



DU PAGE COUNTY

Environmental Committee

Final Summary

421 N. COUNTY FARM ROAD
WHEATON, IL 60187
www.dupagecounty.gov

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

8:30 AM

Room 3500A

1. CALL TO ORDER

8:30 A.M. meeting was called to order by Chair Sheila Rutledge at 8:30 A.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Other members present: Yeena Yoo, Greg Schwarze

PRESENT Cronin Cahill, Evans, Haider, Honig, LaPlante, and Rutledge
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3. CHAIRWOMAN'S REMARKS - CHAIR RUTLEDGE

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following individuals made public comment:

Jacqueline Casazza, president and co-founder of Go Green, Glen Ellyn, and an advocate for reducing plastic pollution, spoke about the dangers of single-use plastics, particularly in terms of health and environmental impacts. She emphasized that plastic contains harmful chemicals which can accumulate in the food chain and in our bodies. While she acknowledged that a plastic-free world is unrealistic, she advocates for reducing single-use plastic products where alternatives exist.

Casazza supports the county's consideration to eliminate single-use plastic water bottles from vending machines, citing research that found significant microplastic contamination in bottled water. She also highlighted the environmental cost of bottled water production, which is much higher in energy consumption compared to tap water. She suggested alternatives, such as water bottle refill stations and the use of recyclable aluminum bottles, encouraging the county to ensure proper recycling systems are in place. Casazza voiced her strong support for any actions taken by the county to reduce single-use plastics.

Wendy Vernon, the Plastic Reduction Chair for the River Prairie group of Sierra Club in Carol Stream, spoke in support of eliminating plastic bottles from vending machines in DuPage County government buildings. Vernon emphasized that plastic production emits harmful toxins and contributes to microplastic contamination in the environment and human bodies. Exposure to microplastics has been linked to various health issues, and the burden affects communities near plastic production sites.

She highlighted the high hidden costs of plastic waste management and health care expenses, estimating that plastics contribute \$250 billion annually to U.S. health care costs. Vernon also noted the inefficiency of recycling plastic, with less than 6% being recycled in the U.S. She

wants DuPage County to act by removing plastic bottles from government buildings, setting a positive example for businesses and institutions while fostering a cleaner, healthier community.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.A. [25-0554](#)

Environmental Committee Minutes - Regular Meeting - Tuesday, February 4, 2025

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill
SECONDER:	Saba Haider

6. DISCUSSION

6.A. Dining Services Plastics Alternatives

Diane Borske, the Manager of Support Services at the Care Center, shared an update on the center's efforts to reduce plastic usage. Key initiatives before 2023 included switching to compostable cups, using unbleached napkins, and providing refillable thermoses for coffee creamers, paper bags and plates. This was not successful due to most customers taking their food to their offices. A discount was offered for bringing refillable cups, and food scraps were recycled to help Animal Services feed small animals.

In 2023-2024, they made more changes, including eliminating foam cups, switching to paper cups and recyclable plastic containers, and biodegradable straws. A trial of aluminum cans for drinks was also implemented. They are now working on eliminating single-use condiment packages.

These changes have had a financial impact. The Care Center's efforts to cut back on plastic have led to an extra \$50,000 in expenses annually. The Care Center's vending contract may be affected because vendors anticipate a decrease in sales due to the shift to cans. Some customers prefer plastic bottles over the canned options. Sales have already decreased significantly and there's concern that reduced revenue from the cafeterias and vending will directly affect residents' activities and services. Diane is seeking direction from the committee on how to balance environmental goals with customer preferences and financial impacts.

Member Greg Schwarze inquired about the revenue the care center generates from the vending company. The care center receives \$5,500 plus 29% of the sales from the vending company in the first year.

The revenue from the vending company last year was close to \$100,000, plus the \$5,500. Each year, the revenue structure increases, with both the percentage and the flat fee rising. The largest revenue comes from the cafeterias.

Member Schwarze asked about the disadvantages of using cans for water at the Care Center. Diane explained that plastic costs are a concern, as well as safety issues for residents. Cans are harder to manage because they create a spill hazard for residents using wheelchairs or walkers. Diane also mentioned limited housekeeping staff to manage these issues.

Diane explained that bottles are better for residents because they are less likely to spill and can be stored in the refrigerator. She also mentioned that nursing staff prefer bottles as they can take them back to the nurse's station. However, due to a recent COVID/Norovirus outbreak there are additional concerns influencing these decisions. She said the twist bottles are always better. Diane mentioned that for some residents, drinking from cans poses a safety risk, as they might cut their mouths or hands.

