

**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2, 2025,
MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION (ENRC)
VILLAGE HALL 6101 CAPULINA, MORTON GROVE, IL 60053**

1. **Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/ Roll Call:** Pursuant to proper notice and in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the regular meeting of the Environment and Natural Resources Commission was called to order at 6:01 PM. Chairperson Georgie Brunner called the roll:

Commissioners Present: Georgie Brunner, Jenny Cleary, Andrew Hoffman, Volha Liston, Kim Moldofsky, Tariq Puthawala (6:11 p.m.)

Commissioners Absent: Ibrahim Khan, Sarah Tag

Village Staff Present: Zoe Heidorn, Mike Lukich

Guests: None

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Moldofsky moved to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hoffman. Commissioner Moldofsky requested a correction to her name. No other corrections were noted. The motion to approve the minutes as corrected passed unanimously.
3. **Chair Comments:** Chairperson Brunner congratulated Commissioner Moldofsky on her recent election to the Morton Grove Library Board. She also welcomed Zoe Heidorn as the new permanent staff liaison to the Commission.
4. **Staff Report:** Mike Lukich, Director of Public Works, provided a review of Staff activity since April. At the time of their last meeting, Public Works was seeking bids for a program to assess water leaks Village-wide. The contract was awarded, and the work will begin in Q3 of 2025. The importance of the program is to identify and correct leaks to the water system and minimize water loss. Public Works serves as a steward of the water system for both the Village and the Morton Grove Niles Water Commission.

Mr. Lukich said that seven of 17 permitted solar panels have been installed in 2025. In 2024, there were 71 installations. There were fewer the previous year. He said that he hopes to continue the upward trajectory. Chairperson Brunner expressed concern over pending federal legislation that may reduce clean energy incentives. Mr. Lukich then provided updates on improvements to the Village's two fire stations, including a new roof.

Mr. Lukich provided an update on public street trees planted in 2025, saying that the Village has already planted 75 trees and plans to plant an additional 150 trees this year. By comparison to other municipalities that received a CRTI grant award, Morton Grove has planted the most trees in the state. Commissioner Moldofsky asked about how this year's 50/50 Tree Planting Program quantity compares to previous years. Mr. Lukich said that the Village has committed to the same number or increased the number of trees planted through the program each year.

Commissioner Cleary asked about parkway trees recently planted along Austin Avenue in proximity to existing trees on Park District property. She asked if Public Works staff anticipated issues with planting trees so close together. Mr. Lukich said that the Village Arborist carefully selected species that would not take more growing space than available so as to not interfere with adjacent tree growth and utility lines. Commissioner Puthawala asked Mr. Lukich to clarify how the CRTI grant funds would be distributed. Mr. Lukich said that the grant provides too many trees to plant in one year unless contractors are used, so the Village is using one tranche in 2025 and the second in 2026. The grant dollars are better spent on trees, not on contractors.

Mr. Lukich also provided an update on the Village's waste, recycling, and compost services. According to WasteNot, there are currently 91 compost collection subscriptions, including three new Village sites. In total, there are six commercial participants. Mr. Lukich also provided figures for the volume of composted collected in 2025 and

associated environmental impacts. Commissioner Puthawala noted that this equated to approximately two pounds of compost waste per day per subscription. The Commissioners discussed having WasteNot segregate the figures for commercial and residential compost collected. They also noted that subscription numbers may dip during warmer months due to seasonal use. Commissioner Hoffman said that he only pays for the service in the winter.

Commissioner Moldofsky asked if the Village has an air quality monitor and, if not, whether staff could look into getting one. Mr. Lukich said that he would like to better understand the cost and maintenance before responding. Ms. Heidorn, Assistant Village Administrator, asked how information from the monitor would be used. Commissioner Moldofsky said that the Village could share information with the public, alerting them to low-quality periods and encouraging outdoor activities during high-quality periods.

Commissioner Moldofsky asked if the Village highlights the work it does to correct water main breaks, showing “your tax dollars at work.” Mr. Lukich said that the Village highlights these figures in the annual year-in-review newsletter to residents. Staff agreed that they could do more to promote these activities.

