



Quarterly Report - January to March

Dated April 30th, 2023

GRC Theme Key

Climate	C	Mobility	M
Economic Development	ED	Municipal Operations	MO
Energy	E	Sustainable Communities	SC
Land	L	Water	W
Leadership	LS	Waste & Recycling	WR

January:

GROW began the year by introducing the “2023 Planning Calendar” (*Appendix A*) which is a working document updated at each regular meeting in order to organize events and newsletter content. **C** - An additional working document titled “2023 Climate Action Plan for Westchester” (*Appendix B*) containing a summary of recommended strategies that can be initiated was abstracted from the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus’ Climate Action Plan. **Opportunity: We await time to collaborate with staff in obtaining information helpful to identify current practices through the Greenest Region Compact Framework scoring tool** (<https://mayorscaucus.org/initiatives/environment/rec/>). Westchester adopted GRC2 on April 26th, 2016. Historical information has not yet been provided for GROW to begin the process of compiling and maintaining a working document so that the tool may be used to track recommended, planned, and completed sustainability objectives and strategies. Items in green reference a GRC theme or a specific objective within a theme.

Diane Scott served her one year term and was presented with a certificate and earth keychain, her last meeting was 2/2. We began a search for two new Commissioners, one seat was still open from inception of commission.

”Nicor Energy Efficiency” events were held on January 21st & 22nd, 9-10am that Liz Wiseman-Chase put together (*Appendix C*). In response to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Emissions Summary for the Village of Westchester (*Appendix F*), it was identified that the highest source of greenhouse gas equivalents in Westchester was related to residential natural gas utilization. In January, Nicor provided 39 residents with information about weatherization and how to reduce natural gas utilization, free weatherization water conservation kits and ability to sign-up for free in-home energy efficiency assessments. This was followed up with information on how residents could access free kits and assessments in the March newsletter. GRC Objectives: **C1, C2, E5, E6, E18, E30, E31, E33, W1b**

[January Newsletter](#) was written by Lee Kaufman regarding a low salt diet, he spoke with Steve Crowley regarding how the village uses salt on streets. A resident did comment in February's meeting that they check ground temperature and referenced the Salt Institute that he felt the amount of salt being put down was "far above the standard" and he was concerned about roads, creek and other waterways. **Suggestion: Check equipment and calibrate as well as winter training for staff who are dispersing salt.** January newsletter, page 8, as well as "Interested in Joining the GROW Commission?" blurb on page 6 with a low salt diet. GRC Objectives: **W8c, MO4, LS4**

LeeAnn Kruszynski assisted in helping the village obtain CRTI Grant for Tree Inventory. Tree Management Ordinance will need to be updated and Tree Preservation Ordinance will need to be passed. GRC Objectives: **L21, L22**

Amendment to Illinois Exotic Weed Act shared with Jim Novosel. Invasive species degrade soil quality and promote runoff. **Opportunity: Amend villages ordinance, enforce and educate on invasive species as the grant received could be more effective if paired with an invasive removal program. Volunteer at Wolf Road Prairie Saturdays @ 1pm. Engage Park District in removal of invasive species on public land.** GRC Objectives: **L14, L14a, L14b**

In depth discussion regarding better Household Hazardous Waste. **Opportunity: Consider village-wide events twice a year for HHW and any overflow items unable to be picked up at the door. Westchester is in the middle of the two drop off locations and if HHW items cannot be picked up at door then it may end up in trash which causes fires at many facilities at least once a week.** GRC Objectives: **WR13a**

FEMA (CRS) Community Rating System details received for Westchester's 2012 & 2019 rating. There are flooding concerns outside of Special Flood Hazard Areas. (*Appendix H & I*) **Opportunity: Work together with staff to increase awareness and CRS score so that residents can receive a greater discount on flood insurance and have land use qualities that infiltrate water.** GRC Objectives: **W20, W21**

Natural lawn care solutions to mitigate flooding and reduce heat islands. CMAP data shows 49% of our land area is impervious. "Center for Watershed Protection studies indicate that the size of one-hundred-year floods (or floods that have a one percent chance of occurring in any given year) can potentially double in watersheds with impervious cover levels greater than 20—30 percent." (*Appendix F & G*) **Opportunity: To build a "Rain Ready" program similar to Oak Park with MWRD.** GRC Objectives: **L29a, L29b, L29c, L30b, L15, W23, W25**

February:

No sponsored event in February. GROW attendance at February 9th CRTI Annual Partner Recognition Celebration @ Morton Arboretum.

