

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group  
Meeting Minutes  
March 23, 2022

A meeting of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group was held on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 3:00 pm 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 (arrived 3:08 pm)  
Victoria Street, Executive Director, DBR Chamber of Commerce  
Art Wilde, Go Green Deerfield

Absent:

Bill Mertes, Sustainability Commission

Also present:

Andrew Lichterman, Assistant Village Manager/Director of Community Development  
Bob Phillips, Director of Public Works and Engineering  
Clint Case, Building and Code Enforcement Supervisor

Document Approval

Commissioner Wilde moved to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2022 Greenhouse Gas Working Group meeting as amended. Commissioner Dadey seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Anderson, Dadey, Mertes, Wilde, Oppenheim (5)  
NAYS: None (0)

Public Comment

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

Business

1. Discussion of Possible Policies, Programs and Resources
  - Focus Area:
    - i. Ecosystem

Commissioner Dadey prepared information on sustainable landscaping that was researched from various municipalities across the country. Chairperson Oppenheim noted the GHG Working

Group has discussed reviewing the current weed and vegetation Ordinances and revise to codify the desirability of native vegetation.

Mr. Lichterman reviewed portions of the Schaumburg and Kane County development, subdivision and municipal codes. Mr. Lichterman noted Kane County requires a minimum number of native trees to be planted when creating a new lot. Similarly, Schaumburg requires a minimum number of trees depending on lot size but it does not require the trees to be native. Mr. Phillips explained Kane County is different than Deerfield because it is farmland that is being developed for the first time. He suggested Deerfield could make modifications. Ch. Oppenheim explained the Tree Ordinance requires mitigation for trees that are removed but does not have a basic minimum for residential properties. Mr. Phillips noted commercial properties have to submit a landscaping plan and the Village can be more stringent on what is approved and encourage natives or drought resistant species. Ch. Oppenheim noted that commercial landscape plans are typically trying to address screening requirements and the exact type of plants are negotiated but not always dictated.

Mr. Lichterman noted Schaumburg allows natural landscaping in the rear yard of residential districts up to a height of 12 inches but it must be maintained and cutdown at least once a year prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. The City of Chicago is considering a native garden registry, which would create a specific address registry for native gardens that meet minimum standards and would be permitted to grow vegetation above 10 inches. Mr. Lichterman noted that a native garden is a good tool to assist with proper enforcement and oversight of native gardens in residential districts. Ch. Oppenheim questioned whether they should also be allowed only in the rear yard or also the front yard. The commissioners generally supported the idea of using a registry to manage the native gardens and to allow them in the front and rear yard. Mr. Lichterman suggested requiring a minimum front yard setback from the property line for native gardens.

Ch. Oppenheim questioned how to get native gardens certified. Mr. Phillips explained the Village works with an ecologist for native restoration work. Mr. Lichterman noted the Village does not have this expertise on staff and an outside consultant would be needed to serve as the expert to ensure the native gardens meet a minimum acceptable standard.

Mr. Lichterman explained there was other information regarding incentivizing rain gardens as part of good, better and best recommendations. There was a lot of discussion about requiring landscaping plans that limit the number of undesirable plants. The Village could possible revise the Appearance Code or other governing document to strengthen the language requiring native plantings. Ch. Oppenheim noted if the Village would like to simplify it internally, they could generate a list of ill-advised or questionable plants.

Mr. Lichterman discussed a bounty program where Villages incentive or reward residents for removing invasive species from their property. There was an example of a city in Arkansas that selects one invasive per year. When residents remove this invasive, they get one native tree or shrub. Commissioner Dadey would like an innovative way to get people to recognize invasive species and provide some sort of reward. Riverwoods was found to be the only municipality that provides some financial assistance to plant trees on private property. Ch. Oppenheim noted the

Commissioner's charge is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the more effective way to reduce those is with a canopy tree as opposed to a shrub that replaces buckthorn. Mr. Phillips explained the parks and golf course are lined with buckthorn. When the park district removes buckthorn, they get major complaints from the neighbors and end up spending thousands of dollars landscaping backyards because they removed a screen. Fortunately, the Village does not have a lot of buckthorn on public rights of way.

Commissioner Anderson noted the Sustainability Commission has done a lot of work in this area. This is an education challenge. The Sustainability Commission is looking at recommending some incentives that are not too costly. A lot of people realize buckthorn is a problem, but they do not want to spend the time and effort to remove it and then buy plantings to replace it. Commissioner Anderson noted the Sustainability Commission will take these thoughts and add them to their seasonal discussions.

