King explained they have not yet discussed subsidizing the program before. Member Turrise said if someone can't afford the \$500 tree then they don't belong there. They have the money or they don't. Co-Chair Pazmino agreed with that statement. Member Turrise said it may sound harsh, but if there are 25,000 residents and not everyone can afford to do it then they will not have 25,000 trees.

Co-Chair Pazmino reiterated that there are funds available in the committee budget and that often times these get swept to the general fund since they don't use it all. He suggested that maybe the extra can be used as a gesture applied to the program. Member Turrise asked where they draw the line and what happens when they run out of money. Co-Chair Pazmino explained how in CED, the business grants are first come, first served, but they have rules and application for that. Or, they can just not do it at all.

Member Panelli stated that he would not have a problem with putting aside \$1,000 to \$2,000 into a fund where they can pull from for hardship cases since, at the end of the day, they are all about planting trees and this is really what their committee is all about. He asked why not do this? They may want to allow a few hardship cases per year, and the overflow money could go toward that. He would have no issue with this.

Member Chiapetta asked what the definition of hardship would be. The committee agreed that it would be hard to determine what would warrant the hardship. Member Panelli said they could just do first come, first served.

Member Panelli asked if the subsidy would be well known and Pazmino said maybe they don't advertise it to everyone. Staff King said that is not a good idea in terms of execution since some people don't know to ask and then will be upset when they learn that somebody else had gotten a subsidy. This would be difficult for staff so they have to be all in or all out.

Co-Chair Pazmino said that it would be better to leave as is and Member Panelli agreed.

Member Cirillo wondered what happens with the funds that roll over? She said this may be a good use for it now, though it is not her first choice/highest priority.

Member Turrise said if they go that direction, the resident should have to pay the full \$500 or they could pay half and the committee matches their donation. Co-Chair Pazmino agreed and said yes, something more supplemental. Member Turrise said they want to plant trees, but this program is not meant for everyone in Homer Glen.

Member Chiapetta suggested that they use the extra committee money to plant trees on behalf of the environment committee.

Staff King explained she is all for spending money since they have had surplus for so long – in the thousands of dollars range – which has been accruing for years. They pinch pennies a lot, but the surcharge is there for a reason. They can look at the funds to see if they want to do anything else, but they have a lot of events going on right now. She is all for more planting too but they need to be conscious of staff and their time.

Staff King added that the contingency charge is the piece they are discussing and they may be thinking about it wrong. Staff Udarbe explained that the trees really range from \$200 to \$275 and the \$500 pricing covers a replacement for if it dies in 10 years. Staff King added they make money off the program and questioned where will they put it? That fund would have too much money.

Member Turrise said they were going to charge \$300 but they went up to \$500 to cover tree death. Maybe they go down to \$300 and take the money from excess funds if the tree dies. Member Panelli agreed, but only if there was excess. He wondered what happens if, for example, 30% of plantings die, then what happens when the program costs more than what they receive in donations? Where would that money come from?

Co-Chair Pazmino said it is better to start the price high and they can cut back next year if needed.

Member Panelli asked if they were much higher than other communities. Staff Udarbe confirmed they were on the higher end since other community charges around \$700 to \$800 for the tree and plaque where they were at \$1000. She explained other may have foundations and have been establish longer. Member Panelli added that to replace a tree and memorial takes work and manpower and he did not think they were unreasonable in their pricing.

Co-Chair Pazmino thinks it is beautiful that a resident can plant a big tree and have a boulder to memorize their loved ones for \$1,000. Staff Udarbe explained the boulder option is priced at \$2,000. The concrete marker and tree were \$1,000 and the tree alone is \$500.

The consensus from the committee is to keep it as is. They will do this for a year and see if they need to change next year. Member Perveiler asked if that consensus includes what to do in the scenario if someone cannot afford anything. Co-Chair Pazmino said the program would be priced as is for everyone.

Member Cirillo asked how much for just the plaque and Staff Udarbe said it was \$275 for the bronze plaque plus around \$5 to \$10 for concrete materials. Member Cirillo suggested, since they love trees, that maybe in the future they could have residents cover the marker costs and the committee can cover the tree cost.

