2020-2021 annual Report



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# Agenda (for annual meeting)

Attendance/Introductions

Approve meeting minutes from May 2021

Short updates from Committees (5 mins. max)

Discussion (time to be moderated):

GGPR spend – what have we done, what should we do?

* One Earth Film Festival
* Author sponsorship
* Clean-up event?
* Scholarship?

Active Clean Up Event(s)

* Support or Lead?

Future of SLURP

Future of Farmer's Market

Feedback on new structure

* What went well?
* What could be improved?

Nominating Committee Report

Election

Introduction of new Board

Other Business

# Mission Statement (from Bylaws)

The mission of the Corporation is to raise environmental awareness in Park Ridge and to inspire residents, businesses and our government entities to take action to live and work more sustainably.

What We Do

Go Green Park Ridge provides Park Ridge residents, businesses and government entities with a path to a more environmentally sustainable community. we do this by:

* Advocatiing for environmental change
* Educating community stakeholders about pressing environmental challenges
* Partnering with and uplifting others who are working toward a more sustainable future

# 2020-2021 Board

**President**: Mark Kleinschmit

**Communications Co-Director**: Catherine Inserra

**Communications Co-director**: Cindy Grau

**Secretary**: Tracey Edsey

**Treasurer**: Joan Doherty

**Vice President of Membership**: Patty Hempel

**Past President**: Amy Bartucci

# Nominating Committee Report:

**Committee**:  Amy Bartucci, Melissa Hulting, Rob Bowe

**2021-2022** **Positions**:

**Communications Co-Directors**: Catherine Inserra and Catherine McDonough

**Vice-President of Membership**: Cindy Grau

**Nominating Committee for 2021-2022**: Rob Bowe, Chair; Chris Parson, and one person to be determined by the board.

We are thankful for these members agreeing to be nominated. We feel like this will be a strong board that will help Go Green Park Ridge continue to provide Park Ridge residents, businesses and government entities a path to a more environmentally sustainable community.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Bartucci

# Membership report

The 2020-2021 session of Go Green was an interesting one. We met remotely all year but hope to end the session by meeting in person. Fingers crossed. We lost 9 members from the 2019-2020 session and gained 3 new paid members for this session with 3 additional people expressing interest recently. We’ve seen an uptick in interest as our new members bring in additional connections. This is all great news and promises to grow membership even more next year.

* Patty Hempel

# Financial Report

Checking Account Balance as of May 27th, 2021: $896.65

2020/21 Dues + Previous GGPR Account Balance: $1,695.61

Contributions/Donations: $100.00

 Total: $1,795.61

Disbursements:

Zoom Meeting Fee: ($14.99/mo.) $59.96

One Earth Film Festival Sponsorship: $650.00

Doug Tallamy Library Program Co-Sponsor: $125.00

Cook County Forest Preserve Permit: $64.00

 Total: $898.96

 Balance Total: $896.65

# President’s message

This was a momentous year for Go Green Park Ridge – we transitioned to a 501c(3) with a Board and elected officers. We formalized our Committee structure with empowered leaders. And we, like everyone, invested in a Zoom account. In some ways we were able to reach more people through virtual events, but sorely missed meeting in person and sharing in our community dedicated to the environment. We achieved some long-sought goals – the establishment of a Sustainability Commission for Park Ridge and a Community Garden program with the Park District. SLURP – perhaps our most well-known activity was benched during the pandemic. Through it all we gained some members and lost others.

We are still developing as an organization. In some ways the pandemic has slowed this evolution – but we are a strong organization with passionate, talented, dedicated members. We will continue to learn and grow and serve this community, where we live, that we love.

* Mark Kleinschmit

# 2020-2021 Committee Summaries

Changemakers

Community Gardens

Education and Schools

Elections

Farmer’s Market

One Earth Film Festival - event stats:

SLURP

Sustainable Yards

## Changemakers

Members: Catherine Inserra, Joseph Steinfels, Cindy Grau

The group met to discuss a *Changemakers* reboot after a bit of a hiatus. *Changemakers* lives on the GGPR [website](https://www.gogreenparkridge.org/changemakers) featuring nominees since January 2017. The current nominees will launch the 5th year to highlight those individuals or groups who are making an impact in the community for environmental health and impact.

