

Environment Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
July 11, 2023

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

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm by Co-Chair Consolino.

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

Members present were Co-Chair Jennifer Consolino, Chris Chiappetta, Fran Perveiler, Joe Turrise, Staff Member Melissa King and Staff Member Taylor Udarbe.

Members Absent: Member Carina Cirillo and Member Andy Panelli.

4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

Staff King noted that agenda item 7.a. Memorial Tree Application should be under New Business instead of Old Business. Co-Chair Consolino made the motion to move 7.a. to 8.a. and it was seconded by Member Perveiler. The motioned passed.

5. Minutes.

a) April 3, 2023

The motion was made by Co-Chair Consolino seconded by Member Perveiler. Motion passed.

6. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

7. Old Business.

a) 2023 Environment Committee Event/Activity Dates

i. Big Tree Contest Update.

Co-Chair Consolino said the Big Tree Awards this year were a success. Staff King said she didn't have a lot to add to this item but asked the committee if they had followed along. Member Chiappetta said he watched the board meeting. Member Turrise said he thinks the awards are getting more and more popular every year and Co-Chair Consolino agreed and added that it is becoming more recognized. People look forward to this event every year. Staff King added that it is likely because Alana did a lot of social media posts this year which kept it in people minds. Member Chiappetta confirm that he had friends commenting on some of these posts and asking him about it. Member Perveiler said she saw we had put this in the newspaper, too and Staff Udarbe confirmed she had also saw that. Staff King said that it wasn't us and that someone else had picked up the story.

ii. Plastic Free July Update.

Staff King told the committee they are not doing anything special this year but they did post an article that Member Panelli wrote in the patch. Co-Chair Consolino said it was perfect and added that the cost for this went way down since they included their cutout in the Village newsletter. She asked the

committee members how they felt about the perforated edge handout instead of the cut-out trash can. Co-Chair Consolino added she really wanted to go for magnets but it cost an arm and a leg. She said in the future she may ask Trustee Fialko for his help since he is really good at working out contract deals and has a lot of experience negotiating for Homer Fest. Staff King asked if this could be eligible for a grant, too, and added that this type of thing would be supported if they think it is something people would actually use instead of throwing away. Co-Chair Consolino reminded the committee of the garbage fires from lithium batteries and how they also needed that message out.

Member Chiappetta told the committee how his daughter used to get these fridge stickers that weren't actually stickers or magnets and left no residue. Staff King said those are probably static cling films and Staff Udarbe said probably like those holiday window decals. Staff King looked it up and said that Vista print makes these and they are likely a lot cheaper than magnets. The committee agreed that this was a great idea and Co-Chair Consolino said they can keep a big stack to hand out also during events.

Members Chiappetta asked about the waste disposal providers and wondered if they would want to help with this message for their own safety and insurance. Staff King confirmed that NuWay had helped previously with cost sharing and Co-Chair Consolino added they also helped with Homer Fest and agreed that it is mutually beneficial so costs shouldn't be all on us. Co-Chair Consolino added that it was still a great idea to stick the information in the April Village Newsletter since it saved a lot of money which can be used for other things.

Co-Chair Consolino said they were rushed this past year to get everything out on time but they have a lot of time to plan now and recommended this be revisited in October. Staff King agreed that January was too late to plan for it.

Member Chiappetta also mentioned making sure that they also push out this message to the kids in school. Co-chair Consolino said member Cirillo has school contacts.

iii. Community and Nature in Harmony Awards.

Staff King explained that she included all the nominee information they have so far and they need to decide who wants to go on site visits and what day.

Staff King told member Perveiler that a few people for the garden walk had already received this award. Staff King also added that she was shocked that Margaret Sabo had never received an award. Member Perveiler said she probably has every tree and Staff King agreed that the diversity is very impressive. Staff King and Staff Udarbe told the committee she gave them a tour and explained how they found another garden to nominate in her subdivision on accident.

