

Public participation is invited. When called upon, please approach the microphone and state your name. Kindly limit your remarks to 3 minutes.

**VILLAGE OF VILLA PARK**  
**Village Hall, Board Chambers**  
**20 South Ardmore Avenue**  
**Villa Park, IL 60181**

**Garden Village Commission**

**April 16, 2026**

**7:00 PM**

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Chair Person: Pete Soltesz  
Commissioners: Patrice Gallagher, Lynn Smith Christopher Diederich, and Jane Wycoff  
Board Liaison: Trustee Tina Konstatos  
Staff Liaison: Tim Howe

- 1. Call to Order - Roll Call**
- 2. Public Comments on Agenda Items**
- 3. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**
- 4. Amendments to the Agenda**
- 5. Consent Agenda**
  - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 19, 2026
- 6. Business**
  - a. Recommendation to Board; Code Enforcement eased until Mother's Day
  - b. Discussion on Spring Spruce recommendations for all parks
  - c. Review of prospective name recommendations for new Village park at S. Villa Ave. and Julia
  - d. Conversation on next steps for enhancement recommendations to Rotary Park; and other areas of interest
  - e. Follow-up evaluation of interest level regarding Conservation Foundation and DuPage Monarch Project
- 7. Chairman Comments**
- 8. Commissioner Comments**
- 9. Village Board Liaison Comments**
- 10. Staff Liaison Comments**
- 11. Adjournment**

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**VILLAGE OF VILLA PARK**  
**Village Hall, Board Chambers**  
**20 South Ardmore Avenue**  
**Villa Park, IL 60181**

**Garden Village Commission Minutes**

**March 19, 2026**

**7:00 PM**

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Chair Person: Pete Soltesz

Commissioners: Christopher Diederich, Patrice Gallagher, Lynn Smith, Jane Wycoff

Board Liaison: Trustee Tina Konstatos

Staff Liaison: Tim Howe

**1. Call to Order - Roll Call**

Present: Pete Soltesz, Christopher Diederich, Lynn Smith, Jane Wycoff

Absent: Patrice Gallagher, Tina Konstatos, Time Howe

**2. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Mark Paulson, resident and native plant advocate, made comments regarding opportunities to embody the "Garden Village" moniker through ecological land management, Village comprehensive plan implementation, and the Prairie Path enhancements. Mr. Paulson suggested community events including the clock tower on Ardmore Avenue and the Julia Drive Park project. He identified Rotary Park as a blank canvass for improvements such as water shed restoration area and a large space to hold community events. Mr. Paulson provided a grant resource document and offered to collaborate. He wants to mitigate the biodiversity challenges.

**3. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

None

**4. Amendments to the Agenda**

None

**5. Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Wycoff mad a motion and Commissioner Smith second the motion. The motion passed by all.

**6. New Business**

a. Remarks from Village President Kevin Patrick:

President Patrick made remarks on agenda new business items and provided a recap of the Julia Drive newly designated park. He discussed potential uses of the park such as natural area and community engagement for selecting the name of the park based on a handful of potential names provided by the Commission. President discussed the need for land enhancements of the vacant plot in Westmore Park. He welcomed the two guest speakers from the DuPage Monarch Project and discussed educational events.

- b. Introduction of New Garden Village Commission Members:  
Chairman Soltesz introduced the two new Garden Village Commissioners, Christopher Diederich and Jane Wycoff and asked them why they were interested in joining this Commission. Commissioner Diederich wants to help the Village embody its moniker, "The Garden Village". Commissioner Wycoff likes to garden and wants to share her knowledge of native plants and water conservation.
  
- c. Presentation from the DuPage Monarch Project:  
The first presentation was by Mr. Jim Kleinwachter, Conservation@Home Program Director, for The Conservation Foundation, partner for the DuPage Monarch Project. Mr. Kleinwachter offered to help the Village keep properties green and discussed potential services such as help with grants, partnerships, educational programs. He discussed free services at Conservation@Home and the benefits of resident engagement to create more eco-friendly landscapes. He encouraged the Village to start on small projects, such as rain barrel program/ tree planting/ butterfly garden, which can provide the best initial cost-benefit and creating sponsorship opportunities. The Commission asked questions.  
  
The second presentation was by Mr. Bruce Blake, Owner of Prairie Wind Native Plants, and works with the DuPage Monarch Project. Mr. Blake leads gardening programs and enjoys teaching about growing native plants and the advantageous.
  
