

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Village Hall, Room 101

Commission Members Present: Liz Lukehart (Chair), Lisa Boone, Tejas Shah, Cassandra West, Ramona Blaber, Darryl Baker

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Abby Zielinski, Civil Engineer

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lukehart at 7:03 p.m.

1. **Approval of Agenda:** A Motion was made to approve the agenda, and it was unanimously approved with no revisions.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** A Motion was made to approve the previous meeting minutes, and they were unanimously approved with no revisions.
3. **Public Comment:** There were no public comments.
4. **Community Waste Reduction:**

Chair Lukehart led a discussion for the EEC to share progress and identify next steps for the community waste reduction project. The discussion included:

 - Chair Lukehart relayed information from Environmental Services Manager, Erica Helms, in response to EEC discussion from the April meeting. The information included:
 - The goal of a rate study is to evaluate and manipulate the overall refuse rate structure to increase affordability and participation in the compost program. Changing the compost rates will also impact recycling and refuse rates because the total cost of all residential refuse services to the municipality is set in the hauling contract. One rate cannot be changed without also adjusting the others to ensure that the Village's costs are covered. Therefore, these case studies should focus on all rates/program structures for each municipality's compost, recycling, and trash services to be most impactful for the commission's rate study recommendation to the Board.
 - The Village is winning an award next month from the Illinois Recycling Foundation! The IRF Awards Committee decided to award Oak Park in a new category called the Pathfinder Award. This award is specifically for programs that represent early adoption of recycling/composting/waste reduction practices in Illinois, and

that paved the way for significant uptake of similar programs by other entities. We already have one of the leading compost programs in the state, so this study should be focused on the opportunities to make compost rates more affordable for residents, not on changing the program operations or guidelines.

- We launched a Leave the Leaves Pledge last week during International Compost Awareness Week to encourage residents to let their leaf litter decompose naturally in their yards/gardens this fall. The EEC can share the link with their networks and share it at events while tabling.
 - The Village is holding off on the Waste Characterization study for the moment due to budget/staff capacity concerns. Erica Helms recommends that the EEC complete the case studies first and identify any realistic alternatives before developing questions for a refuse survey.
- Chair Lukehart recommended a list of communities for composting program case study research. The communities were found through the Illinois Food Scrap Coalition: <https://illinoiscomposts.org/resources/6bg-municipalities-that-compost/>
 - The EEC discussed the type of information that each person should research for each community. The information includes monthly cost and cart size for recycling, refuse, and compost, among other details.
 - Case studies were assigned as follows: Commissioner Baker – Highland Park, Commissioner Shah – Highwood, Commissioner West – North Barrington, Commissioner Boone – Grayslake, Chair Lukehart – Lake Bluff and Northbrook.
 - Questions about the Village’s recycling and compost services were raised during the discussion. Follow-up answers are provided below:
 - Q: What is the cost to the Village for recycling services?
A: LRS does not charge the Village a rate for recycling, so the service is built into other costs.
 - Q: Did the last RFP for waste services request pricing for universal composting?
A: The last RFP did include a universal composting option.
 - Q: Could LRS tell us which other communities they provide composting service for?
A: Environmental Services Manager, Erica Helms, will request this information from LRS.
 - Q: What types of program changes trigger the need for a contract change with LRS?
A: For example, moving from our current structure to opt-out composting would trigger contract change, but a rate change only could be changed annually when the Village sets waste rates.

5. **Electric Shuttle:**

Chair Lukehart led a discussion on potential community survey questions to help identify community needs and assess interest in an electric shuttle project. Potential survey question topics may include: most common transit types used, demographic information, general location of resident's home in Oak Park, desired transit destinations, level of interest in sustainable transportation, current number of car trips per week, and length of time willing to wait for public transportation pickups and trips.

6. **Adjourn:** At 8:12 p.m. a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.