Member Saba Haider asked about the \$100,000 revenue and how much is from the water bottles that are being sold? Diane stated that she would have to get more details from vending company as it's hard to get estimates.

Member Haider stated when we look at the number of cans we have sold in the month of February which was 5, but don't know in comparison to how many water bottles were sold in previous months, we don't have that comparative number to decide if we are going in the right direction.

Member Haider mentioned that a cultural shift takes time, effort and doesn't happen in an instant. She added it's important to see numbers in comparison to cans and how many water bottles are selling every month and what that revenue looks like. Member Haider asked about refillable water dispensers and suggested a campaign to encourage people to use refillable water dispensers and bring their own water bottles, as this could significantly help in achieving the environmental goals.

Member Cahill inquired about potential revenue losses from vending machines and cafeterias due to a shift from bottles to cans, asking if there's an estimate of the decline. Diane explained that the trial of selling only cans is currently happening only in the 421 building, and making this change is a complex process. Member Cahill mentioned that there was an 81% decrease in water sales, and Diane clarified that sales between bottles and cans are roughly 50/50, but cans are cheaper.

Member Cahil emphasized that a reduction in revenue would be detrimental to the Care Center. They suggested alternatives like refillable stations or giving each person a personalized cup, but also noted the sanitary concerns. Member Cahill expressed that she is inclined not to remove all plastic bottles.

Member Evans clarified that she does not want to negatively impact the Care Center. She emphasized that it shouldn't create additional work or difficulties for the staff or residents. Her primary worry was about the products sold in cafeterias and vending machines. Member Evans also voiced concern that if plastic bottles were removed, no one would be willing to bid on the vending contracts if plastic bottles aren't included.

Diane says there are 50 machines in all the county buildings and the scope is big. Chair Rutledge asked Diane to have the numbers the members asked for and the discussion will be continued.

7. PRESENTATIONS

7.A. SCARCE

Kay McKeen from SCARCE presented several successful initiatives in DuPage County. The "Pumpkin Smash" event had the highest participation with three locations in Naperville and growing involvement from scout groups. The vegetable cooking oil collection saw over 200 gallons collected in one morning, and efforts are being made to expand collections in underserved areas. Other achievements included successful holiday light collections, recycling of over half a million pounds of paper and metal, and increased reuse of books for literacy projects.

There were 89 programs offered, including energy conservation and composting, reaching 1,252 participants. Medinah schools had a STEM night and 80 kids participated in energy conservation projects. The fifth Repair Fair saw 90 attendees and 190 items repaired. Collaboration with sustainability specialists in towns like Naperville and Downers Grove is ongoing, and there were educational initiatives, such as a hazardous waste site tour for teachers. Kay highlighted the importance of the Green Your Gig program and how much growth has occurred.

A design challenge will take place on April 15, and the Earth Flag ceremony will be held on Earth Day, April 22. The Sheriff's department is adding a fourth location for syringe and medicine collection, and Downers Grove is reintroducing a Recycling Extravaganza after a decade. Other upcoming events include Lisle Sustainability Saturday on March 15 and 27 scheduled events for the year.

8. STAFF REPORTS

8.A. [25-0621](#)

Switch Together Solar: Northern Illinois 2025

Joy Hinz mentions that her team is collaborating with Citizens Utility, the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, and the collar counties on a group-buy initiative for solar energy. This program involves soliciting reputable solar firms to offer discounted group pricing, which has saved residents about \$0.24 on solar installations. Over the years, the initiative has resulted in 80 solar installations.

8.B. [25-0622](#)

Waste Hauler Survey

Joy discusses the waste hauler survey, noting that an ordinance was passed requiring waste haulers to report their commercial, industrial, and residential numbers. This data will be used to implement the solid waste management plan in the future, providing a clearer understanding of the commercial sector's waste activities.

9. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 A.M.



Minutes

421 N. COUNTY FARM
ROAD
WHEATON, IL 60187
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File #: 25-0554

Agenda Date: 3/4/2025

Agenda #: 5.A.



