

Meeting Minutes for the Environmental Enhancement Commission
Tuesday, January 13, 2026
Tinley Park Village Hall – Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Environmental Enhancement Commission was called to order by Co-Chair **Erin Bradley**, at 7:00 p.m..

ROLL CALL

Present and responding to roll call were the following:

Members: Amanda Loxtercamp, Co-Chair
 Erin Bradley, Co-Chair
 Dee Molinare
 Elizabeth Taylor
 Brandon Wigboldy
 Evan Vogt
 Roger Zylstra
 Paul Michael Yedwofski (Assoc.)
 Pat Car, Village Manager
 Walker Steinke, Assistant to the Village Manager
 Anne Mitchell, Management Analyst
 Denise Maly-Politano, Commission Secretary

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Roger Zylstra made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by **Evan Vogt**. Agenda approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Evan Vogt made a motion to approve the November 11, 2025 minutes, seconded by **Amanda Loxtercamp** pending revisions. Roll call taken. Minutes approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Waste Disposal Services Contract

Erin Bradley thanked **Pat Car** and **Walker Steinke** for attending. Provided a recap of how we got here. Included in the publicly posted committee of the whole meeting packet from last week was a memo from the village manager's office about a new waste management contract. Current contract is not set to expire until September of 2027 and the proposal extends the current contract for a period of 10 years on the new waste management contract. Proposal has been approved for a vote at next week's village board meeting. Sent Anne a message on behalf of the EEC which she had forwarded stating my frustration that the EEC was not involved in the discussions despite the rules and responsibilities outlined in our charter especially given the lengthy terms of the proposed contract. As my Co-commissioners know we frequently get resident feedback on waste management services particularly recycling when we do farmers markets or really any interaction with them and we have been anticipating bringing those questions and concerns to the waste management contract negotiations in the coming year. With that village manager Pat Carr

has graciously offered to be here to answer questions from us on the proposed contract and Walker as well. Have a couple of questions.

Pat Carr stated it all came up pretty quick. Homewood Disposal and it came out early December that they brought it to us the offer of extended the contract even the first two years of it starting actually 2026-27 to 2% and that go back to the 3.5% and so we started the due diligence of calling around to the different municipalities in the area to see what their pricing was then based on the service level that we get from Homewood disposal. We have limited complaints from residents about Homewood Disposal. They're very cost effective. It is our responsibility to negotiate the contract not necessarily the Commission's responsibility. In 2019 we did engage the Commission to give us some feedback. Homewood has been in Tinley 40+ years. Waste Management was higher pricing. No one does collection like Homewood and what they collect. Felt confident the board should proceed to bring the contract forward onto the agenda.

Erin Bradley asked about the contract process and then specific policy questions from the contract itself. You said you included other communities, which communities? Did you look into hazardous waste?

Anne Mitchell provided a comparison sheet.

Walker Steinke explained the comparison sheet. Homewood has no additional service fees and are flexible with yard waste. Some of these lower rates like Oak Forest can get their rates so much lower per household because they participate in a sticker program so when residents want to get rid of waste they have to go out and buy stickers to put those on bags. They may have a lower rate yes but they have to incur that additional cost by paying for the stickers. These higher rates are because they have similar services to us and we get everything that we can get from Homewood so there is no additional service that Homewood would provide that we do not already have.

Dee Molinare asked what type of sticker and what is it used for.

Walker Steinke explained it is for yard waste. We have unlimited yard waste collection during the period of April to October and so you can put as much yard waste as you want on the curb and Homewood will take care of that. If we have to go to stickers, based on the average yard size in Tinley Park it was going to cost a few extra bucks per household even though the perceived cost of it would be lower. You'd end up just paying more by buying stickers.

Erin Bradley asked what the total estimated dollar value of the contract was.

Walker Steinke stated that with the cost savings that we did with this 2% for the first two years it is going to be roughly \$1.5 million overall over the 10 years that we would save residents. Increase pretty minimal. In terms of the total cost I'd have to look at the exact number for the current contract in years 26 and 27. Those were originally going to be 3.5% across the board but then we got that down for the first two years was then just a 2% increase.

