

City of Falcon Heights Environment Commission

City Hall
2077 Larpenteur Avenue West

AGENDA

Monday, February 10, 2025
6:30 p.m.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Beth Mercer-Taylor (Chair) ____	Jared Mehlhaff ____
John Pellegrini (Vice-Chair) ____	Amy Christiansen ____
Adam Keester ____	Sophie Nagel ____
Pedro De Filippo Vannucci ____	
Staff Liaison Lynch ____	
Council Liaison Mielke ____	
GreenCorps Member Siebert ____	

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. January 13, 2025

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2025 Schedule & Priorities
2. GreenCorps Update
3. Energy Action Plan Update
4. Sustainability Fair Update
5. R&E Center Tour
6. City Code Discussion

F. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff Liaison Report
2. Council Liaison Report

G. ADJOURN

*Next regular meeting date: March 10, 2025***

City of Falcon Heights Environment Commission

City Hall
2077 Larpenteur Avenue West

Minutes

Monday, January 13, 2025
6:30 p.m.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:31 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Beth Mercer-Taylor (Chair)	_ A _	
John Pellegrini (Vice-Chair)	_X_	Jared Mehlhaff _A_
Adam Keester	_X_	Amy Christiansen _A_
Pedro De Filippo Vannucci	_X_	Sophie Nagel __X__
City Staff Nelson (filling in for Staff Liaison Lynch) _X_		
Council Liaison Mielke _X_		
GreenCorps Member Siebert _X_		

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Pellegrini made a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by De Filippo Vannucci. Motion passed by consent.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 9, 2024

Vice-Chair Pellegrini made a motion to approve the minutes from December 9, 2024. Motion was seconded by Keester. Minutes were approved by consent.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2025 Officer Nominations

Keester says that notetaking seems to work on a fairly informal basis, with Lynch taking notes and others assisting, as needed. Pellegrini says that as long as Mercer-Taylor is willing to continue, he supports her as Chair. The commissioners unanimously support (4-0) Mercer-Taylor as Chair and Pellegrini receives unanimous support (4-0) as Vice Chair.

2. 2025 Schedule & Priorities

Pellegrini asks if commissioners have anything to add to the schedule. Siebert adds that this is also intended to open the floor for any passion projects or topics that others would like to add. Pellegrini asks Siebert their plans after GreenCorps ends in August and Siebert will bring a report to the February meeting. Mielke asks if the boulevard trees can

be added to the priorities list. She adds that Lynch has applied for grant funds, which may bring the cost of trees down for residents. Commissioners discuss timing of tree sales and will look at Roseville's past sales as an example. Pellegrini enjoys the Nature Newsflash in the weekly newsletter and suggests going back through the archive for story ideas, as they were previously a much more brief article and could be expounded on now. Mielke suggests the idea of backyard garden tours or featuring residents' impressive gardens. Keester volunteers to write about household waste. Pellegrini says that once the new environmental service center is open, it would be nice to educate people about what they do. Will e-waste, for example, be handled there? Commissioners would be interested in a tour of the facility. He then proposes adding a third speaker at the Sustainability Fair, Doug Tallamy, who speaks on the subject of adding just one small portion of native lawn to each person's yard. He adds that Keester's idea of household waste also gives him the idea of writing an article to recap his upcoming Home Energy Squad visit. Nagel and De Filippo Vannucci are also interested in writing a future article. Keester suggests adding action items or follow-up steps for the Energy Action Plan to the calendar, an update to the Climate Action Plan, suggests commissioners tour the pond at Community Park, and says to look to neighboring cities to connect and collaborate rather than duplicate. Mielke adds that Theo, the youth who spoke at a previous commission meeting, is anxious for them to tour and would like to stock the pond with native fish. Mielke then reminds commissioners about Adopt a Drain.

F. Information and Announcements

1. Staff Liaison Report

Siebert walks commissioners through the upcoming Sustainability Fair. The date is Saturday, April 26 at City Hall. Mielke suggests adding a kid's craft and to ask Monarch Joint Venture to participate. City staff person Nelson then adds that she is Staff Liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission and that they have expressed an interest in sharing their goals with other commissions and vice versa as a way to find opportunities to support efforts. Siebert shares Lynch's idea of playing BINGO at the fair as a way to visit every booth and to then receive a compost bin once the card is full. De Filippo Vannucci asks if the compost bins will be limited to one per household, which they will to ensure more people get access. Mielke reminds commissioners that Roseville Area High School students or National Honor Society students may want to help as a way to earn volunteer hours. Commissioners suggest other organizations that may be a good fit to participate at the Sustainability Fair. Nagel asks if a flyer could be produced and if a banner could be ordered to place outside City Hall. Mielke suggested advertising in the Park Bugle.

