

Environment Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
April 4, 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 6:00 pm by Co-Chair Consolino.

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

Members present were Co-Chair Jennifer Consolino, Chris Chiapetta, Carina Cirillo, Joe Turrise, John Walters, Andy Panelli, Staff Member Melissa King, and Staff Member Taylor Udarbe.

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

Absent: Co-Chair Ruben Pazmino, Member Nancy Carlson, Member Bob Moses, and Member Gary White.

4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

Member Turrise asked to make sure the committee would discuss Plastic Free July and Staff King explained that they can talk about it under agenda item 7 b) 6 – Plastic Free July. There were no amendments to the agenda.

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

Co-Chair Consolino asked the committee if there was a motion to approve the minutes from March 7, 2022 meeting. Member Panelli noted that Mark Prewitt's name was sometimes written as Mark Hewitt in the minutes, and it needed to be corrected. Member Walters moved to approve the minutes as amended and Member Cirillo seconded the motion. The motion passed.

6. Public Comment.

No public comment.

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

Member Panelli told the committee that the postcards were delivered to the residents and Member Cirillo confirmed that she had received it in the mail the previous week.

Member Panelli told the committee that, a week prior to the postcards being delivered, he had contacted around 30 HOAs and someone had already responded with positive feedback. He added that others may reach out for more information and that he also reached out to 40 or 50 of his personal contacts about Community Solar. He reminded everyone that you do not have to live in the Village of Homer Glen to benefit from the program and urged committee members to reach out to their personal contacts in the ComEd service area.

Member Panelli had also put this on the Homer Glen Village Square Facebook page and had not seen many comments yet, but added that it would be a good idea for weekly posts. Co-Chair Consolino asked if they wanted to put the post on Homer Glen's official page, and staff King confirmed that Amy has posted it to the website although the info page rotates out for newer posts. Staff King said she believed that it was also posted to Homer Glen's official Facebook page, as well. Member Turrise added that he thought he saw it.

Member Walters explained that the committee should share this information on multiple pages and platforms. Co-Chair Consolino talked about the watchdog page, which she is a member of, and that she would post to it. Staff King added that if they share the original post, it would look more official with the Village logo and said she could check if Amy has a drafted post they can use.

Member Walters told the committee that Steve Balich has a long list of pages that he posts to and they should use that list. Co-Chair Consolino said that some of those pages may be political and that Amy has a list of the typical pages that the Village uses.

Member Panelli said they should all follow up on the websites. He also asked if there was any way they could see how many people are signing up. Staff King said she could look into it.

Member Panelli also recalled that he wanted to reach out to the Heritage Business Corridor and that he will ask Co-Chair Pazmino for that contact information. Member Turrise added they could also reach out to Lemont, Lockport and other community businesses.

The committee discussed the upcoming newsletter, which comes out bi-yearly. They are not sur how big the add would be for Community Solar, but Staff King said that Amy could probably get us a QR code in there for easy information and signup links.

Member Turrise said they should reach out to business conferences in the area, too.

b) 2022 Environment Committee Events/ Activity Dates

1. Youth Program/ Garden Planting Day at Heritage Park

Co-Chair Consolino told the Committee that she double checked with Trustee Reynders and Co-Chair Pazmino and they are both okay with this event.

Fran told the committee that she and the Women's club will follow the committee's lead on this event. She explained that her club talked about the plantings and the take home event and really liked the age group they chose to include. Fran said that they could get peat pots for the kids to take home, as it may be hard to collect enough reuse plastic milk jugs for the kids. Co-Chair Consolino said that this event will likely have good turnout because it is during the day.

Member Cirilo said she will follow up with the schools for final district approval, as her original contacts may have gotten lost during spring break. She told the committee that the schools wanted to send home fliers with the students and then she recommended that there be a pre-registration so there are not too many people. Staff King agreed and added that Sue recommended no more than 20 kids so they may all participate. Fran mentioned there were a lot of people in attendance for the kite event, and the committee discussed how there were also other activities and it was an open event. Co-Chair Consolino explained that pre-registration for events is pretty typical and Member Cirillo told the committee that, so far, only Reed school has gotten back, and this should help limit participants.

