

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group
Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2022

A meeting of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group was held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 via Zoom. Chairperson Mary Oppenheim called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Present:

Trustee Mary Oppenheim, Chairperson
Don Anderson, Sustainability Commission Chairperson
Camilla Dadey, Go Green Deerfield
Elaine Jacoby, Village Trustee
Bill Mertes, Sustainability Commission
Art Wilde, Go Green Deerfield

Absent:

Victoria Street, Executive Director, DBR Chamber of Commerce

Also Present:

Dan Nakahara, Village Planner
Robert Phillips, Director of Public Works and Engineering
Andrew Lichterman, Assistant Village Manager / Director of Community Development

Document Approval

Ch. Oppenheim made a correction to page 3 of the January 12, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Nakahara made a correction to page 4 of the minutes. Commissioner Dadey moved to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2022 Greenhouse Gas Working Group meeting, as amended. Commissioner Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Anderson, Dadey, Jacoby, Mertes, Wilde (5)

NAYS: None (0)

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments received via Zoom or email or in person.

Business

Discussion of Possible Policies, Programs and Resources –

1. Focus Area: Energy Wrap-Up

Ch. Oppenheim noted that we are looking to convert 100% of our electricity from carbon sources to renewable sources by 2030. We also want to begin discussing the focus area of waste today.

She noted that we have been investigating how the purchase of RECs might tie to an electric utility tax and the financial impact it could have on residential, small and large business sectors.

Ch. Oppenheim noted that staff received some additional information on this from ComEd. Mr. Lichterman reported that he worked with ComEd to formulate realistic user assumptions. A dry cleaner, for instance, might use around 17,000 kWh annually and based on that usage the proposed adjustments to the electric utility tax would result in an annual tax increase of \$35.80. A fast food restaurant might use 400,000 kWh annually resulting in an annual tax increase of \$513. A full-service hotel might use 1.2 million kWh annually resulting in an annual tax increase of \$993. An average residential home owner might use 12,000 kWh annually resulting in an annual tax increase of under \$25.

Ch. Oppenheim noted this provides us a sense of scale. A residential homeowner pays \$2 per month, a dry cleaner \$3 per month, fast food restaurant, like a McDonald's, pays \$42 per month and a full service hotel pays \$82 per month.

Commissioner Mertes inquired about how many of those type of business we have. Ch. Oppenheim noted that is something we have not exactly defined but there is somewhere around 300 businesses in the Village.

Ch. Oppenheim reminded the commission that we are not charged with figuring out the specifics of the structuring of the electric utility tax. We are trying to assess the feasibility of the tax and using it to fund the purchase of RECs. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for setting the final structure. This information gives us an idea of the impact it would be on various sectors.

Commissioner Mertes noted that he is trying to evaluate that if we need to raise over \$300,000 tax dollars who will be paying for it. Mr. Lichterman noted that the proposed electric utility tax rate increase uses a weighted average to allocate the tax burden by segment in direct relation to the amount of energy consumed by that sector.

Ch. Oppenheim noted that at the last meeting Commissioner Dadey asked about how this will impact older, less efficient homes versus newer, more efficient homes. Mr. Lichterman noted that he discussed this question with ComEd and they pointed out that the age and efficiency of the home will likely impact the natural gas consumption more than electricity consumption.

Ch. Oppenheim summarized that we have a consensus and that we would add the purchase of RECs funded through the electric utility tax as one of the energy initiatives included in the report to the Board, among many others.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he is strongly against this tax proposal. He noted the cost of electricity and gas utilities are already going up. The proposal would add a tax that does nothing; maybe it improves our leadership. This tax is regressive and would most impact those people least able to pay. He noted a recent Gallop Poll survey shows that Americans are willing to spend about \$1 a month on climate change and he does not believe the commission has community support for this proposal. Mr. Anderson stated that he does not think the average person is

represented on the commission. He believes it is a terrible idea that will also send the wrong message to our business community. He believes the tax will do nothing other than assuage some peoples' feeling of guilt, it's an awful use of government and he is very strongly against the electric utility tax proposal.

Commissioner Jacoby noted that she is struggling to understand Commissioner Anderson's characterization that RECs do nothing. Mr. Anderson noted that global warming is a global problem and imposing a local tax on ourselves is not the correct approach; rather a nationwide carbon tax is better at meaningfully addressing the issue.

