



Village of Westchester

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GROW Ecological Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2026 @ 6:30pm

Village Hall Board Room

1. **Call to Order:** 6:31pm
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** – Comm. Nicolae, Kruszynski, Roberg, Way, Silva, and Wojcik present, as well as Liaison Canavan and Trustee Slavic. Comm. Wiseman-Chase & Evans absent.
4. **Inspiration** – (3 min) – Mariana Nicolae: Reflection on long-term appreciation for trees, rather than utility as a single-use resource.
 - a. Next Month 5/7/26: Comm. Kruszynski
6. **Review of Minutes** – (5 min)
 - a. 3/5/26 Minutes – Kari Roberg – Approved without edits
 - b. 4/2/26 Minutes – Alex Silva
 - c. 5/7/26 Minutes - LeeAnn Kruszynski
7. **Old Business**
 - A. **Quarterly Reports** – Comm. Way noted that quarterly reports are not required. Comm. Kruszynski noted that annual reports are burdensome to complete and that an outline of quarterly reports would be helpful. After discussion:
 - Comm. Silva proposed informal quarterly reports that can be compiled into a formal annual report. All agreed. Tabling vote as to who is responsible for Annual Report.
 - ii. Q4 – 2025: Nikki Way
 - iii. Q1 – 2026: Walt Wojcik
- B. **Updates from Village Staff and Board Liaisons** – (5 min) Annie Canavan,

Evie Slavic

i. Energy Plan Comments closing today, April 2, 2026

- Vote scheduled for April 28, 2026

ii. Arbor Day Tree Planting at Westchester Primary School on Friday, April 24
@ 9:30 am

- GROW is welcome to attend; Annie notes that it is very limited attendance – 5-10 people

C. Energy Plan

i. Comm. Kruszynski thanked the Village for their work on the energy plan and noted it is encouraging that there has not been significant trustee opposition to the plan. Twenty people were present for the public meeting, including Trustee Jones. The draft plan includes several initiatives that could be spearheaded by GROW, which offers opportunities for GROW to help the Village move forward.

- Based on a question by Comm. Roberg, Comm. Kruszynski noted that there should be a cross-functional team to help push items forward, but ultimately that is left to the Village to orchestrate.
- Discussed how priorities were organized within the Energy Plan given all of the different plans the Village is developing and their corresponding timelines, noting that they are looking for overlaps between plans to help move projects forward in a timely manner.

D. Metrics

i. Comm. Nicolae updated data for solar panels (i.e. number of homes with solar panels installed) and is still seeking more information related to electric vehicles in Westchester.

E. SBC Grant Proposals

i. Previously ordered items, including shower timers and coloring books, were paid for and have arrived via EducationOutreach.com

ii. Electric Lawn care and Native Plant subsidies were both declined based on the Village Manager's request that GROW spend money on educational material, rather than rebate-style goods that cannot reach as many individuals, e.g.:

- Education outreach efforts that are benefitting the larger community
- More resources to be used for tabling

iii. Remaining stipend is \$540 to be spent and materials received by April 30, 2026

- Trustee Slavic notes that spending money on a focused set of ideas would be helpful (e.g. focal points) and that decisions related to finances should be made far before December, so that we are not left to the last month to make decisions, as we are this year.
- Comm. Wojcik: Noted that, according to a PNAS article, that 4 out of 100 will follow what you educate them in, as opposed to seeing something in action (e.g. an electric leaf blower), which is more likely to be followed. In addition, he noted that there would have been environmental value to the rebates.
 - Liaison Canavan noted that despite the benefits, the Village is a steward of the public's money and that we have had Village-wide impacts (e.g. SBC composting; replacing trash carts) through various programs.

