

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes May 10, 2022

Conducted Remotely

Commission Members Present: Laura Derks (Chair), Ramona Blaber, Stephen Morales, Carly Provost-Rizor, Liz Lukehart, Cassandra West, Darryl Baker.

Commission Members Absent: Mark Goldberg, Lisa Boone.

Staff Present: Marcella Bondie Keenan, Sustainability Coordinator

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Derks at 5:30 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 previous meeting minutes, it was unanimously approved with none opposed.
3. **Public Comment:** Staff Liaison Marcella Bondie Keenan read the following public comment aloud:

Leslie Hodes: Submitted a public comment sharing her opinion that leaf blowers are absolutely horrific because of the noise, smell, pollution, and lack of necessity. She has lived in Oak Park for 37 years and hopes that Oak Park will ban them like what is being done in Evanston. She wants her grandchildren to grow up in a community that is proactive on environmental issues.

4. **Agenda Items:**

- **Recommendations to Village Board Concerning the Leaf Blower Ordinance**
 - Chairperson Derks and Marcella Bondie Keenan explain that the purpose of this meeting is for the EEC to frame a motion with specific parameters and policy guidelines regarding gas-powered lawn care equipment. The commission will vote and send the decision to the Board.
 - Marcella Bondie Keenan walks through her memo about the adverse impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers on human health, air quality, and greenhouse gas emissions. She discusses the current ordinance, possible alternative options, and public input on the topic.
 - Cassandra West addresses the fact that keeping the leaves on the ground is better for the environment. Promoting electric equipment still contributes to pollution when the focus should be on composting leaves. Chairperson Derks and Liz Lukehart agree.

- Stephen Morales and Marcella Bondie Keenan discuss enforcement. Public Works currently certifies the equipment of landscaping businesses that are registered in Oak Park. Businesses that are registered outside of the Village are not reviewed, enforcement in that case comes from noise complaints to the police. There are no fines associated with the 2004 ordinance.
 - The Village Neighborhood Services Division performs walking inspections of building code issues in Oak Park. Ramona Blaber suggests that current roving code enforcement staff could also enforce the leaf blower ordinance. Chairperson Derks asks for consensus on this idea as long as the Village staff has the capacity to do so, all commissioners approve.
 - Chairperson Derks asks if there should there be a total phase out of all gas-powered lawn devices or a seasonal ordinance? All commissioners agree on a total phase out.
 - Stephen Morales suggests that the ordinance should be specific about prioritizing replacement of lawn care equipment with a readily available electric option, and be aspirational to replace other equipment in the future when the technology is ready. Chairperson Derks asks for a consensus and all commissioners agree.
 - Marcella Bondie Keenan shares her notes on the motion to recommend:
 - Ban on all (gas or electric) leaf blowers before 8am, effective upon ordinance adoption.
 - Total phaseout within one year for all gas-powered lawn care device except lawn mowers. Ban gas lawn mowers when electric alternatives are readily available.
 - Enforcement through the Village code enforcement staff, not through Police Department. Dedicated staff email for resident complaints.
 - Provide education for contractors and residents.
 - Look to other municipal program examples for how to support transition for small business.
 - Chairperson asks for a motion to approve this recommendation. Stephen Morales makes a motion to approve, Darryl Bakers seconds. The motion is unanimously approved.
- **New Business:**
 - Go Green Days is May 21st and May 28th at the Farmers' Market. Contact Erica Helms if the EEC is interested in having a table.
 - An LRS recycling facility tour would trigger OMA so Marcella Bondie Keenan will send a doodle poll to gauge commissioner interest.
- **Adjourn:** At 7:00 p.m. a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

The next EEC meeting is scheduled for June 14th at 7:00pm.