Ch. Oppenheim stated that she strongly disagrees with Commissioner Anderson and that global efforts start locally.

Commissioner Dadey noted that she doesn't feel the Gallop Poll of Americans is representative of our residents' view of the issue. She also noted that there are programs available to assist low-income residents and that the tax is equitable because it is based on usage.

Ch. Oppenheim summarized that we have reviewed many options related to energy and that in order to get our electric consumption down to a zero carbon footprint by 2030 the only viable option was purchasing RECs. The RECs cost money and the funding needs to come from somewhere. The REC proposal will be one option presented to the Village Board that helps us achieve our energy goals.

Commissioner Jacoby inquired if there were alternative suggestions offered by Commissioner Anderson. Commissioner Anderson noted that he supports programs such as the Sustainability Commission's tree initiatives that are dual purposes – addressing climate change while also being desired by a large consensus of the community. Ch. Oppenheim noted that those type of tree programs will be offered in addition to the RECs, but the problem is so enormous there also may be a bitter pill that needs to be offered along with them.

Commissioner Wilde believes the RECs have a huge impact for their cost. At the residential level, we could spend a few dollars each month and reduce one-third of our entire carbon footprint. The REC initiative we have proposed is equitable and it is us as a community standing up and doing our part. Residents also have options to save money on electricity by switching to Community Solar.

Commissioner Mertes noted that his cursory research has indicated that a few communities in the GRC are purchasing RECs to offset their own municipal footprint but none are purchasing RECs community-wide. Mr. Lichterman concurred with that assessment.

Ch. Oppenheim summarized that we have had robust discussions on electricity and RECs and that at this time there is an understanding that Commissioner Anderson and Commissioner Mertes are against the electric utility tax proposal but there is a consensus of the group to move forward with this proposal as one initiative under the focus area of energy.

Ch. Oppenheim referred to the excel sheet created by Commissioner Wilde. Mr. Lichterman noted that a link has been sent out to everyone inviting them to contribute their ideas to the document. The energy initiatives will continue to evolve and be reviewed by the group. Mr. Lichterman noted that excerpts from the 2021 Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Climate Action Plan were also included in the packet. These documents are essentially a more concise listing of the energy initiatives that were included in the GRC2. Mr. Wilde noted that the collaborative excel document is the start of an outline based off the GRC2 document. He suggested that everyone contribute various initiatives and programs under the larger topic areas outlined in the document.

Mr. Wilde observed that there are various clean energy grant programs available to government and non-profit organizations to help retrofit buildings. Mr. Lichterman reported that an energy audit of the Village Hall is underway and once that report is complete he will share it with the group. Additionally, the energy audit consultants will help the Village secure grant funding related to the project.

2. Focus Area: Waste Introduction

Mr. Lichterman summarized the background materials included in the packet, which were intended to lay the ground work for what the waste stream and waste opportunities currently look like. He noted that waste is 3% of the total footprint and the suggestion has been to reduce that by two-thirds by 2030.

Mr. Lichterman reported that much of the information is sourced from the 2019 SWALCO Report. Mr. Lichterman summarized that according to the report, organic materials make up 25% of the Lake County landfill and recycling material makes up 37% of the Lake County landfill material. Additionally, based on weight, approximately half of the waste is generated by residential users and half is generated by commercial users.

Commissioner Mertes requested additional information regarding who the largest commercial contributors are to the waste stream. Mr. Lichterman stated that he would work with the waste hauler to answer that question.

Mr. Lichterman reviewed various waste programs such as the recycling cart upgrade option, curbside composting, e-scrap collections, noting the take-away is that most of the available programs are already implemented and the initiatives should focus on how to leverage the robust programs we already have in place. Mr. Lichterman reviewed the disposal rate for the Village noting the 2018 rate was 1.56 pounds per capita per day (pcd). We achieved the 2015 SWALCO goal of 1.60 pcd and should endeavor to pursue the 2030 goal of 1.35 pcd, which has been supported by the Sustainability Commission. Notably, the 2018 disposal rate does not reflect the year-round curbside composting program that was implemented in 2021.