Member Turrise told the committee that his and member Chiappetta's neighbor just planted 29 assorted tree species and they also want to nominate him.

Staff King told the committee that Brett nominated their other neighbor since they are looking to convert some of their property to prairie but they are just starting now but it may be best to nominate them for the future so they can establish it first. The committee discussed how this may take a lot of work and time to establish, but Staff King said she had Jennifer Vittori go out and recommended they reach out to Father Tom Loya. Member Turrise also mentioned the other property off of Will-Cook Road that are further along in establishing a prairie.

The committee also discussed SoftWay's landscaping since member Turrise had nominated them. Member Turrise added that the veterinary clinic on 143rd also had nice landscaping. He explained most of the commercial areas do not have a lot of landscaping like the ones in Lockport do. Staff King told the committee that there are no landscaping requirements in the Village. She added that she also included the Phoenix restaurant and the library had sent in a formal application for their Veterans Memorial.

Staff King said they typically visit the sites around this time and the committee discussed what days and times could work. They mentioned the garden walk is this upcoming weekend and the committee wanted to wait until after the walk so they don't add any pressure. The committee decided to do visits across 2-days and chose Wednesday, July 19th and Thursday, July 20th.

They will meet at the Village at 9:45am and leave by 10am. Staff King reminded members to let her know if they wanted to add anyone else.

iv. Homer Glen Lands Day

Co-Chair Consolino told the committee that Lands Day is September 23, 2023 and asked them if this was an okay date. Staff King reminded this is the actual Homer Glen Lands Day. Member Perveiler said she would not be available that day.

Co-Chair Consolino reminded the committee they had a lot of high school students last year and Staff King said Jackie's recommendation was to keep this event the same and that way it will gain momentum. Right now, they want to focus on getting people excited for the event. Co-Chair Consolino asked about the location and Staff King said she liked the location since people were able to go around the park or up and down the trails.

Member Turrise said a few years back they were talking about providing a small drawstring bag with a Homer Glen logo for this event. Co-Chair Consolino said that probably wouldn't be too much money and asked if they would give them out. He confirmed, yes, they can give them to the kids and the committee liked this idea since it is also free advertising.

Staff King said they had 9 high schoolers last year and the committee had all gone. She told the committee it is important that committee members show up to these events and she felt that it would be fun and they can view this as an event for their committee and hope the public also gets involved.

They discussed how the community service hours were very enticing to the kids and agreed the event should start early to avoid the heat.

The committee discussed the date and realized that their stargazing event is tentatively planned for September 22nd, the day before, but they had also targeted September 23rd for pickup. The committee agreed to have the pickup event the following weekend, September 30 at 10am. Staff King said they should actively invite the parks committee to join them and told the committee that she will have Jennifer Vittori ask them. Co-Chair Consolino said they could maybe do more than one location if they get assistance from parks and said spreading it out may be nice.

v. Fall Tree Planting

Staff King said this committee had previously talked about planting oak trees, which is what staff Jennifer Vittori had also asked for. She explained that she spoke with their nursery guy and they typically only dig oaks in the spring so they have limited oak inventory. She asked the committee if she should bring back the list of oaks they are able to purchase or if they want to go in a different direction. Member Turrise said he would recommend whatever trees that Jennifer recommends for fall plantings.

Staff King explained that we lost a few oak trees at Lamers Park and Jennifer wanted to replace them there, although they believed that it may have to do with oak wilt so there are still concerns about putting oaks back to where oak wilt may be present. She added that there may be some species that are more resistant and she can facilitate and get more info back to the next meeting. Staff King said they will need to flag these trees now or else they will lose access to them.

Co-Chair Consolino asked if there were any other locations, and staff King said Jennifer had not mentioned any others but assured there likely are more spots. Co-Chair Consolino asked the committee if they wanted to ask Parks for their recommendation and Staff King said they typically don't take this to Parks but she had always asked for Jennifer's recommendation and John's previously. Co-Chair Consolino said they don't need to hand off too much to parks but would like to be considerate.

