



Village of Westchester

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Asst Village Manager
JOHN SCHWARZ
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ANNIE CANAVAN
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Commissioners
DEMITRUS EVANS
MARIANA NICOLAE
KARI ROBERG
ALEX SILVA
NIKKI WAY
ELIZABETH WISEMAN-CHASE
WALTER WOJCIK

GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2026 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. Call to Order

Chair, Commissioner Nikki Way called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

- Nikki Way (Chair)
- Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase
- Walter Wojcik
- Demitrus Evans
- Mariana Nicolae
- Kari Roberg
- Alex Silva

Village Liaison:

- Annie Canavan

Absent: Evie Slavic

4. Inspiration

Chair Commissioner Nikki Way shared an inspirational message encouraging commissioners to “build the story of what you want.”

5. Approval of Minutes

The January meeting minutes were presented for approval.

Motion: Commissioner Kari Roberg

Second: Commissioner Nikki Way

Action: Motion carried. The minutes were approved.

6. Old Business

Quarterly Report

Chair, commissioner Nikki Way reported that the quarterly report will be presented at the next meeting.

Energy Report

Commissioner Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase provided updates regarding energy-related initiatives, including:

- A public comment opportunity scheduled for March 2, 2025 at 6:30 PM at the Village.
- Consultant recommendations identifying cross-functional planning opportunities, including the Westchester–Hillside–Broadview bicycle and pedestrian path plan.
- Encouragement from the school superintendent to involve youth in GROW initiatives.
- Promotion of Residential Energy Assessments, a free program offered by ComEd and Nicor Gas.
- Assistance programs for seniors through the Proviso Handyman Program for home maintenance needs.
- Consideration of financial incentives to support fuel switching in new and existing buildings, including electrification, heat pumps, and solar thermal systems.
- Plans to identify the top ten commercial and industrial properties suitable for solar development.
- Promotion of the Illinois Solar for All program.

Strategic Plan

Commissioner Mariana Nicolae recommended implementing a commissioner tracking system to record contributions and activities, including meeting participation, newsletter contributions, and other commission initiatives.

Podcast Initiative

Commissioner Demitrus Evans reported on an initial concept for a GROW podcast, beginning with a potential interview with Nicole. Agreed by commissioners that this was a good way to start the podcast, the beginning.

7. Village Staff and Liaison Updates

Village Liaison Annie Canavan reported on:

- The Wedgwood Restoration Grant, with the application deadline on the 24th.
- ComEd grant funds that must be utilized within the required timeframe.

8. Communications and Events

GROW T-Shirt Proposal

Commissoner Demitrus Evans presented a proposal for the purchase of GROW promotional T-shirts.

Motion: Commissoner Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase

Second: Commisioenr Kari Roberg

Action: Motion carried approving up to \$300 for T-shirts.

Community Sustainability Events

Comisioner Kari Roberg reported on the Park District Community Swap Event, which includes sustainability-focused initiatives such as a Pumpkin Smash event.

Additional discussion included:

- Use of ArcGIS online tools.
- A potential Geographic Information Systems (GIS) class to support community storytelling and planning.

9. New Business

Village Website

Commisioner Alex Silva discussed the creation or enhancement of a GROW page on the Village website.

Succession Planning

Commissioners discussed the importance of long-term succession planning for the commission.

10. Commission Comments

Commissioners shared general comments and updates.

11. Public Participation

LeeAnn Kruseynski provided additional comments regarding:

- The Greener Grove grant proposal.
- The ComEd grant and Wedgwood restoration project.

12. Adjournment

Motion: Commisioner Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase

Second: Commisioner Kari Roberg

Action: Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by:

Commisioner Demtirus Evans

Approved by:

Commissioner Nikki Way, Chair



2026 Planning Calendar (One event per month, plan 3 months in advance)						
Month	Event	Point Person	Date	Location	Status	Notes
Jan-26	<i>Save Money and Energy this Winter</i>	Liz	January 17 @ 9am	Village Hall Board Room	Completed	Event was recorded and placed on Village website
Feb-26						
Mar-26	<i>Share your Green Success Story</i>	Walt + Kari	March 28 @ 1pm	Village Hall Board Room	Approved	
<i>Tabling</i>						
TBD	SBC Field Trip (Commissioners Only)	Spring	Need Date		Approved	Can we take videos for the new media idea? - Nikki
Apr-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						
May - 26	Argonne Lab Tour	Mariana	May 7 @ 9am	Argonne Lab	Approved	Need to know what will be covered
<i>Tabling</i>						
Jun-26						
<i>Tabling</i>	Juneteenth		Need Date			
Jul-26	July 4 th Parade		July 4th			
<i>Tabling</i>	Party in the Park		Need Date			
<i>Tabling</i>	Native Plant Education at GGG Garden Walk	Liz	July 18th			Follow-up needed
Jul/Aug - 26	Tour Sustain DuPage	Kari				Proposal in Review
Aug-26	Home Electrification	Liz				Proposal pending

<i>Tabling</i>	National Night Out		August 4th			
Sep-26	Reusa - Palooza		Sept 19th/20th?			
	Repair (and Collect?)-a-Palooza		Sept 26th/27th?			Proposal in Review
<i>Tabling</i>	Prairie Fest					
Oct-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						
Nov-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						
Dec-26						
<i>Tabling</i>						

Newsletter Calendar		
Month	Article Topic	Author
<i>Monthly</i>	Plant Based Recipes	Kari
<i>Monthly</i>	Monthly Green Fact	Walt
March 2026	Composting – SBC update	Nikki
April 2026	Earth Day Actions	Kari
May 2026	Native Plants / Wildlife	Alex
June 2026	Environmental Justice	Demitrus
July 2026	Water	Mariana

2026 Agenda Calendar (for reference)		
Month	GROW Business	Education topics
January	SBC Stipend Kick-Off	home efficiency
February	SBC Stipend; Energy plan feedback (overview other plans)	veggie comfort foods;
March	Energy Plan final recommendations and next steps	composting
April	Juneteenth + Fourth of July Planning	Earth Day actions
May	Party in the Park Planning	Native plants; wildlife
June	National Night Out Planning	water; plant-based meals
July		water;
August		electric vehicles; plant-based eating
September		reuse and recycling;
October		composting pumpkins;
November	Strategic Planning	sustainable holiday planning;
December	Strategic Planning	Native plants