Ch. Oppenheim reported the GHG Working Group initially discussed trees and tree cover along with the difficulty of planting enough trees to make a difference in the limited amount of land owned by the Village. She noted residents have access to the 50/50 cost share tree program in the parkways. Ch. Oppenheim suggested after that program winds down, incentivizing or subsidizing homeowner planting on private property may be a possibility.

Mr. Lichterman reported Riverwoods' Municipal Code stipulates native trees cannot be removed unless it is due to new construction or additions that are related to a building permit. Riverwoods also has a protective woodland definition and completed an inventory of woodlands on each parcel. Riverwoods cost share program provides residents up to 50 percent of the cost of a tree not to exceed \$4000 per lot. Trustee Jacoby noted the limited number of households and relatively small population of Riverwoods makes the program feasible for them.

Mr. Lichterman noted the lawn mower buy back programs that were identified were typically handled through consortiums rather than municipalities. Some programs provide a rebate or give residents money to buy or trade in a gas powered mower for an electric mower. Ch. Oppenheim spoke with a Village landscape contractor who said the equipment costs 2 to 3 times more and won't be readily available for a couple more years. It may be 4 to 5 years before they can transition because the technology does not allow them to do it sooner. Mr. Phillips reported the Village is looking to try an electric mower once they become available.

Mr. Lichterman reported the staff work plan includes rewriting the Subdivision Code, which will be a year-long project, at which time some of these concepts can be incorporated into the document. There are opportunities around allowing native grasses in residential districts, requiring a minimum number of native trees on newly created lots, enhancing commercial landscape plan requirements, and creating a bounty program to incentive private property owners to remove invasive species from their property.

Ch. Oppenheim noted water is a huge part of ecosystem but questioned how to translate the effect of water on greenhouse gas emissions. She asked how to align what the GHG group is looking at with carbon reduction. There are all kinds of stewardship that needs to be done with

water, which is done, but how can the effect on greenhouse gasses be quantified. Commissioner Wilde noted the Go Green members have found it hard to quantify it, but big bodies of water are a major contributor to absorbing greenhouse gasses.

Mr. Lichterman explained the GHG group is focused on their mission statement from the Board. Groups like Go Green and the Sustainability Commission complement those efforts. The Sustainability Commission has focus areas of water and trees more broadly and for that reason Mr. Lichterman suggested allowing the Sustainability Commission to focus on water and the GHG Group should focus on the mission statement from the Board.

Commissioner Anderson explained the Sustainability Commission is looking at conserving water, improving water quality and consuming tap water. They have done a host of educational campaigns about this topic. He does not know how to quantify water in the greenhouse gas context. Mr. Phillips noted water is a very complex issue and stormwater is something that cannot be controlled. The Village system is overburdened and there are areas that flood. The big thing about water and greenhouse gas and saving energy is to create an efficient process associated with treating potable water and wastewater.

Mr. Lichterman noted in 2018, the Village looked at installing solar panels at the wastewater treatment plant and various lift stations. They are looking at it again, to see if it makes sense to move forward with solar panels to improve efficiency. Ch. Oppenheim noted the Village keeps on getting hit with additional requirements for water purification that require more energy. Mr. Phillips explained the EPA is always moving forward. The current initiative is phosphorus removal. The Village is required to reduce phosphorus down to 0.5 milligrams per liter, which is a \$1 million initiative.

Ch. Oppenheim summarized water relates to everything in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The GHG Group's charge is narrow, but we can look at reducing energy use and consumption through the potable water process and wastewater process.

Ch. Oppenheim noted the other focus area of the GHG Group is food. She believes this is the area with the least control. She suggested discussing this at the next meeting. The Group will then work on the report to be sent to the Board that will be an introduction to what the Group would like to accomplish over the next 2 – 5 years. The suggestions made in the report should guide the people who take the next step into where they look for solutions, how they define the problems and define the basic goals and principles the Group believes in. The Group can use the general tone of education in the report and have it redefined at a later date. The Board needs enough information and specifics to start implementing things to define a direction in which to move forward. Mr. Lichterman suggested including a cost estimate with the various initiatives. Mr. Wilde expressed his support for all the efforts of this group and wants to ensure that the plan initiatives get implemented. Ch. Oppenheim noted some of the items have already been implemented and the information will be for the Village Board's consideration as they enact future policies and budgets.

## 2. Other Items for Discussion

There were no other items for discussion.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment on Zoom, in person or via email.

Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Commissioner Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Jacoby seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

The next meeting of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group will take place on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 3:00 pm at Village Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton  
Secretary