



Village of Oak Park

123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302
www.oak-park.us

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Monday, June 13, 2022

7:00 PM

Remote

I. Call to Order

Village President Scaman called the meeting to order at 7:29 P.M. She authorized a statement be read providing that the meeting is being held remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines and that it is not prudent to have people present at the Village Board's regular meeting location due to public health concerns related to that pandemic.

II. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

Absent: 0

III. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Village Trustee Parakkat, seconded by Village Trustee Buchanan, to approve the Agenda. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

There were no Non-Agenda Public Comments.

V. Regular Agenda

- A. [ID 22-170](#) **Presentation and Discussion of the Environment and Energy Commission's Recommendation to Amend the Village Code Regarding Gasoline Powered Leaf Blowers**

The following persons spoke their Public Comment aloud:

Matthew Gnabasik : Matthew Gnabasik spoke their public comment in

support of a gas powered leaf blower ban. He has started an online petition asking the Trustees of Oak Park and River Forest to phase out gas powered blowers in favor of electric blowers. They also do not believe a feasibility study is needed as there is already a tremendous amount of data publicly available to draw from.

Scott McAdam : Scott McAdam, President of McAdam Landscaping, spoke their public comment regarding the impact of mandating the end of gas powered landscaping equipment. They support a reduction of emissions but do not believe there are products currently available that could handle the capacity that they need to do their landscaping jobs at this time - the technology needs to be there in order for success to be achieved.

Pamela Tate: Pamela Tate spoke their public comment in support of a gas powered leaf blower ban, and believes that the blowers concentrate their pollutants in a neighborhood and are extremely toxic for the people that use them and everyone around them. It is time to take action.

Clerk Waters read the following public comments aloud:

Barb Jenig: Barb Jenig submitted their public comment in support of a gas powered leaf blower ban. They feel gas leaf blowers are pollution bombs and they are dirty and fuel inefficient. Climate change is one of the most pressing social issues in the world at the moment, and getting rid of these gas bombs is a small step in the direction of cleaner air.

Mike Cosgrove: Mike Cosgrove submitted their public comment in support of a gas powered leaf blower ban, for the sake of the climate impacts on our children, for the sake of workers' and residents' health, and for the sake of being able to hear the sounds of nature that make Oak Park such a wonderful place to live.

Chris Pinc: Chris Pinc submitted their public comment in support of a gas powered leaf blower ban. They feel the evidence to support a gas-powered leaf blower ban is clear: they are loud, a health hazard to the people who use them and surprisingly large source of greenhouse gas emissions. We don't need a feasibility study. We just need to move straight to putting a ban in place!

Village Manager Kevin Jackson introduced the Item.

Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager, gave an overview of the Item. He then introduced Laura Derks, Chair of the Environment and Energy Commission (EEC), and Marcella Bondie Keenan, Sustainability

Coordinator, who then gave a presentation and recommendations from the EEC and staff.

Village Manager Jackson commented a feasibility study is something that would be done with any new policy or new program to analyze how it would impact the village financially and the impact to staff, how it would impact the community, and how it would impact the stakeholders. It would help inform the policy and make sure we are bringing something that can work and be implemented successfully.

Village President Scaman requested clarification on the timeline if the Board is approving a feasibility study.

Village Manager Jackson the goal would be to complete the analysis and prepare recommendations for the Board to review during the budget process, with implementation next season.

John Wielebnicki, Director of Public Works, then gave an overview of the current village ordinance regarding leaf blowers.

Village Trustee Taglia expressed concern on how to communicate to the landscaping companies any new policy or direction when the village does not know who they are or how to contact them.

Village Trustee Buchanan requested clarification when would an Ordinance come to the Board for consideration.

Village Manager Jackson responded the goal would be to bring the Ordinance to the Board prior to the adoption of the budget in November, with implementation next spring.

Village Trustee Parakkat would like to see some quantifiable data as it relates to the issue, a stakeholder impact analysis as to how this would impact all the stakeholders, and a better plan for how this policy would be enforced.

Village Trustee Robinson expressed concern over the social justice implications of a ban to the smaller minority owned landscaping companies. Regarding enforcement, there should be some accountability to homeowners who are agreeing to live according to the village ordinance and are the ones benefiting from the hired service.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla commented this leaf blower issue has been talked about for a long time. Now is the time for actual implementation They expressed their support of an ordinance that

transitions out gas powered blowers in a year or two, as well as providing financial assistance to those businesses that need help to make the transition to electric equipment.

Village Trustee Buchanan agreed this is not a time for incremental change. They expressed several concerns and urged the Board to pass an Ordinance now to take effect next spring, and use the time in between to work out all the details to ensure this program is implemented successfully.

Village Trustee Parakkat reiterated the need for additional analysis, not to stall the process, but to make sure the Board is moving the village in the right direction and to understand its full impact.

Village President Scaman they are not hearing a lot of disagreement, and staff is looking for direction from the Board to move this forward successfully.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla commented they are hearing a dichotomy of urgency between the Trustees. They feel there is plenty data and analysis available to draw from to enact good policy. She supports staff focusing on how to implement this successfully rather than working on further analysis and studies.

Village Trustee Parakkat reiterated he still would like more analysis as to the impact this will have financially and to all stakeholders, which he is not seeing right now.

Village Trustee Enyia thanked the EEC for their hard work on this issue. He is hearing that everyone is trying to bring down emissions and figure out the best way to do that - and this seems like a good way to do it. He questioned how the village could continue to ensure the safety of the workers in the meantime until any actual policy is enacted. He requested clarification on if a feasibility study is always part of the policy making process.

Village Manager Jackson responded it is just a fundamental policy analysis with any new initiative or program that needs to occur in order to protect the Board's interest in its previous investments and investments that are being contemplated with the new initiative. In most instances when you develop a policy, you want the policy to be responsive to all the questions, equity

included, and you want it to actually respect what our position is from a system, financial, and staffing standpoint.

Village Trustee Buchanan reminded the community they are talking about removing leaves from our yards and to keep that in mind when discussing the complexity or stakeholder or financial effects of the issue.

Village President Scaman advised staff to move forward with bringing an Ordinance to the Board for consideration.

VI. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Robinson, seconded by Village Trustee Parakkat, to Adjourn. The motion was approved. The Meeting adjourned at 8:59 P.M., Monday, June 13, 2022.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Deputy Clerk DeViller**

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0