

**VILLAGE OF HOFFMAN ESTATES
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MINUTES**

Monday, March 16, 2026 @ 6:00pm
Alexa Room – Village Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order at 6:04.

Members in Attendance: Amy Hartsough, Chair; Lorraine Leisenberg; Alina Dekirmenjian; Gayle Vandenberg; Sheila Schwartz; and Amy Decker

Members Absent: George Tuhowski; Deepak Bhojwani; Sana Zafer; Anna Newell, Trustee; and Hannelore Conley

Others in Attendance: Michala Sage, Schaumburg Township Library District Hoffman Estates Branch Manager; Aaron Howe, Staff Liaison

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michala Sage of the Schaumburg Township Library District provided an update regarding the Library's summer reading program and a potential collaborative sustainability-themed craft event. Ms. Sage stated that the program is intended for all ages and that participation details would need to be finalized by April 1 to be included in the Library newsletter and related promotional materials.

Ms. Sage reported that the Library had reserved five possible dates in June and July based on room availability, with Friday and Saturday options available. Following discussion, the Commission indicated a preference for a Saturday event, with June 27 or July 18 identified as the most favorable options. The Commission expressed support for June 27, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Commission discussed a bottle upcycling craft concept previously shared by Ms. Sage. It was noted that attendees could be encouraged to bring their own one- or two-liter bottles, and Commission members also discussed providing bottles for participants as needed. Ms. Sage stated that the Library would provide materials including scissors, markers, and table coverings. She noted that craft programs are typically well attended and that the room capacity is approximately 30 participants. A drop-in format was discussed as the preferred structure, as it would allow participants to attend at any point during the two-hour event window.

Ms. Sage also requested any Village seal or logo graphics needed for promotional purposes by the end of the month. Staff Liaison Howe will coordinate with Commissioner Vandenberg to survey Commissioners regarding which logo should be used for advertising materials.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:05 PM)

a. February 17, 2026

The next meeting of the Sustainability Commission is scheduled for April 21, 2026 @ 6:00PM.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes of the February 17, 2026, meeting. During discussion, Commissioner Schwartz commented that the minutes were more detailed than necessary. Chairperson Hartsough noted that detailed minutes can be useful in helping members track ongoing items and follow-up actions. Staff Liaison Howe stated that he will prepare sample minutes in a concise format as well for commission review.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Leisenberg and SECONDED by Commissioner Dekirmenjian to approve the February 17, 2026, meeting minutes.

Motion carried by a vote of 5-0-1, with Commissioner Decker abstaining.

4. STAFF LIAISON REPORT

a. Website Updates: Green Business Program and Solar Webpages

Staff Liaison Howe reported that several updates have been made to the Village website, including the correction of dead links and the addition of updated information regarding solar incentives. He noted that website revisions remain ongoing.

Chairperson Hartsough noted that the Green Strategies page still references the Green Business page and may require additional revision for consistency.

b. Green Aggregation Fund Report

Staff Liaison Howe reported that the Village Finance Director confirmed that approximately \$130,000 remains in Green Aggregation Civic Contribution funds from the green energy initiative that began in 2020 and concluded in mid-2023. He noted that the Commission is encouraged to develop recommendations regarding potential uses for these funds in support of sustainability initiatives. He also clarified that the funds belong to the Village and that the Commission's role is advisory.

Commissioner Schwartz asked whether the funds could potentially be used to support a sustainability staff position. Chairperson Hartsough noted that the Village's Sustainability Plan may also need to be updated. Commissioner Dekirmenjian suggested that the Commission consider first pursuing consultant or staff support to help advance sustainability initiatives and implementation efforts. Discussion followed regarding the potential value of a full-time or part-time staff position dedicated to sustainability-related work.

Chairperson Hartsough also suggested following up with Assistant Village Manager Jon Pape regarding the status and future possibilities of aggregation-related initiatives. Commissioner Dekirmenjian noted that municipalities are permitted to explore utility options.

c. Battery Collection Boxes

Staff Liaison Howe reported that staff continues working to improve the Village's battery collection process, which may require an outdoor collection container that is weather-resistant and fire-rated. He noted that staff recently consulted with the Hoffman Estates Fire Department to identify appropriate options.

