

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2022

A meeting of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group was held on Wednesday, March 9, 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
Bill Mertes, Sustainability Commission
Art Wilde, Go Green Deerfield

Absent:

Elaine Jacoby, Village Trustee
Victoria Street, Executive Director, DBR Chamber of Commerce

Also present:

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

Document Approval

Commissioner Dadey made a clarification to the minutes. Commissioner Dadey moved to approve the minutes from the February 23, 2022 Greenhouse Gas Working Group meeting as amended. Commissioner Wilde 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 or email or in person.

Business

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

Mr. Phillips is doing an inventory on the parkway trees. There is a canopy survey readily available through Lake County. Ch. Oppenheim noted when discussing increasing the number of trees, it would help to know how much space there is between trees. She explained the

Village has less opportunity to plant more trees and it would be up to residents to plant trees on their own property. This is important to note, because the Village can plan things on public land and should not be unrealistic. Mr. Lichterman explained that, according to the Chicago Region Tree Initiative, the canopy coverage for the Village is 40 percent and has 17 percent of the impervious surface is Village owned and 80 percent is non-Village owned. He questioned whether the numbers are achievable and where the real opportunity lies.

Ch. Oppenheim questioned whether the Village should make more of an effort to preserve the existing trees, because of the limited areas where they can increase the tree canopy. The Tree Ordinance was recently made a lot stronger, but may need to be reassessed frequently to ensure they reflect the current situation.

Mr. Phillips explained the Ordinance regarding heritage trees was revised to increase the mitigation requirements; however, it would have little impact for developers. The customer may look at the fees, as long as the trees are not in the building envelope. Most of the trees removed are due to additions and new construction. He noted there have been a number of issues with the tree conditions on parkway trees and a lot are declining. The Village removes and replaces parkway trees on a one-to-one basis. Ch. Oppenheim noted the Plan Commission scrutinizes plans to ensure there is a tree replacement plan.

Commissioner Dadey asked if the building codes regulate the amount of impervious surface on a property. She believes changing the required amount of permeable surface could be better than changing the Tree Ordinance. Mr. Phillips explained there are some restrictions on how much of a property can be developed. In addition, he maximum amount of impervious coverage in a front yard is 40 percent but there is no requirement for the rear yard. There is also the requirement to provide detention, which minimizes what can be done because it becomes cost prohibitive. Mr. Case added there are a lot of structure requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Phillips explained the Village has a net zero runoff requirement, which limits the size of a structure. Depending on the size of the subdivision, the lots are broken up and the maximum impervious coverage for a new lot is determined. Mr. Nakahara added the Village does a tree inventory for subdivisions to determine the largest footprint of a house and how much mitigation would be necessary to replace trees. The Village is pretty restrictive and it determines how large a house can be. Commercial developments must submit a landscaping plan.

Ch. Oppenheim noted the Village Codes are based on the open space requirements and how much impervious surface is allowed. Each site is different in terms of how water behaves, making it difficult to create a standard that is applicable for every site. The current standards are vetted and supported in other communities. Commissioner Dadey asked if there is a way to incentivize having more open space. Mr. Nakahara noted that we typically offer credit on impact fees depending on the amount of open space in a given development and this can be a meaningful incentive.

Ch. Oppenheim noted at the last meeting, Amy Call asked if there could be a requirement as part of the Appearance Code for commercial developments requiring a certain percentage of native plants. The Village currently recommends it but does not require it. Mr. Nakahara reported in

the appendix of the Appearance Code, there is a listing of native plant species that go well in a C-1 or C-2 development. The information comes from Lake County. Mr. Phillips noted developers look for species of plants and trees that will have a better survival rate and lower maintenance.

Ch. Oppenheim noted the Village may have the opportunity to naturalize a few more areas that are maintained by the Village. This would be driven by the desire to be more sustainable and have less maintenance. Mr. Phillips explained the Village has dozens of locations that are maintained with turf grass, which has to be mowed weekly. The Village has discussed centralizing those areas to reduce the amount of maintenance. The native plantings will look nice and be easier and less expensive to maintain. Mr. Phillips described a property that has not been maintained. When it is cleared out, it will be a drainage improvement. When that is taking place, it can be naturalized to make it easier for the ownership to maintain. The Village has a vested interest in it and may want to take over ownership at some point to benefit the Village. Ch. Oppenheim believes the more the Village can do with sites like this and show they are successful and serve a purpose, the more successful the Village will be in encouraging people to take advantage of this as well. She noted the Village has received communication this week about people wanting to put things in the parkway. People need to understand that the parkway is an easement.

Mr. Phillips explained there is more than one property in the Village with Astro turf in their backyard. Ch. Oppenheim noted there are many points of view. In discussing low maintenance, Astro turf is low maintenance but not the desired result.