Staff King said this topic might be a good segway to also discussing the location of the memorial tree application at the Parks meeting. She added that Carmen think this location is great as people have been complaining about lack of shade of years, though Jennifer's initially worried about maintenance and field impacts. Staff King added that if there were only this one memorial tree there now, maybe we could add more in the same area this year.

Co-Chair Consolino said they can bring this discussion back to the next meeting and Staff King said she will discuss with Jenifer and Alana to talk about this at their meeting since the memorial tree application is already on the agenda.

Co-Chair Consolino asked if there was anything else to discuss during Old Business. Member Turrise said he wanted to mention the May stargazing event and thanked Staff Udarbe and Member Panelli for their help. He added that the event was great but the only complaint he had heard was about the food truck since people were still looking for the cookies and refreshment they typically keep out. Co-Chair Consolino said they will go back to providing these snacks. Staff King explained they do not pay for the truck but they come for free and that is how event staff has been doing food trucks, except for the farmers markets where they have to pay. Staff also explained there were problems with their generators and that the setup was a little awkward for the food truck. Member Turrise said the food truck was nice but sometime people don't want to spend the money. Staff King said they can do more marketing the next time and it typically draws people into an event when they see a food truck.

Co-Chair Consolino wanted to give the committee a follow up to their PFAs discussion from their last meeting. She said Will County does not have anything in place yet and she does not believe other counties to, either. She added that people are permitted to get their wells tested every year for \$20 to \$25, through these are not looking for PFAs. Co-Chair Consolino said they should reach out to Will County and try to facilitate appropriate testing and figure out the cost of doing it. Member Turrise said in Michigan over 6,000 private wells have been tested and it is over \$500 each. The committee discussed how difficult and expensive it is to keep plastics out of water due to plastic textiles being produced.

8. New Business.

Co-Chair Consolino said she spoke with Trustee Reynders and she said parks was okay with the location of the tree near the Kilmer fields and it will be further discussed at their meeting. The application is a request for a Red Maple Tree and a bronze plaque set in concrete next to Kilmer Fields in Town Center Park. The committee discussed the various tree cultivars available which included Red Sunset, Red Point, and Brandywine. Co-chair Consolino stated that as long as the tree is hardy. Member Fran said that she would only have a problem if this tree is too commonly planted and Staff King said if they do choose to do a fall tree planting near this tree, that those trees have more diversity. The committee did not have any other issues with this application and Staff King explained all of these cultivars are available at the nursery and the applicant is okay with any of the section.

Member Turrise made the motion to approve the 3" Brandywine (red maple) for the price of \$285. This motion was seconded by Co-Chair Consolino and the motioned passed 4-0.

Co-Chair Consolino added that it is nice that this cultivar is seedless and will not make a mess on the football fields.

Staff King said the applicant wanted this by the football fields a little more toward the library property. Co-Chair Consolino stated that there is no shade here and Staff King added that Carmen had mentioned the same thing and said trees are needed there. Staff King said she was not aware of a tree in this location would be a conflict with the proximity to the football fields, like if kids come off the field there, though Carmen had not mentioned this being a problem. Co-Chair Consolino said they can look into this and explained where parents usually sit around the area.

The committee had no other discussion and were okay with the memorial tree application.

Co-Chair Consolino said felt really good about this program and they have a lot of people saying this was a long time coming.

9. Announcements/Committee Member Communication

Co-Chair Consolino gave the committee an update on what is happening at Trantina Farm. She said there are two things happened. The township gave an update about the clay being stored on site and Mr. Portfilio said their report came back and said it was clean. Co-Chair Consolino spoke with him and he explained that there are three checks and balances for geotechnical investigations before it leaves the site, at the relocation site, and before they use the materials at Trantina. She reiterated they said it all testing proved it was non-contaminated, clean clay.