Steps for a Nomination:

1. GGPR members are encouraged to send a nominee to Catherine Inserra, via an email to (cathinserra59@gmail.com).
2. The Changemaker team will send the above request to the nominee for response including a photo.
3. The nominee will be presented to the *Changemaker* team who will in turn, present to the GGPR during a monthly meeting for a vote.
4. The approved *Changemaker* will be featured in a monthly newsletter and be added to *Changemakers* on the website.

There is some discussion still as to when a GGPR member would be eligible for this recognition.

The original communications for a *Changemaker* nominee was reviewed and confirmed to be used moving forward (see below):

*You may not realize it, but your efforts in Park Ridge reach farther and wider than you probably imagine and you are really creating an impact.  You’ve been recognized as a Go Green Park Ridge Community “Changemaker” and it would be an honor to help communicate what it is you do that supports our collective future and connect the dots of how you care for our environment in your role.* ***You*** *are a great asset in Park Ridge!*

*Are you willing to answer the following question in a few short sentences and send Go Green Park Ridge a photo?  We would like to recognize community members who are helping to make an environmental difference.  With your permission in this email, we would like to use the information you share on social media, neighborhood displays, and relevant events.*

*Do you see important connections with the role you play in our community and our future on this planet?**Share your story and how Park Ridge can support you!*

March 2021 featured Tim Milburn and Melissa Hulting for their work on the Sustainability Task Force for the City of Park Ridge.

May 2021 featured Sue and Mike Sirvinskas for their sustainable yard and their sponsorship of a community garden on their lot. It will also feature Nan and Chris Parson for their work on Community Gardens and Sustainable Yards.

## Community Gardens

Members: Nan Parson (chair), Carol Becker, Patty Hempel

We have a great news to share – after several years of campaigning, the Park Ridge Community Garden will be a reality in 2021.

After a suitable site was agreed on – near the maintenance offices on top of the old water reservoir at Hinkley Park - the Park Ridge Park District board voted to provide funds to build the community garden.

A group of interested folks have been meeting almost every week since after the new year to begin to bring our vision to reality. Several subgroups were formed, with folks from Go Green on the Rules & Regulations Committee and the Management and Oversight Committee. The Park District folks worked with the legal and compliance components and worked with the neighboring Lutheran church and other interested neighbors. There were 2 members from the Park Ridge Garden Club included on the committee also.

The Park District has announced the Community Garden and registration will open on May 10 for one of 22 plots, including 4 ADA plots. Each plot is 4’ x 16’. Depending on interest there will be a lottery on May 17 to determine who is able to secure a plot. [Here is a link to Community Garden page](https://www.prparks.org/News/Hinkley-Park-Capital-Improvements).

The site also contains a compost pile and water will be available. Go Green worked with others to find a sustainable way to manage water usage – a timer will turn off the supply after a short time period.

As of this report the city of Park Ridge has completed permitting and removal of soil has begun. The garden beds themselves have been constructed in the maintenance buildings, ready to be put in place. Construction is now paused pending notice from the MWRD that no further permits are required. When that is done plumbing and other construction can start. This uncertainty means the opening date of the garden is not set but this has also been published.

We are very excited that this dream has finally come to fruition but this is not the final stage. More plots will likely be added and the Park District may also plan some events to take place near the garden site.

## Education and Schools

Members: Mary S. Allen (chair), Amy Bartucci, Nicole Burmingham, Joan Doherty, Tracey Edsey, Joseph Steinfels, Laura Wilkins

Members of this committee met informally in September and October, becoming a “committee” with a chair in December 2020.  We meet the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

COVID-19 made implementing new initiatives hard to achieve due to not being able to have direct contact with residents, teachers, or students.  Committee members, however, were able to achieve the following:

A survey of questions pertaining to waste reduction practices was compiled to send to Park Ridge public and private schools but retracted due to the many COVID challenges administrators were facing.  The survey was tabled and will be discussed this summer.

The committee communicated with members of the Sustainability Task Force and supported the development of a Sustainability Commission.

Committee members uploaded a large variety of waste prevention and sustainability initiatives, photos, and graphics in the Go Green Park Ridge’s Google Drive for members.

**Dist. 207**

Kept a pulse on District 207’s Sustainability Policy and formation of the Green Team.

Connected with MSHS ecology club sponsor and Green Team representative, Bart Masellis.

Developed criteria for a student scholarship for a Park Ridge senior.

**Dist. 64**

Kept a pulse on District 64’s Strategic Plan, two members participated in the planning sessions and others communicated with administrators.

Each week an environmental informational blurb is submitted to the parent and student newsletters.  As a thank you for publishing the weekly submissions, a “Waste-Free” lunch package was given to Peter Gill and Dr. Olson on behalf of our committee.