Commissioner Decker commented that some current precautions may be more extensive than necessary and referenced emerging retail collection programs that provide disposal bags and tape. She noted that public education on proper battery disposal would be beneficial and offered to provide additional input.

It was also reported that iPass transponders will soon be delivered to an approved drop-off location. Chairperson Hartsough noted that the current battery and ink cartridge collection bin is full and may require follow-up by Village staff. Commissioner Decker emphasized the importance of keeping batteries separated from other materials.

5. OLD BUSINESS (6:20 PM)

a. Sustainability Expo Planning

i. Subcommittee Report

Chairperson Hartsough reported that the subcommittee is awaiting approval to proceed further with Sustainability Expo planning. She noted that several proposed dates for 2027 have already been submitted and expressed hope that approvals could be obtained soon so that more substantive work may begin, including budget planning.

Commissioners discussed the order of operations that should be followed to keep progressing with this initiative. Mr. Howe requested more time to prepare a roadmap that includes this year's planning efforts and next year's event preparation timeline.

b. Green Business Program Revival

i. Subcommittee Report

The Commission acknowledged an email update from Commissioner Bhojwani regarding the Green Business Program.

Commissioner Dekirmenjian asked whether, if Green Aggregation funds are not available for staffing support, those funds could instead be used to create a Green Business grant program. She referenced the concept of small business climate-readiness grants as a possible framework. Mr. Howe also proposed establishing a low-interest revolving loan fund for sustainable initiatives.

c. Collaboration with Hoffman Estates Branch Library

The Commission noted that library collaboration had largely been discussed earlier in the meeting during Public Comment.

Commissioner Decker suggested that the Commission also consider programming opportunities later in the year, including into the fall. Ms. Sage indicated that the Library is already considering fall options. Commissioner Decker mentioned mending clinics as a possible future topic.

Ms. Sage stated that the Library is open to additional programming ideas, but space at the branch location is limited unless the program focuses on a single concept or activity that can fit within the available room. She also noted that any outside party requiring compensation would need an identified funding source.

d. Bon Appetit Event Planning

Chairperson Hartsough reported that Commissioners Leisenberg, Hartsough, Conley, and Vandenberg are expected to participate in the Bon Appétit event. It was noted that the \$35 registration cost would be paid by the Village.

The Commission discussed potential giveaway items and outreach materials. Chairperson Hartsough suggested including a QR code linking to the Village's Recycling Coach webpage or widget. She also discussed the possibility of using the event as a small-scale test of various disposal bin types and messaging approaches to evaluate public response.

Chairperson Hartsough stated that she would review the list of participating restaurants and provide any new participants with information like what was distributed at the previous year's event.

6. NEW BUSINESS (6:50 PM)

a. Elgin Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban

Chairperson Hartsough discussed recent actions in the City of Elgin related to a plastic bag ban, which was approved by their Board on March 11, 2026. She noted that Elgin's sustainability commission had requested this ordinance using language based on a proposed state law that has not yet been adopted. She further stated that this change should primarily impact large retailers.

Discussion followed regarding the Commission's advisory role and the value of continuing to explore sustainability-related policy ideas. Chairperson Hartsough noted that initiatives such as green aggregation demonstrate that advisory recommendations can be successful when there is sufficient follow-through and support.

b. Commission Budget Request - 2027 Initial Discussion

Staff Liaison Howe reported that he will prepare a preliminary 2027 budget request for the Commission and work through Chairperson Hartsough and the appropriate subcommittee as part of the development process.

7. OTHER (7:05 PM)

Commissioner Decker asked whether the Sustainability Commission would have any interest in participating in the Northwest Fourth Fest parade. This discussion was tabled until the next Commission meeting.

The Commission discussed including information about the upcoming Library collaboration event in the May/June edition of the Village newsletter.

8. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.