Bicycle Safety event discussed in collaboration with the Police Department to engage more in active transportation. Lack of bicycle racks around town. Forming a Complete Streets policy so that the road is shared with those who use active transportation. **Opportunity: Work together with staff to find grants available for bicycle racks and consider setting-up a program for businesses to purchase bike racks at a subsidized cost. Review any existing Complete Streets policy or form one for the community. GROW to collaborate with staff on Tour de Proviso community event in October** GRC Objectives: **M1, M2, M5, M27, M34, M39**

"Nature In Westchester" Vehicle Sticker Contest presented at 2/14 Village Board Meeting which was initiative lead by Diane Scott.

Westchester Climate Action Plan (*Appendix B*) is working document of strategies introduced to consider when formulating a climate action plan. **Opportunity: In tandem with Cross Community Climate Collaborative (C4) plan and evaluate a community (or Proviso) climate action plan.** GRC Objectives: **C**

[February Newsletter](#) was to have Reusa-Palooza Volunteer blurb, which is on page 13 without any contact information. This was corrected and reprinted in March. GRC Objectives: **WR**

March:

"Illinois Solar for All" events with Marina Minic, Solar Programs Administrator at Citizens Utility Board were held on March 25th & 26th, 9-10am. GROW put the events together to help facilitate access for residents at or below 80% of the area median income in Cook County to procure affordable rooftop or community solar. To ensure adequate attendance to support holding the sessions, we had identified a need to communicate to our target audience through the Village newsletter, Westchester Food Pantry, and by inviting residents throughout Proviso Township to the session. The township posted the newsletter information on its website and sent out an email blast. The food pantry included information about the event in its newsletter. A training opportunity arose as the submission was not included in the newsletter. Village staff created Facebook events, posted the events to the website and reached out to other municipalities to make the event available to their residents. . The events were attended by 13 people, half learning about the events from Proviso Township and the other half learning about the events from Westchester Facebook posts. GRC Objectives: **C, E13, E17, E33**

[March Newsletter](#) Tree Equity, Heat and Flooding article cut off with second half not printed which is included in appendices. (*Appendix D*) GRC Objectives: **W23, W24, W56, C13**

WR - Reusa-Palooza, Recycling Rules of the Road

E - Energy Efficiency Nicor "Steps Residents can take to Save Money and Energy"

L, C - Tree Equity, Heat, and Flooding

Continued conversation regarding MWRD holding an educational event for residents since they are an ecological stakeholder in our community. **Opportunity: Engage MWRD to host an event presenting on the "Green Neighbor Guide" to promote rain barrels and downspout disconnections as well as define an ongoing plan to clean up waterways of invasive species, trash and pollutants.** GRC Objectives: **W23, W23a, W24b, W46, L1a, L14b, L37**

Native Plant Sale engagement online with Sticks and Stones Preschool to beautify surrounding grounds of Community Church. (*Appendix E*) Future Native Plant sales in village will defer to Save The Prairie Society. GRC Objectives: **L30b, L39, SC1, SC6**

Nikki Way, who was the consistent notetaker for commission since inception, applied for one of the two open vacancies on GROW and motion was approved for her to join.

Discussion of annual large-scale Earth Day event with MWRD and i-Naturalist City Nature Challenge event with Park District. **Opportunity: Start planning of these events with MWRD and Park District before the end of the year.** GRC Objectives: **L38, L40**

Increase resident engagement through a Tree Board and Bee City USA certification/committee. Promote green infrastructure to decrease impervious land surfaces. **Opportunity: Have the village apply to become a Bee City USA and pass a Resolution associated with commitment. Application fee budgeted within GROW. Form a separate Tree Board to execute a tree maintenance plan after Tree Inventory is completed. Can the village invest in a GIS system to maintain an ongoing overview of trees within the village? Train additional staff on green infrastructure practices and fund for arborists within Public Works.** GRC Objectives: **L44, M13**