

City of Falcon Heights Environment Commission

City Hall
2077 Larpenteur Avenue West

AGENDA

Monday, March 13, 2023
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 ____
Emma Kostecki ____ VACANT
Pedro De Filippo Vannucci ____

Council Liaison Meyer ____
Staff Liaison Lynch ____

A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. February 13, 2023

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Welcome to New Member, Jared Mehlhaff
2. EV Smart Cities
3. No Mow May Discussion

D. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff Liaison Report
2. Council Liaison Report

E. ADJOURN

If you have a disability and need accommodation in order to attend this meeting, please notify City Hall 48 hours in advance between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 651-792-7600. We will be happy to help.

Next regular meeting date: April 10, 2023

City of Falcon Heights Environment Commission

City Hall
2077 Larpenteur Avenue West

Minutes

Monday, February 13, 2023
6:30 p.m.

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

B. ROLL CALL:

Beth Mercer-Taylor (Chair) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Martin McCleery <input type="checkbox"/>	John Pellegrini <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Emma Kostecki <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amy Christiansen <input type="checkbox"/>
Pedro De Filippo Vannucci <input type="checkbox"/>	VACANT
Council Liaison Meyer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Staff Liaison Lynch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. November 11, 2022

Motion by Kostecki to approve, seconded by Pellegrini. A vote was taken and all were in favor.

E. AGENDA

1. 2023 Officer Nominations

Staff Liaison Lynch advised the Commission it is their duty to nominate and elect officers at the first meeting of the year. She recommended elected a Chair, and potentially a Vice-Chair and Secretary.

Staff Liaison Lynch volunteered to be Secretary and take minutes for the meetings. Commissioner Mercer-Taylor volunteered to be Chair, Commissioner Pellegrini volunteered as Vice-Chair.

Kostecki made a motion to accept the nominations as stated, seconded by Mercer-Taylor. A vote was taken and all were in favor.

2. 2023 Schedule & Priorities

Staff Liaison Lynch advised the Commission to look at the schedule for 2023 and set some priorities for agenda topics. The Commission discussed and the following list of priorities was proposed:

- *Climate Action Plan / Public Engagement / Funding*
- *Business Recycling / Sustainable Packaging*
- *Public Engagement during existing Falcon Heights events such as the Ice Cream Social and the Spring Forward event*
- *Including Environment Commission updates in the newsletter*
- *Liaise with other environment groups in the area*
- *Single-Hauler Trash*
- *Electric Vehicles*

3. Guest Speaker – Guido Wallraven

Commissioner Mercer-Taylor introduced Mr. Wallraven as a colleague and friend who is a technical consultant to the energy transition and sustainability planning that is underway in German cities.

Mr. Wallraven shared a video of his work at Saerbeck, Germany and a presentation of the methods involved to create a sustainable city. He emphasized community engagement as a major step in the process, and ensuring that citizens are educated in a way that allows them to be involved. He spoke about the many jobs that have been created in Saerbeck as the result of this process and the many projects which have been completed as a result of the effort.

F. Information and Announcements

1. *Staff Liaison Report – None*
2. *Council Liaison Report – None*

G. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Next regular meeting date: March 13, 2022

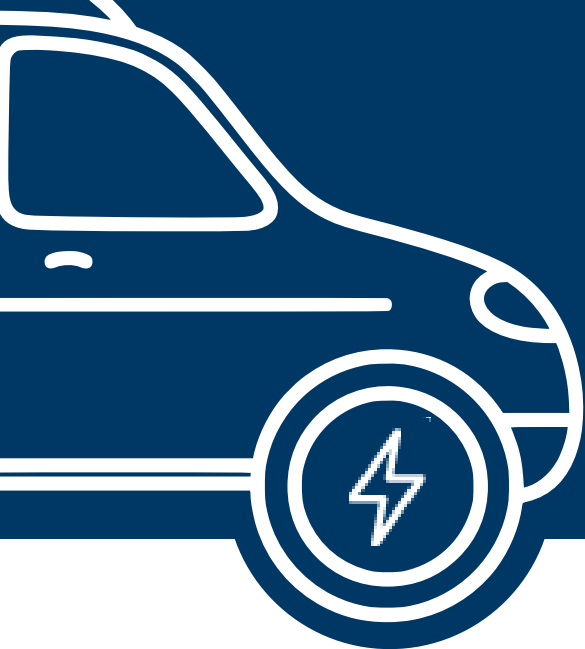


ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	March 13, 2023
Agenda Item	C-2
Attachment	See below.
Submitted By	Hannah Lynch, Community Development Coordinator

Item	EV Smart Cities Program
Description	<p>EV Smart Cities is a recognition program designed to provide cities with a roadmap to electric vehicle (EV) readiness, including securing funding and getting projects off the ground. The path to becoming EV ready involves a portfolio of best practices and actions that include both simple steps and more complicated initiatives that makes it possible for any community to participate.</p> <p>The program provides flexibility for individual community priorities and institutional capacity. Participating communities will not have to reinvent the wheel on their own. They will create an environment of peer communities to work together and establish new EV markets and benefit residents and businesses in their local communities.</p> <p>Program Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance • Roadmap to securing both state and federal funding opportunities for EVs and charging infrastructure • Partnership development with local electric utilities and other private partners • Save money • Future proofing the community • Paving the way for economic development (EV chargers that bring folks in) • Recognition as an “EV Smart” program participant <p>The City of Falcon Heights was chosen as a full participant for this program. The next step in the program is discussing priority actions with the Great Plains Institute team. Priorities will be based off what the city has already done with EVs, the goals of the city, feasibility, and what will help boost the city to EV Smart certification.</p>

Budget Impact	None.
Attachment(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EV Smart Cities Program Handout• Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan – Energy Goals and Policies• Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan – Housing Goals and Policies
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests the Environment Commission discuss priorities for assistance in EV Smart Cities program.



