



CITY OF NOVI
Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting
September 23, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 5:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, and Smith

STAFF LIAISON: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Katherine Oppermann, Assistant to the City Manager
Rebecca Runkel, Project Engineer

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Gurumurthy; Seconded: Heintz; Approved: 3:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 12, 2025 Minutes

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Gurumurthy; Approved: 3:0

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Shawood Lake Discussion Recap

Chair Smith recapped that, from the recent meeting regarding Shawood Lake with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR), they want to be sure not to induce algal blooms. Residents have already applied treatment and have seen lily pads start to die off (by way of turning brown). He will be interested in checking in again to see about their later results. Councilmember Heintz said that he would be interested to know that next steps for the lake. He also noted that City Attorney Schultz had sent on an example of a fertilizer ordinance that hadn't passed elsewhere and wants to know what we might do to impact the lake without "impacting" the lake. Councilmember Gurumurthy spoke on her takeaway from the meeting, primarily that they stressed keeping the lake as natural as possible. She is also interested in potential next steps. Chairperson Smith agreed, stating that it can never be a multi-sport lake due to the shallowness (and likely resident opposition) but there may be other opportunities to get people out to Shawood Lake.

2. Shawood Lake Water Testing RFP

Chair Smith expressed interest in knowing the current condition of the lake in detail and that they might consider a Request for Proposal (RFP) for such a study. Assistant City Manager Mahoney stated that she is not sure that an RFP would be necessary

for such a study. Ms. Runkel said that she can talk to the Alliance for the Rouge about what might be recommended as far as testing goes. Councilmember Gurumurthy noted that EGLE might also be worth asking to help establish a baseline and know what ranges we should be looking for. Chairperson Smith agreed that it would be good to measure, especially if they choose to create an ordinance. They can then use those base measures to re-test and see if there is any effect. Councilmember Heintz shared that in his conversations with Parks & Recreation Director Muck that he understands that the development of the recently acquired Shawood Lake parkland is lower in precedence compared to other Park projects. He would be in favor of "turning down" the attention focus on Shawood Lake. He thinks that they might instead consider a fertilizer ordinance for the entirety of the community. He is also interested in exploring what they can do on their own, without the need of specialists. Chairperson Smith said that they would need to know the approximate cost of testing before they could proceed further. Ms. Runkel shared that, in 2022 during the 9 Mile Road sanitary sewer project, City consultant Spalding DeDecker performed an assessment of Garfield Lake for approximately \$18,000. Councilmember Heintz stated that, with that as an estimation, from the perspective of resource management there might be other programs that could be funded for greater immediate effect. He stressed that we want to be sure of the scope/impact before proceeding. Ms. Runkel affirmed that she can look further into the costs.

3. Pet Project Updates

Chair Smith shared that, regarding Solar, he would like to talk to Srinergy again and start setting things up for a Solarize Program.

Councilmember Heintz stated that he and Ms. Runkel had recently attended a networking event regarding food waste and composting and got some great resources. He noted examples in Ferndale and Southfield and stated that he would like to look at setting up 2-3 locations in the City as a pilot and seeing how it goes. They could also reassess the data when the next waste contract comes up. Chair Smith asked if we pay a flat rate for waste disposal to which Councilmember said yes, per his discussions with City Manager Cardenas. Councilmember Heintz said that he would wonder about, as far as locations and costs, what would be appropriate for a pilot. Chairperson Smith noted that the population is about 20,000, or about 1/3 of the Novi population and Councilmember Heintz agreed but also said that Ferndale is generally a very "green" community, we might not have the same level of buy-in initially, but we have the opportunity to educate and grow. Miss Runkel suggested that she would like to speak with MSU Tollgate Farm to discuss the possibility of a partnership for a food waste/composting program. Councilmember Heintz also spoke briefly about the potential of creating opportunities for food waste certifications for restaurants, or "green ranking", that could be organized through the City of Chamber of Commerce. Chairperson Smith suggested that it could be shown as a logo that might go on ads or menus, so people know what to look for. Councilmember Gurumurthy agreed, saying it could be part of an overall "green business" certification alongside energy audits, etc. Ms. Mahoney said that she would run the idea by City Attorney Schultz but also noted that it doesn't necessarily need to be an arduous process or overly prestigious designation, it could be as simple as a registration for participating businesses. Councilmember Heintz agreed and

suggested that they always have the opportunity to expand levels/tiers if the program is successful and enough businesses take part. Ms. Mahoney asked if there were any available project kits that provided guidance on starting a pilot and Councilmember Heintz said no, not yet, but that there is a noted need and interest in such a guide. It was stressed that the more people we can get onboard, the more we can do. He also added that the Michigan Sustainability Conference will be taking place in Grand Rapids with some elements of food waste reduction included in the scheduled programming, he plans to attend the conference. Councilmember Gurumurthy suggested reaching out to the Novi High School environmental club regarding their food waste reduction program at the school.

Councilmember Gurumurthy stated that she used ChatGPT to get ideas for Community education/engagement and shared the spreadsheet with the Committee, she noted that she and Ms. Mahoney had already gone through it and edited out the GPT generated ideas that wouldn't work. One idea that was discussed further was a "know your bin" challenge/audit. It would inventory where and what type of waste receptacles and disposal sites are available throughout the City. This could also then be turned into an education campaign. It was also suggested that they further promote Hazardous Waste day and consider a general recycling day. She then highlighted including residents and businesses in green living efforts, scheduling volunteer opportunities in 2026, etc. This could be in a "adopt-a-road" style program or coordinated efforts for rain gardens or other larger installations. Councilmember Gurumurthy would like to start with a Spring and Fall event, potentially expanding the existing Arbor Day event, Citizen Science opportunities (bug hunts, frog observation), a green bingo sheet, green commute challenge, environmental art projects, etc. It was also suggested that getting in contact with Friends of the Rouge and MSU Tollgate could be beneficial.

Chairperson Smith encouraged Committee members to keep the group up to date on what they are individually working on, there is a lot of good here to keep working on.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT: 6:33 p.m.

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Gurumurthy; Approved: 3:0