Commissioner Wilde attended a webinar called, “Under the Influence of Putting Pear Pressure to Work.” People will follow what others are doing. The more public and residential areas that show what can be done, the more the desirable behavior will be adopted. At that point, the Village could educate the public with the benefits. Commissioner Wilde believes the Village needs a stronger, more effective way to preserve trees. He believes it is working with homeowners, but developers do not have a stake in the Community. Commissioner Wilde suggested revisiting who is doing this effectively on an annual basis. Seeing the trees come down that are not replaceable is heartbreaking. Ch. Oppenheim noted one of the categories in the Green Region Compact information was conservation ethic, which is having the ethic that is embodied, lived and demonstrated. She believes the Tree Ordinance needs to be made as strong as possible

Ch. Oppenheim expressed concern about the Appearance Code requiring trees in parking lots. Mr. Nakahara explained this was updated a few years ago as a guideline or best practice. Commissioner Wilde asked whether the Village can use the funds from the mitigation fees for a more aggressive 50/50 program and encourage going above and beyond when planting in yards. Mr. Phillips explained the mitigation fees go into the general fund and the Village spends more money than it takes in. Commissioner Wilder suggested the mitigation fee should take into account the net impact in dollars so the result is a zero net impact for the Village. Mr. Phillips explained people are encouraged to plant trees by receiving a portion of their mitigation fees back. People are also not going to plant the same net caliper of tree. Ch. Oppenheim noted some

of the trees that are removed are poor quality or unhealthy. These trees are replaced with better quality trees. Commissioner Anderson questioned whether the Village has ever studied what other communities have done to encourage residents and businesses. Ch. Oppenheim noted Amy Call indicated Northbrook has made an investment in a tree program. With the Village's 50/50 parkway tree program, however, Deerfield has the ability to protect the tree/investment. It is a different situation when putting something in someone's backyard. A number of questions come up, including the cost, liability and maintenance. Mr. Phillips noted this would also affect the Public Works department. He spoke with Northbrook to see what they are doing. The information in the report, stating they were going to do 1500 trees a year, is factual. They will buy small-width trees and drop them off at people's houses. Ch. Oppenheim explained the Village needs to ensure they are getting quality trees and installers who will bring quality plant material as well as homeowners that become responsible for the trees. The Village, in essence, would be making the donation of trees for homeowners to upgrade their property. Mr. Phillips will look into the reality of how the process is being implemented in other areas.

Ch. Oppenheim noted people have water issues on their properties that impact the trees. Commissioner Dadey and Amy Call discussed the possibility of restricting subdividing lots. Mr. Lichterman explained there is a Zoning Ordinance with minimum log size requirements. The Village cannot arbitrarily deny a subdivision; it would either conform or not. Mr. Phillips noted the engineers are tough on developers when it comes to tree removal and mitigation. Mr. Lichterman added the Ordinance encourages tree replacement with the same caliper and incentivizes residents to plant the highest quality of trees to get the most credit.

Ch. Oppenheim noted the Village Code states a lawn cannot be higher than 8 inches. Mr. Case explained he receives a number of complaints about grass not being taken care of when it is actually natural vegetation. Ch. Oppenheim questioned if the language needs to be tweaked to read lawns need to be mowed to a height of 8 inches except in the case of a naturalistic planting which contains native plantings. Mr. Case explained the Municipal Code and property maintenance code would need to be amended and adopted. It would have to be specific to some sort of controlled environment in order to assist with enforcement.

Commissioner Wilde noted the reduction in the use of gasoline powered lawn equipment is an important initiative. Mr. Lichterman explained the North Shore Consortium is working together on a report discussing this matter. He would not want staff to duplicate that work. Ch. Oppenheim explained one of the possible solutions is reducing the gasoline powered lawn equipment by 25 percent. Mr. Lichterman explained these were high level numbers and the Commission should come up with a consensus on all of those solutions. Commissioner Wilde believes it is difficult to regulate because a lot of landscapers use commercial size mowers even though battery powered mowers are available. Commissioner Dadey believes the Village could incentivize homeowners to use battery powered mowers, but most homeowners in Deerfield do not mow their own lawns. Some contractors may be open if given a manufacturer's coupon. Ch. Oppenheim noted many landscaping companies bill customers based on the amount of time their crew is on the site and the workers can move faster with big mowers than smaller, battery or electric powered mowers. She explained there is a cost to the landscape companies for the switchover, which could represent a fairly substantial increase in the cost to residents. Ch.

Oppenheim believes the Village needs a lot more information on how this could get implemented. Mr. Phillips noted there has been a lot of advancement in battery powered equipment, with some batteries having an 8-hour life before needing to be charged. Mr. Lichterman explained the report will consider a timeline / phased in approach as well as equity between large and small properties. Ch. Oppenheim explained the commission has been charged with coming up with basic principles. Some will not be able to be implemented right away, but could be thought about for two to five years out. The Commission would like to decrease or eliminate the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment. Commissioner Anderson noted Deerfield is different than other communities. Ch. Oppenheim believes it will be easier to think through this once the information is received.

Ch. Oppenheim noted at the last Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved the purchase of an electric powered vehicle. This is the first step toward moving the municipal fleet toward electric vehicles and away from carbon-based fuel. Commissioner Wilde asked how the Village could make this stand out, so residents see it. Mr. Phillips explained there will be something on it telling everybody it is electric.

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. Commissioner Dadey seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

The next meeting of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Ad Hoc Working Group will take place on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 3:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton
Secretary