Dee Molinare stated in the current contract, 2026/27, what the percent increase?

Pat Carr stated it is 2% for 2026/27.

Erin Bradley stated you said that you included recycling and yard waste services that we have now and appliance disposal. Did you look at any other services offered? Did you know Orland offers hazardous waste?

Walker Steinke stated we did not look at hazardous waste.

Dee Molinare stated there has been discussion w/in our group about the recycling frequency because bi-weekly is not enough. Speaking to residents they would like to have weekly.

Erin Bradley asked about recycling frequency or the recycling pickup simply because believes it is not enough bi-weekly. Any discussions about increasing recycling pickup frequency or being provided a larger bin? Did you elicit resident feedback? Any RFPs? Is it something that we can request? Getting feedback from residents at our recycling event in August. Recycling bins for 65 gallons and they're only being picked up every two weeks. Was there any discussion of increasing frequency of recycling pickup or increasing the size of the bins?

Pat Carr knows people have larger recycling bins so those are out there. You can request a larger one for no charge you can also request an extra one. We have not heard that feedback from residents regarding recycling.

Erin Bradley asked regarding waste or refuse that in the contract does it say extra cart lease refuse and recycling any size. Asked if the village knocked it out in RFP or illicit bids for this process?

Pat Carr stated no.

Amanda Loxtercamp stated she is looking at the chart of the contracts. Homer Glen is extended to 2031 because they have all these guys to negotiate their contracts but they might not be at 5%. It's a little tricky to compare them and their variables but I'm trying to make sure that when we look at these we can realize that they're not necessarily in the same variables. As far as Orland Park and Homer Glen and their recycling, that is a pretty big difference. Surprised that the prices are even somewhat close but Orland Park is not getting something similar to us. When I need to replace my bin I will have to rent or buy. It's a little bit hard to look at every variable but I think it's a little bit more complicated than the prices listed hereto.

Erin Bradley thinks a comparison of services would be helpful as well in addition to just numbers like weekly recycling pick up is a big issue for us and an issue that we hear consistently from residents. I also wanted to ask about whether the current contract states that the townhouse and condos can be billed individually or via their HOA. Do you know if a HOA does not pay for recycling can that resident pay for individually to add recycling to their contract.

Pat Carr thinks it is all by association. That's why we broke it out that way because there's just there's just too much pushback that we're getting from the association and being forced to have recycling collection.

Erin Bradley - I know you said the multi-unit residences are not included in this contract at all, so in the past they tried to have a drop off center somewhere but does not exist anymore. I would say aside from recycling frequency, the ability of multi-unit residents to recycle is probably the number two concern that is brought up to us. Has there been any discussion of bringing back a recycling Center for those multi-unit residents that do not have the option to recycle or townhouse or condos that do not chose to opt-into a recycling contract?

Pat Carr stated no. the reason being was that the drop off was an absolute mess to manage. Had violators that would drop hazardous materials there, TV's, even though the signs were perfectly clear. We ended up putting cameras there. We have people outside of Tinley Park that we're using the drop off center. It was too hard to manage.

Pat Carr explained all the cross contamination that was in the recycling bins. It's too hard to manage and that's why we did away with it. Thinks the township has the recycling drop off center.

Erin Bradley knows Orland Township has the recycling drop off center that Bill Brennan is in charge of because he is the highway commissioner, do you know if they faced similar issues that that center?

Pat Carr did not know.

Walker Steinke responded way back in my municipal early days I toured an LRS recycling center and they spoke to how there was a period of time where it used to be a lot easier and we would export a lot of our recycled materials but now the restrictions have become so crippling that even the smallest amount of contaminants can completely ruin a recycling lot so sites like this can be tough because if there is one pizza box in there and food waste on recycling they will just consider all of it trash and just throw it all out. Then it defeats the purpose of us recycling. It's challenging for situations like that.