Lastly, Mr. Lichterman discussed the commercial waste franchise program noting that we have a 15% commercial recycling rate and that businesses receive 4 cubic yards of recycling serviced once a week for free. While there is opportunity to increase the 15% participation rate, it should be noted that this is one of the highest rates in the County.

Commissioner Wilde asked about the participation rate of 55%. Mr. Lichterman noted that all businesses have access to the recycling program but not all businesses utilize the program.

Commissioner Mertes asked if these figures account for materials disposed of by third parties such as an Iron Mountain. Mr. Lichterman noted that items that are not picked up by our hauler such as document shredding and medical waste may not be included in these reports as they are not serviced by our hauler.

Ch. Oppenheim suggested possibly surveying our large commercial properties to determine who is recycling and if not, what obstacles they are facing. Commissioner Mertes noted that the greatest impact on the greenhouse gas reduction would be to not use something in the first place; and, not create the plastic waste, for example, in the first place. Commissioner Dadey noted that most of the single-use plastic waste comes from food service.

There was no consensus to move forward with any sort of plastic bag ban at this time, recognizing that the problem is much broader than just plastic bags. Mr. Mertes suggested that our work plan include the five initiatives in the GRC2 related to waste that staff has indicated we are interested in pursuing. Those items include (i) setting a waste reduction goal, (ii) conducting waste audits, (iii) establish multi-family recycling goals, (iv) establish commercial and institutional recycling goals; and, (v) facilitating biosolid re-use in the community.

Commissioner Wilde noted that there may be other ways to financially incentive the behavior we want, such as the 4 cubic yards of free recycling included in the commercial waste program. Mr. Wilde suggested that we view the residential and commercial waste initiatives separately. Commissioner Anderson concurred with the suggestion to separate the residential and commercial waste programs and to continually pursue education and awareness and suggested pursuing award programs for commercial businesses, for example.

Ch. Oppenheim asked what else we can do to get residents to utilize their compost bin. Mr. Lichterman noted that a survey was completed in the fall indicating that 30% of the homes were utilizing the compost bin. Ms. Dadey noted this requires a large education effort. Commissioner Anderson concurred noting composting needs to be showcased at community events such as the Farmers Market. Commissioner Jacoby suggested utilizing door hangers to encourage residents to utilize the compost bin when the hauler sees that a homeowner has only put out the garbage and recycling containers. Mr. Anderson supported the suggestion noting that the door hanger could include some financial incentive such as a coupon to a restaurant or to purchase compostable liner bags.

Ch. Oppenheim commended the compost toolkit program and suggested we think about doing another round of giveaways. Mr. Lichterman noted that the Village has given out almost 2,000 compost toolkits to help get residents started.

Ch. Oppenheim raised the question of trying to reduce paper consumption and recognized the difficulty of that given consumer habits and online purchasing. There was no consensus to

pursue a paper reduction initiative at this time. Mr. Wilde noted that Lake County passed an ordinance banning single-use plastics in all their facilities. Ch. Oppenheim asked if we could make our special events, such as Family Days, a zero-waste event. The group recognized the difficulty of eliminating single-use plastic at special events, particularly related to the food vendors. Alternatively, the group expressed a favorable view to trying to offer composting at our events, possible starting with Harvest Fest this fall. Commissioner Anderson noted there is a lot of momentum around composting and is encouraged that we will see the rates increase over the years.

Commissioner Wilde suggested that everyone contribute their waste reduction ideas to the collaborative excel sheet that has been circulated.

Commissioner Jacoby suggested discussing another focus area at the next meeting. Ch. Oppenheim recommended that we discuss transportation. Mr. Lichterman will work with staff to prepare some of the background information related to the topic of transportation.

Public Comment

George McClintick thanked the Commission for their work. He noted that the City of Evanston along with about 15 other towns are utilizing RECs to reduce their carbon footprint related to municipal services. Additionally, Mr. McClintick noted that the Biden Administration put the social cost of carbon at \$51 a ton and when you use RECs to offset carbon emissions, it costs somewhere in the order of \$2-5 a ton so the cost benefit analyses is very much in favor of using RECs.

Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Trustee Wilde moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jacoby seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next meeting of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group will take place on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 3:00 pm via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Lichterman

Assistant Village Manager / Director of Community Development