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Room 3500A

1. CALL TO ORDER

8:30 A.M. meeting was called to order by Chair Sheila Rutledge at 8:30 A.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Other members present: Yeena Yoo, Paula Deacon Garcia

PRESENT	Cronin Cahill, Evans, Haider, Honig, and Rutledge
ABSENT	LaPlante

3. CHAIRWOMAN'S REMARKS - CHAIR RUTLEDGE

Chair Rutledge cites an article in *Business Insider*, which found a spoon's worth of nano plastics accumulating in human's brains, raising concerns about their impact on health. In addition, Chair Rutledge highlights the broader issue of plastic pollution and expresses a desire to reduce plastic use, particularly by eliminating plastic shopping bags. She also suggests that addressing plastic waste is an ongoing discussion and an important environmental goal.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following individuals made public comment:

David L. Barcus from Dark Sky International

The Dark Sky Initiative will be presented at the Mayor's Caucus along with the Environmental Committee on Tuesday, February 18th, from 9:30 to 11 AM via Zoom. Representatives from Homer Glen, Glen Ellyn, and Westmont will discuss their efforts in implementing better lighting choices. Progress is slow and steady but building and David believes change is coming.

Hawthorne Woods is an example of success, people are starting to make good decisions on lighting that they have chosen.

The meeting is expected to have 40-50 attendees, but the goal is to increase participation, ideally to 100-225 people, to encourage broader adoption. The presentation will cover key issues, benefits, municipal actions, and technical lighting options. The invitation was sent by Kevin Burns, Mayor of Geneva.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.A. [25-0411](#)

Environmental Committee Minutes - Regular Meeting - Tuesday, January 7, 2025

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill
SECONDER:	Andrew Honig

6. PARENT COMMITTEE APPROVAL

6.A. [EN-R-0002-25](#)

Resolution EN-R-0002-25 DuPage County Electronics Recycling Program 2026 Notice of Participation

Joy explained how the county needs to complete and submit a form to qualify for the state's electronics recycling program for 2026. The program operates at no cost to the county, except for an annual \$6,000 reimbursement for trailers at two collection sites. Submitting the form ensures continued participation in the program.

RESULT:	APPROVED AT COMMITTEE
MOVER:	Saba Haider
SECONDER:	Lucy Evans

7. DISCUSSION

7.A. Arbor Day Program 2025

Joy explained how this initiative began with distributing 500 bare root seedlings. In 2024, the County worked with West Chicago's Environmental Commission to further support tree planting efforts. West Chicago was chosen because it has the lowest tree canopy coverage in DuPage County, according to the Chicago Regional Trees Initiative. This effort aimed to support tree planting in an area with significant room for improvement.

West Chicago has expressed interest in continuing the seedling distribution program this year. However, with only \$1,000 in funding, expanding it to all communities isn't feasible. Looking ahead to 2026, there is potential to develop a broader program, possibly modeled after the document shredding initiative. The committee's input is needed to determine preferences and future direction.

The seedling distribution could be offered to employees again, but this isn't ideal since individuals can only plant so many trees and shrubs in their yards. The committee's input and ideas are needed to determine the best approach moving forward. Additionally, Member Lucy Evans was informed by Chair Rutledge about discussions regarding some seedlings being allocated for Hinsdale/Willowbrook.

Lucy suggested a potential idea to involve Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts in the seedling distribution program. This could help ensure that more trees are properly planted and cared for, rather than relying on individuals who may not have the means or opportunity to plant them. Lucy stated she wants to make sure these trees get homes.

Joy offered to get in touch with Girl Scouts but adds that education on the care and planting of trees is necessary as part of our arboretum standards.

Shelia stated the benefits of having a higher tree canopy, which contributes to lower costs in heating and air conditioning. Bolingbrook, Wooddale, Bensenville, Bartlett and Addison are mentioned as next on the list of having lower tree canopies. Cindy suggested that the effort spreads out to these communities and specifically mentioned Bensenville. Joy agreed to reach out to Bensenville to see if they have a mechanism to distribute the trees.

8. PRESENTATIONS

8.A. Sustainability Initiatives Update

Ian Johnstone gave a summary of updates on campus solar and EV projects:

The rooftop solar array has been operational since October 2023, generating energy for 25-30 homes worth of electricity.

Additional solar panel installation is planned to complete the rooftop array with grant funding. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) of \$500,000 was awarded for:

- EV charging at the courthouse
- Solar panel installation on the Administration building
- Workforce gap analysis and training program
- LED lighting retrofit in tunnels

The Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant (CFI) of \$350,000 was awarded for:

- Additional EV charging stations at the Care Center
- Animal Services & 421 Administration Building
- Expanding public EV charging access

At the Courthouse there are plans for 2 Dual-port Level 2 chargers, but progress has been delayed due to zoning changes, installer challenges, and compliance with federal/state/local requirements. Also adding an extra layer of requirement for our installer was a ComEd rebate program that could provide up to \$20,000 in additional funding.