Pat Carr stated he managed a recycling center. A lot of items in the recycling centers is sorted. Not saying that recycling is not done but they still get recycled materials out of the everyday garbage. They want separated because it is a lot less costly way of doing it with the machinery. But if you get a cross contamination of glass, such a porcelain plate, that throws off the glass and contaminates it. Very expensive process. You see more of less recycling in the collection and trying to sort it during the regular collection process. A lot of it is cross contaminated. Recycling is a very expensive process that they undertake.

Erin Bradley stated the metropolitan mayors caucus has an initiative right now to improve recycling rates across the city and suburban communities. Have you guys engaged with them at all on best practices or potential policies.

Pat Carr stated we are working with Cook County. They started the program where you have to have a certain percentage of compostable material where they actually come out and inspect it and do a report. Working with them to see what the process is, who is going to police that and who will be responsible for policing. Since the convention center is our building, we have a management company responsible for it but we are working with them since it is our building. If that is something the Commission wants to be engaged in and be more involved with, can pass on the information.

Erin Bradley stated we have been in contact with the zero waste coordinator from the music theater in the past when they started doing their earliest initiatives so that would be something we would be interested in.

Pat Carr stated the county thought that we owned the amphitheater and we passed it on to Courtney and Courtney is working with them on that. They do a very good job out there with that.

Erin Bradley - another question I had was I know the current contract includes services at village buildings and facilities. Does the new contract include locations? We are specifically interested in street bins along Oak Park Ave. That's been issue that has come up from residents frequently as well.

Pat Carr answered that the street bin issue is something that we're talking about in public works where we would put out the bins and then have a collection point. If anybody's been at Harmony Square we definitely have a waste issue especially after some of the big events and if we know that enclosure where there is sometimes the garbage is overflowing in the parking lot so we're working with Homewood to figure out whether we locate something down at the far end of the parking lot or maybe a compactor but at the end of the day we need to figure out where we're going to put this and once we collect it, off the street. It has been talked about and we have received feedback from people especially for big events. Public works is working on that initiative right now. But that's something that we could have them include the Commission on.

Erin Bradley stated obviously we promote pedestrian access to things and as pedestrian traffic increases in that 167 to 175th St. corridor there is more trash and right now there are so few waste bins outside of Harmony Square on that corridor for pedestrians to put anything.

Pat Carr stated we also want a nice looking bin.

Dee Molinare asked as you talk about refuse, are you talking only about refuse or are you talking about recycling opportunities as well?

Pat Carr responded we are just talking about refuse.

Amanda Loxtercamp stated we have both now at Harmony Square. Very nice but they have the same open top and if it's dark people are not going to see it and if you are not paying attention they are not going to see it. Short term and long term goals but we love the fact that things are moving in the right direction and there are initiatives. We hope to be part of that. We tried really

hard to be part of the planning process of Harmony Square. We got some feedback and I think some things might have been heard but we didn't get a lot of feedback from our suggestions.

Dee Molinare stated if you could advise us on how our voice or how our direction would carry more weight we would greatly appreciate that.

Erin Bradley stated we would have liked to have been more involved in the Harmony Square planning. Did actually get to review a native plant list and offered some suggestions because the original list had some invasive species. If there was a more formal way for us to be involved in that process, that would be great. The only reason I saw that list is because I knew someone on the Planning Commission who gave it to me.

Brandon Wigboldy explained our understanding of our charter is that we should have some input in the process. Still some confusion.

Waker Steinke agrees there was kind of discrepancy. When we have that engagement that we try to have consistently with public events, how do we stay engaged for the next 10 years and let the board as a whole and the village staff and the commission, how do we stay engaged.

Pat Carr suggested sending an email to him, or that we get feedback from village staff so we get some direction. See the minutes but it isn't something that comes across my desk. My suggestion is if you've got an important topic, let Anne know and ask her to forward this on to the village manager's office and get back to us on that or feel free to email me with any questions. That's the way that we could get it done or that's the way we could engage with Homewood Disposal. Feel free to reach directly out to me.

Brandon Wigboldy stated we're grandfathered into getting the second bin but now there is a fee. Something to show people that we are trying to work on this issue of having more frequent or more availability for us to move forward with more recycling. Maybe allow them to get a second bin up to a certain time.