Member Chiapetta recommended the committee start buying and planting trees and when there is hardship, the people just add a plaque to the available tree. The committee liked that. Staff Udarbe added that Morton Arboretum does this. Member Perveiler asked if this would be promoted and added that staff may have too many requests to dedicate existing tree. Staff Udarbe added that this program option would not result in more trees being planted.

Co-Chair Pazmino said they should start with how it is at first and then if they see hardship requests, then they could look into this in a different phase. Member Chiapetta said as they plant the trees they can tell people to reach out if they have hardship, so we have trees planted already. Member Panelli asked where the inventory money is coming from. Chris said they have funds and Joe added that they plant 2 trees a year.

Member Turrise said they can use one of the 6 junipers planted last year as hardship memorial trees. Staff King said they could do that if they want. Staff King suggested they add more money to their tree budget and decide how they want to use it.

Co-Chair Pazmino said as of now, they should leave it as is. The committee voted to leave as is.

**b) 2023 Environment Committee Event/Activity Dates**

Staff King told the committee that she just has some updates. She got information from living lands – 200 free trees and she bought an extra 150 seedling. She said they will have them ahead of arbor day to set outside. She said she will likely need help wrapping and organizing the trees this year. She said she will let the committee members know when they receive them.

Staff King then told the committee that she has already received two calls about the big tree contest. Member Perveiler added she has a few trees in her subdivision that they should check out.

Staff King told the committee they decided 11 am photos on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Lamer's park for the planting. Staff King asked Member Perveiler what the women's club did last year for the seedlings event. She told staff king they supplied peat pots and the marker and only spent around \$48 dollars. She

confirmed the Women's club can do the same this year. The day will be May 21<sup>st</sup> from 11am to 2pm. Staff King added that Jennifer is very busy this year, but in order to plant in the natural area, it will need to be sprayed so they do not know if it will be possible. The committee said they can revisit this during the monarch pledge.

Staff King suggested that they do something similar to last year where the kids can help Rose plant in the planters. The committee discussed if they will have a registration fee and Member Perveiler thought it would be a good idea to discourage no-shows.

Staff King said Jacquelin is working on the contract with Cross Town Exotics and a coffee/ hot cocoa truck for the stargazing event. She added that she wants to include more signage that helps direct people between indoor and outdoor activities. Staff King said the truck will be parked in the front since it is normally blocked off from event parking.

Member Perveiler said the Women's club is more than willing to facilitate the milkweed seed distribution at the Kite Fest. She explained that the cost for milkweeds have gone up significantly and Staff King said she is open for this. She explained they have a budget line item for community events and it would be up to the committee if they want to use these funds. Member Perveiler added they would need new signage to reflect the co-sponsorship. Staff King reminded that the Kite Fest is May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Member Panelli reminded the committee that they had discussed pushing out community solar at the stargazing event and he asked if the committee is still okay with this. He also asked if Kite Fest would be a good event for community solar too, and the committee said they had a booth there last year. Staff King said if he is willing to volunteer, it would be easy to put together.

Co-Chair Pazmino told the committee that town center planning study will be at these events, too, in order to get community feedback. He said they will for sure be at Kite Fest but was not sure about Stargazing and asked if this is something they should be attending. Staff King said they had hundreds of people attend last year so she can ask Janie about that.

Staff King asked for a committee consensus for a cost share for milkweed seeds, which would be around \$550 and Co-Chair Pazmino said he didn't see a problem with that. The committee came to a consensus to share.

Staff Udarbe told the committee that she forgot to submit the pledge on Friday, but she is going to submit after the meeting to get that going.

Co-Chair Pazmino introduced Trustee Fialko to the committee. Trustee Fialko offered a 10' x 10' tent for their town center survey so people have a place to stop in.

Member Panelli gave the committee an update on plastic free July and passed out an article to the committee members. He said, up to now, they have been

working toward getting people to recycle smarter, but it is time to shift toward reducing plastic consumption. This article includes information on the plastic problem, suggested solutions, and plastic free July resources. He asked the committee if this is right focus to reduce plastics and if so, how do they want to get this information out to the public. Member Panelli asked if it should be on the website or in the newspaper.

Member Turrise told the committee that England just passed a ban on single use plastics. He added that he uses re-usable shopping bags and they should explore a plastic bag fee in the Village. He said this would incentivize less plastic bag consumption. Member Panelli said he liked the idea but wondered how this would fly. Co-Chair Pazmino said this could be a domino effect and he would hate to see grocery store increasing prices to cover these costs.