Fran asked the committee about whether the raised beds will be an herb or a native plant garden and added that native plants would require less maintenance. Co-Chair Consolino said she will reach out to Trustee Reynders for input since she was the one who planted the herbs in the beds last year.

Fran then added that an herb would be good for the kids to take home. The committee discussed how the kids should plant seeds in the peat pots and we can provide labels. She told the committee that they can handle some of the costs, but not all.

Co-Chair Consolino asked Staff King if she had connections with local nurseries. She responded that she could ask around. She also mentioned that Home Depot is sponsoring planting beds and signage plantings in the Village. She added that this is a good will thing they are doing and it helps them get their name out there. Staff King said they have the budget, but they should definitely ask around first.

Co-Chair Consolino said she will let the committee know what Trustee Reynders wants to plant, but said she will likely want to do herbs again.

Fran also added that she would like Butler School to be involved, too, because a Women's club member's grandson goes to school there. Member Cirillo said she will reach out to them, too.

2. Arbor Day Proclamation and Tree Planting

Staff King updated the committee and told them that this has been done on different days every year and suggested the April 27th Village Board Meeting, as Arbor Day is the 29th.

She added that she bought 6 Juniper trees, and that they will be held until the committee is ready to plant them. She said that the committee still needs to pick a day to plant these and suggested Arbor Day and Co-Chair Consolino said Earth Day, both Fridays. The committee discussed and decided to do it Arbor Day, April 29th, at 2pm. Staff King noted that it is the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day.

The committee discussed where the location should be. Staff King said she could ask John Robinson to see if he knows anywhere that needs a tree. Member Turrise

suggested in front of the maintenance building where they had planted in the past. Co-Chair Consolino asked if there is a spot along a walking trail, they could add a tree for shade and maybe a bench in the future. Member Walters noted it is important that the tree planting doesn't interfere with future park plans, like parking lots or soccer fields. Member Turrise recommended they plant near the entrance to the park from the Saddle Brook Run Subdivision. The committee decided that a priority spot would be along the walking path and that they will ask John Robinson where to do it.

Member Cirillo asked about watering and establishing the tree. Staff King explained that they bag the tree and the new Village Foreman is very knowledgeable.

3. Stargazing

Co-Chair Consolino volunteered for the event. Staff King explained that they need indoor and outdoor volunteers and reminded the committee that the event is on Friday, May 6th. She asked members Panelli and Turrise how volunteering typically works, as they usually volunteer every year, and asked if they are coming again this year.

Member Cirillo asked when volunteers should show up to help out. Staff King explained that Big Run Wolf Ranch will arrive around 7 to 7:30 pm and Member Turrise indicated that he normally shows up 15 minutes before the guests to help them set up.

Staff King said the astronomers come earlier, although the sun won't set until 8:30 and it won't be dark until around 9 pm. She said that volunteers can float between indoors and outdoors, too. She has never had so many volunteers and that these events do attract a lot of people.

Co-Chair Consolino asked if there have been any issues in the past and staff King cited tractors in fields across the street picking up dust, harvester lights, and other light sources. Co-Chair Consolino said she would ask someone to make sure the park lights are off, and Member Walters added that the Village gets control of the sports fields on May 1st, so it will be easier to control the lights.

The committee also discussed the possibility of reaching out to John Gallagher to try to coordinate and ensure field work isn't at that same time, although he may not know when his thousands of acres of fields are being managed.

4. Big Tree Contest

Staff King asked if anyone has nominations for Big Tree and Member Cirillo said she knew of 2 trees – one willow tree in her yard and one on her neighbor's property. Staff King said she will send her the application.

Staff King also asked if anyone is interested in going out to measure trees with member Turrise and member Cirillo volunteered. Member Turrise suggested they could maybe give out community service hours and have made this a learning

opportunity in the past by also involving the Village Arborist, Roger. Member Turrise said it is sometimes difficult to coordinate measuring times with the tree owners. Staff King suggested they all get on the same email thread so they can all see the times.

The committee discussed last year's nominees and talked about how there were a few record breakers. They also discussed the criteria they use to determine the Big Tree Winners, which is just largest circumference per species.

5. Community and Nature in Harmony Awards

Staff King told the committee that she will update the application, post it online and it also gets pushed out on social media. She added that many people on the committee have gone in the past to view the nominees and Co-Chair Consolino agreed that it was very fun to see the beautiful gardens.