- d. Discussion of potential collaboration with DuPage Monarch Project:  
Commissioner Wycoff is interested in taking the lead to develop a partnership for a rain barrel program and Commissioner Smith is interested in taking the lead to develop an ongoing education series and asked Commissioner Diederich to co-lead this planning effort. Commissioner Diederich agreed.
  
- e. No Mow 'til Mother's Day - Program Discussion:  
Commissioner Wycoff suggested doing an education program on No Mow 'til Mother's Day to explain to residents the objectives and benefits of this optional program. One benefit is that dandelions are an early source of both pollen and nectar for pollinator insects. President Patrick provided a brief history and inspiration for No Mow 'til Mother's Day. The general objective is to promote awareness about pollinators and their habitats. Discussed potential options for increasing awareness and advertising for this initiative and resident engagement/participation. Commissioner Diederich discussed a four-step program. The Commission's key takeaway is that a No Mow 'til Mother's Day Awareness Campaign and Education Series is needed and should be planned.
  
- f. Community Naming Initiative for the newly created park at S. Villa Avenue & E. Julia Drive (Parcell PIN: 06-15-118-019):  
The Commission discussed a fixed action item for the naming initiative. Each Commissioner is to email the Commission their potential names for the park and come up with recommendations for canopy, conservation and No Mow 'til Mother's Day.
  
- g. Creation of Public Education Series on Environmental Health, Sustainability, and Village Green Initiatives - Quarterly at Villa Park Recreation Center:  
Commissioner Smith clarified that the education series is to be on Village Green Initiatives related to the Garden Village Commission mission and will not include environmental health and sustainability topics which are outside of our mission. Commissioner Smith to

take the lead with assistance from Commissioner Diederich and to commence with discussing/planning proposed programs (topics, speakers, location, times, dates).

- h. Discussion of potential collaboration with the Conservation Foundation regarding their Conservation @ Home Program and Rain Barrel Program:  
The idea of each Commissioner taking the lead to “Adopt a Park” was discussed.  
Teaming up with others is encouraged.
- i. Review and the potential adoption of the Village Policy on Remote Meeting Attendance:  
Commissioner Diederich made a motion and Commissioner Wycoff second the motion.  
All approved and the motion passed. The Commission will make a recommendation to the Board.
- j. Expansion plans for Westmore Park:  
Each Commissioner to visit the park and to suggest plans for the park.

## **7. Old Business**

- a. Villa Park Green Sweep Project:  
There was discussion amongst the Commission and potential partners were suggested.  
The Commission decided that it is best to move this event from the Garden Village Commission role. Commissioner Diederich will contact the Green Commission regarding planning for this event as part of their mission since it seems to be a better fit.  
Commissioner Smith made a motion and Commissioner Wycoff second the motion. All approved and the motion passed.
- b. Train Station Lighting:  
This agenda item was removed because it is not in the purview of the Garden Village Commission and is being handled by Villa Park Department of Parks and Recreation.
- c. Open Meetings Training:  
A reminder that all Commissioners are to complete Open Meetings Act Training if they have not done so already.
- d. Discussion of Next Steps for Rotary Park:  
Commissioner Diederich will take the lead on this and noted it will take time and planning to do properly. Commissioner Wycoff noted the next steps are to read the proposal for Rotary Park. Chairman Soltesz this could be our flagship project.

## **8. Chairman Comments**

Chairman Soltesz would like for each Commissioner to adopt a park or team up with other Commissioners for this endeavor to share thoughts and make recommendations for enhancements/improvements. Start small and build from there.

**9. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Wycoff will look at the rain barrel program and is excited to have an action list.

Commissioner Diederich will take the initial lead on a proposed Adopt a Park program and will contact Director Howe to get the ball rolling. He also wants to explore Adopt a Tree and Adopt a Path programs. Partnering with the Fun Commission on the Landscaped Award and discuss us moving this to our purview. Discussed partnering with other Commissions on joint events and collaboration opportunities to contribute.

Commissioner Smith thanked the speakers and commented on the importance of resident involvement, education series, informational fairs, and sponsorships.

**10. Village Board Liaison Comments**

None – not present

**11. Staff Liaison Comments**

None- not present

**12. Adjournment**

Prior to adjourning, Chairman Soltesz encouraged the residents to attend our meetings and share their ideas. Commissioner Wycoff motioned to adjourn and Commissioner Smith second the motion. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:42 p.m. CDT by Chairman Soltesz.

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