Member Panelli said the state of Illinois is going through the house to get legislation passed to ban food-related Styrofoam packaging. He said there are big things brewing and that is only one example. This would certainly reduce Styrofoam waste.

Member Turrise told the committee that the petrol chemical industry just built the largest plastic producing plant in Pennsylvania. He used this as an example that legislation is the only solution.

Member Panelli agreed that legislation solutions are very important but stressed that this should not stop us from individual changes. He gave a few examples of easy bathroom products they can replace like using solid shampoo and conditioners. Staff Udarbe confirmed that Meijer now sells these in the bar form.

Member Panelli said this is important messaging to get in front of people's faces. The committee discussed using social media and the patch.

Co-Chair Pazmino added that the garbage can ideas is eye catching and Member Panelli asked if they should try to work this information into a similar format. Staff King said she can work with Alana on something catchy.

Member King asked if the Patch charges, but the committee did not think they did. Member Perveiler added that she thinks they have a limit with how much information can be included, like 4 paragraphs.

Member Cirillo said it would be great if they kick-off plastic free July with this article because the first page contained super important information. She also suggested doing weekly push outs to share tips.

Co-Chair Pazmino asked if they were replacing the post with just one article, and staff King said they would be doing this all-in combination. They can pull the tips out directly from the article and add graphic elements.

Member Panelli said the committee had great marking tips and the committee should use them as they see fit.

The committee members told member Panelli that he was doing great work. Member Cirillo also asked if they should to a July trash pick up with a learning element about plastic waste. Member King said they should probably stick to one trash pick up event per year. Member Cirillo said she liked the theme of it being during plastic free July.

## **8. New Business.**

Member Panelli told the committee that legislation for the inflation reduction act was passed last summer, which incentives people to be more energy efficient and to promote clean energy. He passed out a flier to the committee which broke down how the program works and explained how approximately only one-in-five people know about this. He asked the committee if this should; be an area of focus for pushing out and educating others on.

Co-Chair Pazmino said most people don't know about this because the name had no indication what the program is and Staff King added that the flier even touches on that topic, too.

Member Panelli asked the committee if they though education on this is worth pursuing. Co-Chair Pazmino said he likes this and it is a federal program, so he didn't think there was an issue putting out this information.

Member Chiapetta told the committee his experience with his solar power savings and reimbursements from the state. He said in the long run, the savings are incredible, but most people get scared of initial costs.

## **9. Announcements/Committee Member Communication**

Member Turrise talked to the committee about PFAS and explained that the Biden administration told EPA that they have to remove 8 of the forever chemicals out the drinking water. The EPA then determined that private well testing is the responsibility of property owners.

Member Turrise also told the committee about Will County's DOT letters to residents along Chicago-Bloomington Trail about widening. HE added there are thousands of trees tagged for removal, which is also well into private property. He explained the environment committee had received plans for 143<sup>rd</sup> Street widening and he said he wants to see these Chicago-Bloomington Trail plans, too. Member Turrise said he was cornered about flooding and animal crossings and he had heard the county is planning on hosting a meeting at the end of the summer.

Staff King she did not believe that there were plans yet and Member Turrise said that plans were finalized October 2022 according to Jeff Ronaldson in an email he was copied on. Staff King asked if he could forward this email and Member Turrise declined as it was a private email.



Staff King explained that this project is in Phase one, which is very early for a road project. She explained that the road does need improvements, but calling it a widening project is painting it in a different picture. She said she didn't know the plans but they have not seen anything yet so she questions is they have any plans right now. She added they likely have idea of what they want to do, but we have not seen anything and they are following normal protocol.

Member Turrise said this committee should be involved due to tree removal and loss of animal habitat. He also wanted to make sure that if the project is federally funded that they meet all the requirements.

Co-Cahir Pazmino told the committee that the election was coming up and that by the next meeting, he may or may not be here. He said he wanted the committee to know that it had been a pleasure and that the environment committee had always been his favorite and he will be involved again either serving on the committee or as a resident.

#### **10. Adjournment/ Committee Members Communication.**

Member Cirillo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 pm and Member Turrise seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Taylor Udarbe  
Assistant Planner