Fran added that many of her members are interested and said that a lot of people from the garden walk won last year, although she had a problem getting people to do the walk in the first place. Staff King added that they also struggled to get nominations last year and that the deadline had to be extended a few times.

Member Panelli asked the committee if infrastructure projects are eligible, as he wants to nominate his DeBoer Woods subdivision for their creek erosion project and Staff King said that yes, it is.

6. Plastic Free July

Member Panelli showed the committee the Plastic Problem flier from last year. He also talked about an educational article that had not been send out through them before. He said that they probably spent around \$2200 on the fliers for last year and asked if the committee want to replicate and enforce the same message. He also asked if the committee wanted to do fliers on responsible recycling instead or if they just want to buy newspaper space to run an article and not run a flier.

He explained that he has not been able to get a quote on a newspaper page yet, but Staff King added that it would be around the same price. Member Panelli said this article could reach a different audience but wanted feedback from the committee and broke down the important time lines for both options, which should be done by the next meeting.

Co-Chair Consolino asked if this could be included in the Village newsletter and Staff King said the newsletter would likely be too early, as Plastic Free July is also a national event.

The committee discussed the impacts of the pandemic, such as coffee shops not accepting refillable mugs and excessive carry out containers. Member Panelli talked about Starbucks reusable plastic bottle initiative and said they were looking toward eliminating plastic all together. He added that the committee was working on a green restaurant initiative, like a green sticker on the door for reducing plastic straw usage, using paper bags and containers but then the

pandemic hit. Member Walters commented that so much trash was produced during the pandemic and Member Panelli added that if restaurants tried to reduce waste, it would have made it harder for businesses at the time and the project was put on the back burner. Member Turrise talked about Great Britain's green initiative as a response to the 18-tonne plastic waste in the ocean.

Member Panelli asked which option the committee would prefer, considering the news ad and the fliers are around the same price. Co-Chair Consolino added that people are more likely to keep and hang up the fliers.

The committee talked about how Homer Horizon used to print stories for free but the Southland Your Times is likely reliant on ad space. In the past, Staff King was told they would need to purchase space to run the story. Staff King asked if anyone gets the Daily Southtown or the Joliet Herald to see if there were other options. The committee said that the Southtown has the best general circulation in Homer Glen.

The committee discussed what content they want on the fliers and Member Panelli explained to the committee what down cycling is. Staff King agreed that it is important for people to know what is actually allowed to be recycled, and we could get this information from New Way Disposal. The committee agreed that the information should focus on the theme of correct recycling and they could refresh the flier by asking New Way if they know any pressing issues. Member Panelli agreed and he will come up with a draft for the theme of being better recyclers.

Member Turrise mentioned that the Will County Citizens Against Ruining the Environment group had done a series about life without plastic at the Lockport Public Library. They asked if they could come to the July 11th Environment Committee Meeting. The committee is interested in asking them to show the film and Member Panelli added that they should also involve a broader audience, too. Member Turrise agreed and they should advertise on social media. Member Chiappetta added that anything would help and trying to reach out to the paper for a story could never hurt.

Member King told the committee that the papers take submissions and they let you know if they are approved and if not approved they could pay for advertising space for the article. Member Panelli said that maybe New Way Disposal would be interested in buying space. The committee agreed it could be a good idea although there may be a conflict of interest, as New Way would prefer more recycling and the committee wants to also promote reducing.

8. New Business.

Co-Chair Consolino told the committee that Trustee Reynders wanted to plant herbs and that she will likely get some small plants for the garden. She added that the committee just needs to focus on the pots and other equipment needed of the event.

Member Panelli told the committee the wooded lots near DeBoer Woods have been sold and that they need to keep an eye out for the trees. Staff King said that with

the new Village Manager and the Village Board setting the agenda, they will need some time to get the Tree Ordinance looked at again. Member Turrise added how important it is in the Village to live in harmony with nature and large, beautiful trees should not be clear cut for development. Co-Chair Consolino agreed and told the committee that it will definitely be on the agenda soon.

9. Announcements/Committee Member Communication

10. Adjournment/ Committee Members Communication.

Member Cirillo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm and Member Walters seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



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