



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE
Tuesday, September 9, 2025
6:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Evenson at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Commissioners Carlson, Evenson, Johnson, Kurek, LaPlante, Leoni-Helbacka, Small

Staff present: Rochelle Widmer, Director of Engineering and Facilities
Mitchell Forney, Director of Community Development
Ursula Brandt, City Planner
Liam Genter, City Forester/Natural Resources Specialist

Members absent: Chairperson Jensen Christen, Commissioner Groseth

Council Liaison: Rachel James

COMMUNITY FORUM

No community members present.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the August 12th, 2025, Regular Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chairperson Evenson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by commissioner Johnson.

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion was approved unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

2. Partners in Energy Grand Opening Discussion

Director Forney introduced the new City Planner Ursula Brandt and asked her to provide the commission with some information about herself and her background. Planner Brandt introduced herself and her work in city planning and most recently at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Director Forney recapped some of the discussion from the previous meeting about the grand opening and some minor changes that had been decided upon since that meeting. The grand opening was moved to October 15 and would take the place of the regular Sustainability Commission meeting for that month. Forney said that the most important role for the commissioners was publicizing the event and inviting neighbors to make sure it was well attended. Staff and commissioners discussed activities and engagement for the event, locations for the presentation and activities, and logistics for setup. The

commissioners also discussed the importance of having resources available in multiple languages to connect with as many residents as possible. The commission discussed the option of creating a subcommittee dedicated to events, scheduling, and planning. A motion was made to create the subcommittee and it passed unanimously.

3. Initial Sustainable Purchasing Policy Discussion

Director Forney addressed the commission and discussed staff efforts to date regarding the creation of a Sustainable Purchasing Policy. Commissioner LaPlante gave the commission an overview of the policy development over the last year, including the initial use of the policy from the City of New Brighton as a template. Staff made some initial commentary to the plan and then members of the commission made edits as well. Commissioner LaPlante asked the commissioners to review the plan and make edits prior to the November meeting of the commission where the policy will be a primary item for discussion. Staff and the commissioners discussed the draft policy and goals for the process and development of the final policy. Director Forney made the point that making the policy as simple and straightforward as possible would contribute to its usage and longevity at the city.

BUSINESS UPDATES

Staff Updates

Subcommittee Updates

Commissioner Leoni-Helbacka provided an update about the recent buckthorn pulling volunteer event at LaBelle Park and encouraged the commissioners to attend the upcoming event which will also be held at LaBelle Park. Leoni-Helbacka estimated that at least 500 feet of shoreline had been cleared of buckthorn saplings at previous events already.

Commissioner Updates

Planning and Coordination

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 7:01. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by the commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Liam Genter
City Forester/Natural Resources Specialist