Erin Bradley stated because on their website it says that residents can place extra rubbish in 32 gallon trash bins with lids the residents provide themselves as long as they don't weigh more than 50 lbs. This is not a provision in the contract it seems like a policy that Homewood has just decided on their own volition. Do you know if that applies to recycling items as well because if it does and residents are able to put out their own trash cans without an additional monthly fee to hold recycling items then and that would I think solve a lot of the issue.

Erin Bradley stated you can put out as much yard waste as you want but it does not specify in the contract if you're allowed to put out as much recycling as you want and they'll take it.

Pat Carr stated it is something we could follow up with and ask them. He has put out trash in his own trash can and it has been taken.

Brandon Wigboldy stated we are stockpiling recycling up in our garage.

Elizabeth Taylor stated residents tell us at the farmers markets that they have to throw their recycling into the garbage because they have no place to store it.

Pat Carr stated it gets sorted at the facility but it's more expensive for them.

Amanda Loxtercamp asked How long contracts are across the different areas? Nervous about being locked in for 10 years.

Pat Carr explained it was actually a 4 year extension and then it was another 5 year extension. It is actually a norm that they try to do a 10 year contract. Based on their research, felt this was the way to go.

Walker Steinke explained the cost of trucks now impact pricing. Now trucks are close to half a million dollars and they don't see these prices going down anytime soon. When that's your whole business that makes these increases. Certainly hope rates would go down or the prices of things would go down but trucks are what is really impacting the rising costs of so much of waste services.

Elizabeth Taylor asked what the feasibility is of moving towards weekly recycling pick up because that is something that we've heard about and I understand that extra bins would be beneficial for sure but weekly recycling pick up seems like it would solve that issue.

Paul Carr stated based on what we were told this was brought up a couple of years ago and that it is a small minority of people saying this. Feels that it does not warrant weekly pickup. Did not do the survey.

Walker Steinke said they can provide those reports to us about how much waste they're picking up, and how much recyclables they're picking up.

Erin Bradley asked when was the last time an assessment was given?

Pat Carr stated it was a couple of years ago but we can pull it anytime.

Brandon Wigboldy thought we would get skewed data on that because if they are putting recyclables into the refuse then it would be heavier.

Evan Vogt stated it's the possibility of it. I think what we're coming up against is that we have anecdotal data and that's where we're talking about in the next 10 years is having an engagement and 10 years is a long time but if we have stability within this Commission to have a game plan and to ask the village for those reports every six months that we can keep track on our own and a really informed decision within the next 10 years of where we see the village and it's recycling and garbage collection go. We do hear that a lot. It is mostly anecdotal because we have not engaged in any other way which we're discovering how to do in a meaningful way and I think one of the things that I've noticed with us here is that we all very engaged with that sort of thing. I think coming into the future of having that contract signed, once we have that I think that we as a Commission can do a really dive and connect with marketing and then sort of print for lack of a

better term a “garbage collection Bill of Rights”. We are confused ourselves because we're getting conflicting information and if we can say hey the village is the authority on this with our contract then our residents have something to engage our contractor with. So I think once that contract is signed, hash into it say hey folks this is what this is, what you can ask for, and the services that the village fought for you to have.

Dee Molinare observed to that point the lack of proactive in this instance because this contract was renewed abruptly kind of left us in a lurch because we have had discussions at this Commission on what we wanted to bring forward when the contract was expiring. We do not have firm date. We hear it a lot. We have emails, we hear about these things that we need more bins on the street of Oak Park Ave. My frustration comes in at is that we had planned to engage and then our plan was derailed because of its abruptness and I think when the village has these opportunities, apparently that you're saving us money as residents, which is wonderful, but to that point wouldn't it be wonderful to be open and transparent with that and really engage the community? Open and transparent government is really what it's all about and if it wasn't for Erin who was on top of the COW, we would have not known about it. That's my level of frustration with this process and my next question for you is this 10 year contract that they negated the open and transparent process, how often does that happen?

Pat Carr stated it was a professional services contract with extensions and with those extensions it would have most likely not come forward to you with any of those extensions. Definitely input and again I was unaware of all of these different concerns as it related to recycling. This is the first time that I'm hearing about it and again that's my suggestion is that when these things come up is put it to the forefront so that we are aware of it.

