



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

6:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Coveyou at 6:03 p.m.

Members present: Commissioners Carlson, Coveyou, LaPlante, Leoni-Helbacka, Matson-Brady, Nelson, Small

Staff present: Liam Genter, City Forester/Natural Resources Specialist
Zekima Rashid, GreenCorps Member

Members absent: Commissioners Jensen Christen, Woods

Council Liaison: Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula

COMMUNITY FORUM

No community members were present.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the April 7 and May 12, 2026 Regular Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion to approve by Commissioner LaPlante, seconded by Commissioner Nelson. The motion was approved unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

2. 2026 Goal Setting Continued

Presenting item: Liam Genter, City Forester

Commissioner Nelson provided a recap of the previous meeting and goal setting session. Commissioners generated ideas and subjects for the commission to work on in the next year and placed them into several different broad categories. Commissioner LaPlante stated that the broad categories used for the goal setting session were based upon the GreenStep Cities Step 4 criteria. The ideas were then compiled by staff into a list for the commission Teams site, and commissioners were asked to select their top three priorities before the next meeting. Commissioner Coveyou asked if the list was the same one on the Teams site that had color coded items. Forester Genter replied that staff had compiled the items together and color coded them according to amount of work needed to accomplish each item. Items that were

color coded red would require significant staff and commission time and effort to accomplish, yellow items were deemed moderate work, and the green items were the most straightforward and required the least investment of time. Genter said that staff hoped to help the commissioners decide how many items to pursue based upon this color coding. Commissioner LaPlante asked if the list could be put up on the big screen. Commissioner Coveyou suggested that each commissioner share their top three priorities to see where shared interest was in the group. The commission had broad interest in a community forum/lecture series about a variety of sustainability related topics. Forester Genter suggested that city staff could record the lectures and forums and add them to the Sustainability Commission webpage. Commissioner LaPlante stated that she was really focused on improving the implementation and enforcement of the City's Complete Streets Policy and adding bike racks in the Central Avenue business district. Forester Genter said that getting bike racks installed would be possible but recommended temporary and mobile options due to the upcoming reconstruction of Central Avenue by Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT). Commissioners provided ideas for topics for the lecture/community forum series including water bottle and tap water education, home energy squad experiences and opportunities, stormwater management topics, and urban forestry. Commissioners discussed strategies to increase residential and commercial participation in energy audits, energy efficiency grants, and multi-family building energy efficiency. GreenCorps Member Rashid stated that a list of multi-family properties could be acquired from the police department and related that she had presented energy efficiency information to a previous meeting of landlords. Commissioner Leoni-Helbacka asked if a list of businesses could be acquired to help inform outreach strategies. Forester Genter replied that Community Development staff would be able to provide that information to the commission. The commission discussed which subcommittees would be best suited to focus on individual goals and topic areas. Commissioners also discussed ways to increase business engagement in sustainability topics including a potential Green To-Go policy, increased participation in energy efficiency programs, and ways to involve the municipal liquor stores in the effort. The commissioners decided that goals for the next meeting would be to work on organizing a lecture or forum for July or August, adding topics for the lecture and forum series by the July meeting, and having a sample energy audit form to review from Commissioner Carlson.

BUSINESS UPDATES

Staff Updates

GreenCorps Member Rashid provided an update on the Community Art and Information fair and asked if commissioner members would like to table at the event. Rashid offered to share her table at the event with the commission and said that she would have flyers with Partners in Energy information to distribute, which was agreed to by the commissioners. Rashid also provided an update on the Community Energy Action Plan since the kickoff event. Personalized flyers and handouts have been created, energy efficiency guides are being mailed monthly to new residents, and staff have started attending monthly landlord meetings to present energy efficiency opportunities and information for property owners. Rashid further stated that presentations were also made by city staff at the quarterly business meeting on energy

efficiency topics. Rashid said that Home Energy Squad flyers are being mailed in targeted areas where participation has been low. Rashid also provided the commissioners with flyers to hand out to neighbors and others about upcoming Comprehensive Plan and Parks Master Plan events.

Subcommittee Updates

Commissioner Leoni-Helbacka provided a description of the very successful volunteer invasive species management event held at Silver Lake Beach Park. Around a dozen volunteers attended and pulled garlic mustard, buckthorn, sweet clover, and burdock. The next event will be held at LaBelle Park in August and will target buckthorn.

Commissioner Updates

Planning and Coordination

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner LaPlante made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Leoni-Helbacka seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Liam Genter
City Forester/Natural Resources Specialist