Siebert provided brief updates on the Climate Action Plan progress, the plastic bag recycling program, and a new form on the website to seek energy project testimonials from residents.

2. Council Liaison Report

Council Liaison Mielke updates the commission on recent City Council agenda items such as the approval to purchase new playground equipment at Community Park, the passing of Cannabis ordinances and the passing of the levy. She spoke briefly about the application for funding for EV chargers through the NEVI grant program.

G. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Next regular meeting date: February 10, 2025

DRAFT



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	February 10, 2025
Agenda Item	E-1
Attachment	See notes below.
Submitted By	Hannah Lynch, Community Development Coordinator / Planner

Item	2025 Environment Commission Schedule & Priorities
Description	Attached is an updated schedule for 2025 Environment Commission meetings. As part of this, we generally discuss priorities for projects for the year. A few suggestions for priorities include planning and assisting with the Sustainability Fair, working to further the implementation of the Energy Action Plan, and working on the Climate Action Plan.
Budget Impact	None.
Attachment(s)	2025 Environment Commission Schedule
Action(s) Requested	Staff recommends reviewing schedule for 2025 meetings and discussing priorities for the year.

**City of Falcon Heights
Environment Commission**

2025 Schedule

(2nd Monday of each month, 6:30 PM)

January 13, 2025

February 10, 2025

March 10, 2025

April 14, 2025

May 12, 2025

June 9, 2025

July 14, 2025

August 11, 2025

September 8, 2025

October 13, 2025

November 10, 2025

December 8, 2025

[illegible]



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	February 10, 2025
Agenda Item	E-2
Attachment	None
Submitted By	Olivia Siebert, GreenCorps Member

Item	GreenCorps Progress
Description	Update from GreenCorps member Siebert on her progress and projects, as requested by Commissioners. Major projects include: • Tree survey • Climate Action Plan • Energy Action Plan • Nature Newsflashes • Plastic Film Recycling • Sustainability Fair • General research and support for understanding potential grants and initiatives
Budget Impact	None
Attachment(s)	None
Action(s) Requested	None



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	February 10, 2025
Agenda Item	E-3
Attachment	None
Submitted By	Olivia Siebert, GreenCorps Member

Item	Energy Action Plan Update
Description	The Commission requested an update on the Energy Action Plan with regard to actions they can assist with. The actions that identified the Environment Commission are outlined in the attachment. Representing the values and actions in the Energy Action Plan and promoting them to the community is a major part of the role outlined for the Environment Commission by the Energy Action Plan.
Budget Impact	None
Attachment(s)	EAP Actions
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests the Commission evaluate which actions they would like to participate in and identify priorities.

Focus Area 1: Alleviating Energy Burden on Homeowners and Renters

Strategy 2: Develop Neighborhood Energy Liaisons

Local liaisons, equipped with energy knowledge, will play a crucial role in bridging the gap between resources and residents. These trusted neighborhood figures will provide personalized guidance on energy-saving practices and available support programs, focusing on equity and inclusion.

Actions: Partnerships / Resources:

A) Call for community volunteers by the City. Community Engagement Commission (CEC), **Environment Commission**, City of Falcon Heights

B) Provide Xcel Energy and supporting energy resources to the volunteers to share with their neighbors / associations. Neighborhood Liaisons at CEC, Homeowner Associations, City of Falcon Heights, Partners in Energy

C) Develop resources for volunteers to share with neighbors (e.g., template emails, National Night Out activities, NextDoor posts, website content, etc.). Neighborhood Liaisons at CEC, City of Falcon Heights, Partners in Energy, Falcon Heights GreenCorps Member

Communication: City of Falcon Heights website / newsletter, handouts, emails, social media

Timeline: 1–6 months

Strategy 4: Promote Home Energy Squad Visits

An emphasis on free home energy audits will empower residents to identify inefficiencies in their homes. Armed with this information, they will be able to take steps to reduce their energy consumption and costs. They may also become more aware of available rebates and other incentives.

Actions: Partnerships / Resources:

A) Promote home energy assessments Partners in Energy, City of Falcon Heights, Xcel Energy

B) Showcase residents who have had home energy assessments and made improvements in their home as a result. City communications, Partners in Energy

Communication: Events, CEC, **Environment Commission**, NextDoor website or other websites

Timeline: 6-12 months

Strategy 6: Highlight Energy Saving and Clean Energy Testimonials

Promoting positive experiences that residents have had with the home assessments and other energy projects could increase their demand. The City of Falcon Heights will encourage residents to share their testimonials and experiences publicly to inspire more residents and business owner to participate.