- Comm. Way noted the mission of GROW is to educate and help develop policy for the Village, not necessarily provide rebates for residents
- iv. GROW Gear: Comm. Evans had proposed a shirt purchase, which Trustee Slavic undertook to design given time constraints. Options include long-sleeve vs. T-shirt. Comms to send Trustee Slavic sizes for order.
- v. Closing Out Fiscal Year:
 - Ideas:
 - Liaison Canavan – a branded tent
 - Comm. Wojcik – branded stainless steel water bottle; reusable canvas grocery bags?
 - Trustee Slavic – additional tabling items to procure OR electric yard tools/items for a yardwork focus?
 - Comm. Way – water coloring book or native plant ideas?
 - Comm. Silva – Items or fasteners/connectors to rain barrels? Potential to follow-up with MWRD for materials to support Water theme while tabling.
 - Comm. Kruszynski motioned to spend the remainder of stipend (\$540) on reusable canvas grocery bags. Motion approved by all.

F. Communications & Events (20 min)

i. Upcoming Event Support Needs

- SBC-GROW Field Trip: Liaison Canavan to check with SBC on scheduling.
- Argonne-Public Field Trip: Twenty-five people maximum reached, though 28 originally signed up. Many people signed up within hours of the posting.
 - Discussion as to whether to open this up to a second group or open a second trip in the fall. Comm. Nicolae will reflect on this first trip with one group before deciding on a second trip in the fall.
- Sustain DuPage-Public Field Trip: Proposed date of July 18, 2026 from 1-2pm, which could also tie in with a Saving Monarch's festival in Lombard later in the afternoon.
- Juneteenth Celebration: To take place June 20, 2026, 11am-4pm at Gladstone Park
 - Comm. Way recommends compositing as a focal point.
 - Comm. Wojcik volunteered as point person for tabling
- July 4th Parade
 - Ongoing debate as to how to represent GROW within the parade, including better visibility for GROW signage.
- Party in the Park: July 31 and August 1

ii. Event & Education Outreach Proposals

- Website updates
 - Liaison Canavan: IT Kevin Brockman approved the idea
 - Requirements:
 - WordDoc blueprint of format and content
 - Group will review it at least quarterly to ensure it is up to date

- Social Media
 - Comm. Silva inquired about the opportunity for GROW to produce social media posts that can be offered and posted to the Village social media accounts. Comm. Kruszynski suggested a social media calendar to help us populate and articulate ideas. Liaison Canavan confirmed the Village is open to such posts, though noted that not all may be posted given other constraints.
- Newsletter
 - Calendar is set. Comm. Silva is writing May newsletter article.

G. New Business

i. Succession planning

- Comm. Way reviewed the requirements for Chair, including creating agendas, maintaining time, etc.
- Comm. Roberg and Comm. Kruszynski agreed to co-Chair, succeeding Comm. Way, who is rolling off the commission. Comm. Way motioned for approval. All approved.

ii. Agenda items for next meeting

- Tree Walk Proposal for Summer 2026

H. Commission Comments

- i. Comm. Way is still looking forward to being involved as a volunteer of GROW going forward.
 - Many thanks to Comm. Way for all she has done to support GROW.

I. Liaison Comments

- i. Trustee Slavic and Liaison Canavan give many thanks to Comm. Way and Comm. Wiseman-Chase for their leadership as co-Chairs.

J. No public participation warranted given that no members of the public attended the meeting.

K. Adjournment: 8:09pm

The Village of Westchester will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Village of Westchester, should contact the office of the Fire Chief, 10300 W. Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL, (708) 345-0441,

as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

Action Items for May Meeting:

- ☐ Vote to determine who will take responsibility for the 2026 Annual Report.
- ☐ Confirm Sustain DuPage-Public Field Trip date given overlap with Grassroots Gardening Group Summer Garden Walk
- ☐ Confirm volunteers for:
 - Juneteenth Celebration
 - Fourth of July Parade
- ☐ Tree Walk Proposal for Summer 2026



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	Share your Green Success Story	Walt + Kari	March 28 @ 1pm	Village Hall Board Room	Completed	
<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
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<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