Erin Bradley stated that the reason it hasn't come to you is because we thought the contract is going to be up in September of 2027 and what we're talking about in terms of more formal feedback, getting a survey out to residents to being able to do some quantitative and qualitative analysis, those were all things that were working on for the next year that have now been circumvented by this extremely abrupt and you were talking if they could even the beginning of December that's a four week turn around that includes the holidays for whatever research and analysis you were able to do that didn't include us and I don't know what other entities were we're not involved so I think I shared these frustration that we could have had a really robust engagement of residents and really had some even more clearly defined issues to bring to the table in a negotiation and we did not have the opportunity to do that.

Erin Bradley stated this comparison has not even been posted for residents to view. Everything was anything done very quickly.

Dee Molinare stated that everything was done very quickly and that gives the appearance of not being open and transparent. If we do not accept the contract, are they going to take away the 2% or do they want our contract? That's part of negotiating isn't it?

Pat Carr said he can bring these concerns back to the board and see if they want to postpone the contract and what their response is.

Paul Yedwofski suggested to do a trial run with a weekly pickup of recycling just to see how much we picked up, what's the cost.

Brandon Wigboldy stated the date is great but there is not much point to it. If you are just looking into recycling weight, it is going to appear there is not as much recycling if they are putting into their waste cans.

Pat Carr suggested doing a memo in the next day or two.

Erin Bradley made a motion to give the co-chairs, Amanda and her, authority to draft a memo which they will circulate urging delay of the vote and providing some of the concerns that we discussed today with the option to present publicly at the board meeting as well if necessary on Tuesday.

Roll call taken. All in favor of Erin Bradley and Amanda Loxtercamp drafting memo.

Strategic Plan and Upcoming Priorities

Erin Bradley made a motion to delay discussion on the Strategic Plan until next month's meeting but to pursue edits in the meantime. Seconded by **Brandon Wigboldy**.

Earth Day 2026

Erin Bradley wants to confirm dates. Suggesting Earth Day Event on April 18th and then Earth Week events the week after. Similar to past years.

Erin Bradley made a motion to plan Earth Day Fair for April 18th and all subsequent Earth Week events would be the week following, pending the village's calendar. Motion seconded by **Dee Molinare**.

Anne Mitchell will reserve the Kallsen Center.

OLD/ONGOING BUSINESS:

- **Newsletter Updates/Green Corner**

- **Elizabeth Taylor** will include fun facts about Tinley Park and International Environmental Education Day on January 26th. Will include facts about a migration corridor in Tinley Park with transient population cranes between Tinley Park and Palos.
- February 2nd is World Wetlands Day.
- Bartle Grassland is a nesting site for lots of bird species.
- January 28th is International Reducing Co2 Emissions Day. Tips on how to reduce carbon footprint.
- February 18th is National Battery Day

Dee Molinare stated Co2 has increased due to AI facility data centers. First time it has increased in five years.

Brandon Wigboldy stated that the “Leave the Leaves” post had a lot of likes and interest. Can we find out how many people were interested?

EEC Email monthly update

- No updates from **Erin Bradley** at this time. The person from the Mayor’s Caucus have not responded.

Website updates

- No updates from **Erin Bradley** at this time. Hope to have website updates before Earth Day. Will add a few sections on recycling, composting and a few other things under environmental. Have Green Award winners listed.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Discussion on how/where to recycle lithium batteries for lawn mowers and snow blowers.

Erin Bradley suggested watching “Listers” which is a documentary on YouTube.

Anne Mitchell gave an update on the Village’s strategic plan. As a part of the process to solicit information, there will be focus groups where participants can give their feedback on what the Village does well and what can be improved on. There will be different categories of participants for each focus group. She is going to highly recommend Commissions have their own focus group. The focus group sessions will likely to occur January/February. Still waiting on determining a permanent timeline. Consultant is very on board with tailoring the strategic plan for our community and for our needs.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

N/A

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by **Evan Vogt**, seconded by **Roger Zylstra**. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

/dmp