Actions:

Partnerships / Resources:

A) Showcase positive testimonials in the City's newsletter, blog and articles in local media. Park Bugle, Partners in Energy, City of Falcon Heights

B) Postcard mail out campaign of testimonials from residents to other residents, Partners in Energy, City of Falcon Heights

C) Postcard mail out campaign of testimonials from business owners to other businesses. Partners in Energy, City of Falcon Heights

D) Share testimonials at St Paul Chamber of Commerce meetings. Energy Action Team members, St Paul Chamber of Commerce, **Environment Commission**

Communication: Post card mail outs, newsletters, emails, blogs, and presentation

Timeline: 6–12 months

Focus Area 2: Enhancing Energy Efficiencies in Buildings

Strategy 1: Support Energy Improvements

To encourage landlords to invest in energy efficient upgrades, the City will tie energy improvements in rental properties to deductions in rental license fees. This will make it financially beneficial for landlords to improve living conditions for tenants.

Actions: Partnerships / Resources:

A) Create and promote City incentives and/or recognition for energy efficient multi-family buildings. City of Falcon Heights, Partners in Energy

B) Review and revise City code to remove barriers to more energy efficient multi-family buildings. City of Falcon Heights, Planning Commission, **Environment Commission**, City Council

C) Support the adoption of standards requiring buildings larger than 5 units to periodically re-invest in energy efficient improvements that have a reasonable payback period. City of Falcon Heights, City Council

D) Support incentives for retrofits and redevelopment of existing multi-family buildings to improve energy while respecting the historic integrity of buildings and communities. City of Falcon Heights, City Council

Communication: City communications

Timeline: 12–24 months

Strategy 3: Partner with the State Fair to Encourage Energy Projects

The annual State Fair can become a platform for promoting energy projects. Interactive exhibits and demonstrations could showcase innovative energy solutions, inspiring residents and visitors alike to adopt more sustainable practices.

Actions: Partnerships / Resources:

A) Draft proposal to partner with State Fair to encourage joint energy projects. Minnesota State Fair, City of Falcon Heights, **Environment Commission**

Communication: City communications

Timeline: 6-12 months

Strategy 5: Form Climate Action Partnership with the University of Minnesota

Partnering with the University of Minnesota could reduce carbon emissions. The City will seek collaboration with the University to reduce carbon in the atmosphere and add electric vehicle (EV) chargers.

Actions: Partnerships / Resources:

A) Draft a proposal for collaboration between the City Council and the University of Minnesota and find a way forward. City Council, University of Minnesota, Energy Action Team

B) Advocate for increasing EV charging infrastructure on and off campus. University of Minnesota, Partners in Energy, EV toolkit, City of Falcon Heights

C) Encourage charging infrastructure on new developments and retrofits, especially multifamily buildings and businesses. Support the continued development of charging infrastructure for EVs. University of Minnesota, Partners in Energy, EV toolkit, MF building owners/managers, City of Falcon Heights, **Environment Commission**, Planning Commission

Communication: City communications to University of Minnesota

Timeline: 6-12 months

Strategy 7: Reduce Costs of Home Energy Assessments for Residents

Create a program that would pay for residents to have complimentary or reduced cost home energy assessment visits. The City could eliminate any financial objection for residents.

Actions: Partnerships / Resources:

A) Address economic barriers for residents who may be hard to reach or under-represented in the community and increase home energy assessment visits by promoting free visits. Community Engagement Commission (CEC), **Environment Commission**, City of Falcon Heights

Communication: City communications through CEC, City newsletter

Timeline: 6-12 months



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	February 10, 2025
Agenda Item	E-4
Attachment	None
Submitted By	Olivia Siebert, GreenCorps Member

Item	Sustainability Fair 2025
Description	Update on the Sustainability Fair: We will be partnering with Lauderdale for the event and have organized a paper shredding, electronics recycling, and textile collection event concurrently. We have assembled organizations to table at the event and speakers to give lightning talks.
Budget Impact	Budgeted for in SCORE grant funding
Attachment(s)	February Update
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests Environment Commission volunteers to help direct the outdoor collection event and staff a table for residents as well as hand out compost scrap bins.