## Elections

Members: Mark Kleinschmit (chair), Amy Bartucci, Cindy Grau

The Election committee focused on the local elections in 2020 – specifically on the contested races: Park Ridge City Council (2nd Ward), Maine School District 207 (high school), and the Park Ridge Park District Board. The approach was to create a list of environmental questions for the candidates to answer. The questions and answers were then supplied to our members and beyond via our communication channels. The decision was made to not endorse candidates due to time constraints.

**Highlights** – we received 100% participation from all candidates! It was exciting that Go Green Park Ridge is perceived as being worth responding to in our community.

**Lessons Learned** – Go Green should endorse candidates – this would be more useful to our members and communities. To do so we should develop a documented process for endorsements to avoid it being arbitrary or based upon personal experience/knowledge of a candidate.

## Farmer’s market

Members: Lauren Maloney

The Farmer’s Market was impacted by the pandemic, and the use of personal (or reusable) bags was prohibited as a result. The future of GGPR’s interaction with the Farmer’s Market is uncertain – but Tracey Edsey and Joseph Steinfels have both volunteered to try to form relationships with the Farmers’ Market leadership.

## One Earth Film Festival

Members: Mark Kleinschmit

Go Green Park Ridge and local community partners (Park Ridge Youth Commission, Health) have been repeat sponsors of The One Earth Film Festival since 2018. The One Earth Film Festival, which is in its 10th year, brings important documentaries to the fore throughout Chicagoland communities and encourages post film discussions that increase environmental action and change. Go Green Park Ridge believes we can heal the planet through raising awareness and talking more about the impacts of climate change and becoming a bigger part of viable solutions.

This year, Go Green Park Ridge chose to show Youth V. Gov, a story of empowered youth finding their voices and fighting to protect their rights and our collective future. One Earth Film Festival’s Executive Director, Ana Garcia Doyle, stated it best: “We are at a unique place in time with a collision of pandemics. The pandemics of COVID-19, our racial reckoning and our climate crisis.” The event stats for our virtual showing of Youth V. Gov were:

■ 360 guests registered for the event from all over the US

■ 67% of registrants represented IL, and 33% represented 26 additional states, including other top states of California, Oregon, New York, Maryland, Michigan, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Virginia.

■ 163 guests attended our virtual event, but it is likely more, since devices can often have more than 1 person tuning in.

You can register to watch the recorded virtual event for online viewing [HERE](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/youth-v-gov-watch-party-recording-tickets-147021674787). Special thanks to the Parson family for the extra contribution!

## SLURP

Members: Nan Parson (chair), Catherine INserra, Lauren Maloney, Catherine McDonough

SLURP (Straws Literally Upon Request Policy) has been one of GGPR’s most visible and active groups. A number of restaurants in Park Ridge have signed up – raising awareness of the downside of single use plastics – and straws in particular. During 2020-21 SLURP went on hiatus due to the closing of indoor dining and general stress on restaurants. Long time chair, Nan Parson has also stepped away from her leadership role. The future of SLURP has yet to be determined.

## Sustainable Yards

Members: Cindy Grau (Chair) Amy Bartucci, Carol Becker, Tracey Edsey, Patty Hempel, Chris Parson, Leah Zalinski

Purpose: Our community can actively preserve wildlife from extinction by changing how we care for our green spaces.

We focused on education on the following topics:

1. Leave the Leaves – leaving leaves in yards promotes wildlife and provides free mulch
2. Talking to lawn care providers about mowing grass higher and not mowing when lawn doesn’t need it
3. Natural Lawn Care – natural methods to promote healthy lawns reduces need for chemicals
4. Rain barrels – collecting rainwater on site to help with runoff and to use for plants
5. Doug Tallamy’s book: Nature’s Best Hope through library author event

Publicity Outlets:

1. Facebook
2. Go Green newsletter
3. Library Event
4. Garden Walk Tabling Event

Our potential partners are:

1. Garden Club
2. Green Drinks
3. Library
4. Rotary Club
5. Sustainability Commission

We are investigating action on Gas Powered Leaf Blowers in conjunction with Go Green Illinois.

We hope to support a tree sale when the Sustainability Commission is established.

Lessons learned:

Doesn’t feel like messages reach far without partners

1. Don’t hesitate to ask to collaborate! The Park Ridge Library event with Tallamy is a highlight! Keep asking.