5. Programs and Events:

• **Earth Month Activities**

- **Village Facility Recycling:** Ms. Heidorn reported that WasteNot added compost collection service to four Village facilities in April: Village Hall, the Police Station, and the two fire stations. Commissioner Moldofsky asked to revisit the proposed community compost drop-off site at Village Hall and other locations. She said that Ms. Heidorn had responded with information on why the Village would not pursue this amenity at this time and focus on increasing compost service enrollment. She questioned whether having a drop-off site would impact paid subscription enrollment and whether having individuals drive to a public composting site would mitigate the environmental benefits of composting. The Commissioners and staff discussed the proposal and the larger goal of Village-wide compost collection service. Commissioner Cleary asked if the Village would be able to get better pricing on compost collection service if enrollment were higher. Ms. Heidorn said that she would look into this with WasteNot.
- **Earth Month Newsletter:** Ms. Heidorn said that the Earth Month newsletter was distributed by mail to all addresses in Morton Grove and that a kids’ Earth Month activities book was distributed at Village Hall.
- **Adopt-A-Block Program:** Ms. Heidorn said that nine individuals have registered as Block Captains. She said that people seemed to have positive feedback about the program and that staff would continue work to promote it through banners, social media, and mailings. She said that she will develop a map and explore ways to recognize Captains and their volunteers.
- **Crayon Recycling:** Ms. Heidorn said that there was no significant change to this year’s crayon recycling program and that all collected crayons would be sent to SCARCE.
- **Morton Grove Greener Business Awards:** Ms. Heidorn said that two applications were received for the 2025 program and awarded in April. She said that the program would be shifting from the Economic Development Commission to the ENRC in 2026. She suggested that they accept applications from residents because submissions from businesses and organizations were becoming redundant.
- **Arbor Day Tree Planting:** Ms. Heidorn reported on the annual Arbor Day tree planting, which occurred at Edison School this year. She said that the schools have asked for greater caution around inviting the public due to security concerns.

- **2025 Events:** The Commissioners reviewed the 2025 schedule of ENRC events, including the Sustainability Expo, the Tree Walk, and the Pumpkin Smash. Commissioner Liston asked about the timeline for sponsorship requests from businesses. Ms. Heidorn said that they should be asking for sponsorships soon, but that staff wanted to provide some distance from the Morton Grove Days sponsorship activities. Commissioner Hoffman suggested bringing some of the sponsorship forms to the Morton Grove Pride event in June.

Commissioner Cleary asked if the kids’ activities table could use more non-plastic or second-hand materials for their crafts this year. The Commissioners discussed the request and agreed that they could begin collecting used materials like toilet paper tubes. Commissioner Moldofsky said that she would contact her colleague and friend about doing an art installation or activity with the kids. Commissioner Cleary said that she would also reach out to the Waste Shed in Evanston to see if they have any materials to donate.

Commissioner Puthawala asked about inviting used goods retailers like Play It Again Sports. Ms. Heidorn said that she would certainly invite them and other similar businesses. She reached out to last year's exhibitors and would continue sending out requests.

Commissioner Moldofsky suggested that they only hand out veggie dogs at this year's Expo to promote more sustainable food choices. The Commissioners discussed this proposal and a suggestion to provide educational information comparing vegetarian and meat options. The Commissioners were generally concerned that promoting one type of food over another would be offensive to some attendees and agreed to offer both options this year.

- **Goals:** Ms. Heidorn asked the Commissioners to share their goals for the ENRC. Commissioner Cleary said that she sees the purpose of these meetings as furthering education in the community and recommending policies and regulations that are helpful and beneficial to the community through an environmental lens. For example, the Village could promote No Mow May, residents becoming stewards of native gardens, and other low-cost initiatives. She discussed various native garden and wildlife habitat certifications offered through other government entities and NPOs, including Go Green Glenview's program. She hoped they could work together to get more people on board to make more environmentally mindful choices.

Commissioner Hoffman said that for people who have native gardens, it would be helpful for the Village to acknowledge and for the public to be aware that they are intentionally not mowing. This would help promote more native gardens. He said that Evanston offers a little metal sign that people can put in their non-turf yards. Ms. Heidorn said that a project on the Village's to-do list is to develop native landscaping regulations and policy that support native landscaping while providing tools to code enforcement staff to address neglected yards. She said the Commissioners could help identify communities with good regulations or policy in this area.

Commissioners Cleary and Hoffman asked about prohibiting gas leaf blowers, as some other communities have. Ms. Heidorn said that a good proportion of residents would be against this type of regulation, but that it had been discussed at the ENRC's recommendation. She said that the ENRC and Village could develop educational materials for residents about gas leaf blowers, the proper disposal of yard waste, and tree mulching best practices to pass on to their private landscapers. Considering the nature of landscaping activities and Village staffing, enforcing poor landscaping practices would be very difficult.

6. **Other Business:**

- **Tree Ordinance:** Ms. Heidorn reported that the Tree Ordinance flyer was distributed to commercial and select residential property owners. Commissioner Moldofsky asked if any fees have been collected through the ordinance. Ms. Heidorn said that she would look into this and provide an update. Commissioner Moldofsky asked if Public Works is installing notices for street tree removals. Mr. Lukich responded that the practice was in effect. Ms. Heidorn clarified that the practice is to provide a courtesy notice to the public but is not an invitation to debate whether a tree should or should not be removed.

7. **Commissioner Comments:**

- Chairperson Brunner reminded the group that Morton Grove Days volunteers are needed.

8. **Next Meeting:** Monday, August 6, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

9. **Audience Comments:** None

10. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further comments, Commissioner Moldofsky moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Puthawala and approved by a unanimous voice vote at 7:12 p.m.