Falcon Heights & Lauderdale Sustainability Fair February Update

Saturday April 26, 11am – 2pm, Falcon Heights City Hall

Parking lot:

- Retold Recycling textile collection (requires volunteers to help sort)
- Repowered electronics recycling collection
- Shred Right paper shredding
- *Electric Vehicle demonstration – Kate Anderson*

City Hall:

- 15-minute lightning talks:
 - 11:30 Russ Henry on bee lawns
 - 12:15 Gregory Goodwine on climate change and public health
 - 1:00 Peter Lindstrom on CERTs ambassadors
- Environment Commission welcome tables (requires volunteers)
- Tables (16 confirmed) – sending confirmation email 2/12
- BINGO cards for residents to fill out and redeem for a food scrap bin (while supplies last)

Bicycle Chain – Bike Shop Contact: unknown Topic: Bike safety, ebikes	Capitol Region Watershed District Contact: Maricella Xiong, staff Topic: nonpoint source pollution, give away stickers and seed packets	Home Energy Squad Contact: Gerardo Roca Topic: HES and home electrification, Xcel Energy giveaways
Ramsey Co. Recycling Ambassadors Contact: Mariah Quick, ambassadors Topic: recycling, food scraps, medicine collections, household hazardous waste and the new environmental center, giveaways	Ramsey Co. Master Gardeners Contact: Darren Lochner Topic: Ask a Master Gardener! (potentially information from Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms as well)	CERTs Contact: Keely Rau, Bruce Topic: Air Source Heat Pumps, solar, electric vehicles, Community Energy Ambassador program, and Home Energy Guides
Russ Henry/Bee Safe Minneapolis Contact: Russ Henry Topic: Bee lawns, pollinators	Solar United Neighbors Contact: John Anderson Topic: Solar group buy	The Good Acre Contact: Nikki Warner Topic: CSAs, plastic free produce storage
MN Tool Library Contact: Kate Hersey Topic: shared access to home repair, landscaping and woodworking tools	Gibbs Farm/RCHS Contact: Sammy Nelson Topic: nature related activities for kids, info about the farm	Reuse MN Contact: Emily Noyes Topic: Waste reduction, reuse network
Falcon Heights Climate Action Plan Contact: Ted Redmond/CAP team Topic: FH CAP progress	Environment Commission Table Contact ??? Topic: adopt a drain flyers, Xcel flyers, sign up for newsletter, hand out compost buckets	We All Need Food and Water Contact: Dawn Pape Topic: kid activity, puppet show if RCWD funds it?
Metro Transit Contact: Doug Cook Topic: bus routes, adopt a stop?	MWMO Contact: Mary Yang Topic: water conservation?	Waiting on: Bell Museum, RCWD (Lauderdale), Bee Lab, Monarch Joint Venture, Art Scraps, CEF (unlikely)

Volunteers needed: (10 people per 1.5 hrs, 20 people total)

Activity	Name/email	Name/email	Name/email	Name/email
Set up (3) 10:30-11				
Direct cars (2) 11:00-12:30				
Direct cars (2) 12:30-2:00				
EC table shift 1 (2) 10:45-12:30				
EC table shift 2 (2) 12:30-2:15				
Textile shredding (4) *manual labor 10:45-12:30				
Textile shredding (4) *manual labor 12:30-2:15				
Paper shredding (1) *manual labor 10:45-12:30				
Paper shredding (1) *manual labor 12:30-2:15				
Snack table (1) 11:00-12:30				
Snack table (1) 12:30-2:00				



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	February 10, 2025
Agenda Item	E-5
Attachment	None
Submitted By	Olivia Siebert, GreenCorps Member

Item	R&E Center Tour
Description	Gregory Goodwine from Ramsey County has offered to set up a tour of the Recycling & Energy Center in Newport for the Environment Commission.
Budget Impact	None
Attachment(s)	None
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests Environment Commission indicate interest in a tour and offer dates that might work.



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	February 10, 2025
Agenda Item	E-6
Attachment	None
Submitted By	Hannah Lynch, Community Development Coordinator

Item	City Code Discussion
Description	Though recent discussions at Climate Action Plan team meetings and Planning Commission meetings, a few potential issues with City Code have been noted. 1 - Composting is not currently allowed in the R-5 zoning district. This is deliberate to prevent apartment buildings from composting, however there are a few single-family homes located in the R-5 zoning district. Staff recommends adding a note to exempt single-family homes from this requirement. 2 - Permeable driveways are not permitted by City Code. The Planning Commission recently questioned the reasoning behind this and noted it should be looked at. As climate change is occurring and the heat island effect along with flooding is getting worse, this may be time to reconsider this Code requirement.
Budget Impact	None
Attachment(s)	None
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests Environment Commission discuss City Code updates.