At the Care Center, as part of the sidewalk project, we installed Level 3 spot-fast charger and we would be drawing electricity from the SWAP building.

Public charging at 421 Administration Building currently has one charger, with space for another. Options include a fast charger or dual-port Level 2 charger. Animal Services has pre-installed piping for future free EV chargers Care Center has Level 3 (fast) charger planned, with some infrastructure already installed.

The south solar array on the 421 building is exceeding manufacturer efficiency ratings, producing more energy than expected on sunny days. Conditions on our rooftops are very optimal. Factors contributing to high efficiency include cool rooftop temperatures, optimal panel tilt, and reflective white roof coating.

With the EECBG dollars, Facilities Management included finishing the additional rooftop areas like the auditorium. When new sealant is applied, solar panels/inverters that have been previously installed will be ready for future array, which is an estimated 25 homes worth. The auditorium would be another 64kW. \$200,000 has been allocated from the EECBG for this installation. Design documents are complete and ready to issue an RFP.

8.B. SCARCE

Kay McKeen from SCARCE was scheduled to present but time did not allow. SCARCE presentation rescheduled for upcoming Environmental Committee Meeting.

8.C. Recycle Coach Demonstration

Joy added that the state of Illinois, EPA has contracted with a company called Recycle Coach to provide all counties and all municipalities. Joy demonstrates a the Recycle Coach app which offers several helpful features to improve recycling and sustainability efforts where a user can enter their exact address to receive a customized recycling schedule The app supports multiple languages, using the county's top languages, ensuring accessibility for all residents.

One of the app's features is the What Goes Where tool, which allows you to type in items like electronics, old appliances, or medications, and it will tell you how to properly dispose of or recycle them, especially useful for e-waste and unusual items.

This tool provides users with immediate, easy-to-understand guidance to ensure they recycle or dispose of items correctly, reducing contamination and improving overall recycling efficiency. There are a few communities on boarded. Bensenville, Downers Grove & Naperville. Lombard opted out because they are contracting with waste management, and they just didn't want they didn't want to invest the time and into the app.

9. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 A.M.



Informational

421 N. COUNTY FARM
ROAD
WHEATON, IL 60187
www.dupagecounty.gov

File #: 25-0621

Agenda Date: 3/4/2025

Agenda #: 8.A.



FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

630-407-5700
fax: 630-407-5701

www.dupagecounty.gov/facilities

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sheila Rutledge, Chair
Environmental Committee Members

FROM: Joy Hinz, Environmental & Sustainability Programs Manager

DATE: February 24, 2025

RE: Switch Together Solar: Northern Illinois 2025

The County has been partnering with the Citizens Utility Board, Midwest Renewable Energy Association and iChoosr to offer a group buy and solar education program since 2023. Since that time, more than 1,300 residents have participated in a Solar Power Hour and/or signed on to receive a group buy quote. As of February, there have been 80 installations in DuPage and 329 in the Chicagoland region.

For 2025, the program name has changed to Switch Together Solar: Northern Illinois and will launch in March when an auction will be held to identify the best price from qualified installers. A bi-lingual direct mailer will be sent to the next round of residents that have not previously received a letter. The Division will be sending out the opportunity to Cool DuPage email subscribers and placing information on the website and social media platforms.



Informational

421 N. COUNTY FARM
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File #: 25-0622

Agenda Date: 3/4/2025

Agenda #: 8.B.



FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

630-407-5700
fax: 630-407-5701

www.dupagecounty.gov/facilities

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sheila Rutledge, Chair
Environmental Committee Members

FROM: Joy Hinz, Environmental & Sustainability Programs Manager

DATE: February 24, 2025

RE: Waste & Recycling Hauler Survey

In support of DuPage County's Solid Waste Management Plan, the County Board adopted EN-O-0001-24 which requires waste haulers operating in the County to annually report waste and recycling data. The information below summarizes the information that was collected from the 14 surveys submitted for the 2024 operating year.

<i>Source of Waste</i>	<i>Municipal Waste</i>	<i>Recyclables</i>	<i>Food Scrap</i>	<i>Landscape Waste</i>
<i>Industrial</i>	20.69%	8.6%	15.79%	1.89%
<i>Commercial</i>	37.48%	18.9%	84.21%	0.28%
<i>Residential</i>	41.82%	72.5%	-	97.83%

This data will help the County measure more accurately a recycling rate and plan for future solid waste management.