Member Turrise asked if people had concerns and Co-Chair Consolino said Trustee Steileen and Margaret Sabo have had concerns that have been brought up during board meetings. She added that even though nobody has brought this up in this committee, she wanted to make sure that since this is the Environment Committee that they are up to date and have the facts. She said there were rumors that people saw chunks of asphalt in the material.

She said there were also other questions brought up at the town meeting about the cemetery being built. She explained they did have a driveway access permit but are not to do any other work without other permits. She mentions that they have not heard back from the EPA regarding peoples concerns about the water tables and potential water contamination but during the meeting there was no evidence to support contamination.

Member Turrise asked if anyone had knowledge on the Trantina barn that was moved from the Williams Farm and it was mentioned at the township meeting that they do not have the expertise to maintain this historic barn and they were talking about moving it to the Konow Farm with other historic barns. He asked if that was going to happen and Staff King said she did not know if that was going to happen but knows that Walt was looking at a barn a few years ago and was not sure if rumors were getting mixed up. Member Turrise said

there are few historic buildings in our boundaries and Konow farm already has a few of the other historic buildings. Co-Chair Consolino said she can look into it and said it was important this committee discuss these things even though these issues have not ever been brought up directly to the Environment Committee.

Member Turrise asked about the cemetery going in where they do not bury the bodies in a casket and just into the ground and that there were concerns about the water table. Co-Chair Consolino said this was what she was talking about earlier with the EPA and Staff King reiterated that Will County's Health Director said there is no regulation at the EPA level about this. She explained he had read studies that was done, and so had Staff King and other residents, that came up with inconclusive evidence anywhere in the entire history of burial practices and there was an open dialogue at this meeting with residents. Staff King said that he had stated that "traditional" (Christian) cemeteries could present more contamination because of embalming and the materials uses in caskets and hinges.

Co-Chair Consolino said she can understand the concerns of our residents but by law and by jurisdiction we cannot have a say in what is happening now. She said the Township, too, was limited since input was only a curtesy but they didn't in this case. She said the only people that were dealt with were the road district for access permits. She added that they are looking to change the code for future development.

Staff King told the committee it was shocking how little regulations cemeteries have in Will County and in most, in majority, of places this is a special use permit. She also said she noticed that this code in Will County had actually recently changed from required to a special use permit in this district to not.

Staff King told the committee there was recently a challenge for the exact situation where a county went back to try to change the codes and impose on a new regulation on the cemetery and the feds made them change the zoning back. Staff King and Co-Chair Consolino said they didn't want to get peoples hopes up and county should not be promising people that they can pass new codes on them.

Staff King also mentioned an APA article about burial density called *Planning for the Deceased*. She said they recommend up to 1000 to 1200 plots per acre and that sometimes up they see up to 2000 depending on the layout. She said this project is really around a 600 plots per acre according to their website and acreage. She added that it sounds bad on their website and how large the property is, but it is important to put into perspective and compare apples to apples.

Member Turrise told the committee there will be a meeting regarding 167th Street and Hadley road on July 26th at a Baptist Church. Staff King said they just sent out notices in the mail and County requested that staff not post the notice until tomorrow. She explained it was already announced at the county

meeting but there are notification processes that need to be followed and respected.

Staff King said they have not heard a lot of information about this, only that the pavement is failing and that it was installed in the 80s with no work done since then. She said from what she understands, this is not on the list for widening projects but it is categorized under County's capital plan as a preservation project but is not sure the ultimate plan. Staff King urged people to go to the meeting to find out information and said she would be in attendance. Co-Chair Consolino said she also would be going.

Member Perveiler told the committee that the Garden walk is this Saturday and said they even have a garden Orland Park, too. She said they can get tickets ahead of time or perchance for cash the day of.

10. Adjournment/ Committee Members Communication.

Member Turrise motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm and Member Perveiler seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Taylor Udarbe
Assistant Planner