EV SMART CITIES PROGRAM

WHAT IS EV SMART CITIES?

EV Smart Cities is a recognition program designed to provide cities with a roadmap to electric vehicle (EV) readiness, including securing funding and getting projects off the ground. The path to becoming EV ready involves a portfolio of best practices and actions that include both simple steps and more complicated initiatives that makes it possible for any community to participate.

The program provides flexibility for individual community priorities and institutional capacity. Participating communities won't have to reinvent the wheel on their own. They will create an environment of peer communities to work together and establish new EV markets and benefit residents and businesses in their local communities.

The EV Smart Cities program is led by the Great Plains Institute. It is funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Clean Transportation Pilot Program.

DETAILS

- No cost to participate (only staff time!)
- Program Length: November 2022 - March 2024
- Time commitment:
 - One to three one-on-one meetings and/or technical assistance
 - Optional monthly webinars on supporting best practices
 - Self-directed work to meet local goals

ELIGIBILITY

- Staff capacity to participate fully in the program (identify one staff person)
- Any city with priority to geographic representation across Minnesota
- Complete a Letter of Commitment to implement EV readiness actions

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To participate in the EV Smart Cities Program or for more information, contact Diana McKeown, Metro CERT Director at the Great Plains Institute at dmckeown@gpisd.net.

Has your city already completed many EV readiness actions? If so, talk to Diana about the opportunity to participate in the EV Smart Cities- Light Duty program.

WHY PARTICIPATE?



PROGRAM BENEFITS

Successful community participants will be recognized for their work to accelerate local adoption of EVs, while benefiting the economic, social, and environmental vitality of their community. Communities pursuing EV Smart certification will receive the following benefits:

- Technical assistance
- Roadmap for securing both state and federal funding sources
- Partnership development with local electric utilities and other private partners
- Recognition as an “EV Smart Cities” program participant

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

- Drafting EV ordinances
- Support organizing educational events for your community and staff
- Assistance creating an informational section for EVs on your webpage
- Guidance on adding EVs into comprehensive, specific area or functional plans
- Building relationships with local electric utility and car dealerships
- Development of a roadmap for actions to be EV ready
- Assistance streamlining permitting processes
- And more!

PRESENTED BY:



**GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE**

Better Energy.
Better World.

Becoming a sustainable, energy efficient, resilient, and environmentally just community

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

– The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development.

The climate crisis and rising cost of energy present all cities with an extraordinary challenge. Local action is a critical part of global solutions to these problems. Individuals, businesses, public institutions and local governments all have an important role to play in making wise choices that ensure the health and viability of our communities for future generations. By establishing policies that balance social, economic and ecological needs, encourage wise stewardship of natural resources and incorporate environmental responsibility into future development, Falcon Heights can become a sustainable and resilient community that remains a community where people want to live and work for generations to come.

What is meant by sustainability and resilient communities? It is not always clear. Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. Resilient communities have the strength to withstand, respond to, and adapt more readily to acute shocks (such as flooding from extreme precipitation) and chronic stresses (such as ongoing effects of the changing climate on the local tourist economy). The urban heat island effect may worsen chronic stresses. These stresses often affect marginalized and low-income individuals the hardest. The City will keep environmental justice a part of its goal making and policy development processes. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The City has this goal for all communities and persons across this community. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and
- equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

Falcon Heights faces a number of resiliency challenges, those challenges and opportunities can be found in the resilience analysis, Appendix E.

The City will strive to make the community more resilient, save energy and reduce its carbon emissions and become more sustainable.

The City’s Energy Goals are as follows:

1. Reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2030
2. Secure 50% of the community’s electric energy from renewable energy sources by 2030, including 10% of its electricity from local renewable energy resources

3. Continue to secure nearly 100% of municipal facility electricity from renewable energy sources
4. Make the community “EV-ready” with electric vehicle charging stations in every public and private parking lot or ramp by 2030
5. Substantially increase participation of low- and moderate-income housing in energy efficiency programs so that 80% of these buildings have completed deep energy efficiency retrofits by 2030.
6. Assess critical public facilities for potential for “renewable energy plus storage” options installations to improve the resiliency of these facilities.

The City’s Energy Policies are as follows:

1. Promote utility, government, and nonprofit programs that encourage energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy.
2. Encourage net-zero energy development.
3. Engage the community in energy goal setting exercises.
4. Offer regulatory incentives within zoning.
5. Offer technical assistance for private sector developments to incorporate net-zero and/or solar-ready designs.
6. Require energy efficiency and renewable energy within PUD ordinance.
7. Adopt an energy benchmarking ordinance in cooperation with local energy utility providers.
8. Regularly re-evaluate zoning and permitting procedures to remove barriers to renewable energy.
9. Adopt a voluntary net-zero energy code.

Housing: Goals and Policies

Housing Goals

1. Support the reconstruction of dilapidated properties in an environmentally just way through equal opportunity to affordable housing repairs and energy efficiency practices.
2. Encourage sustainable and resiliency practices that reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions and promote alternative energy sources in existing and new housing.
3. Keep housing affordable, maintenance affordable, and accessible to all income levels
4. Promote the following practices:
 - a. Residential access to electric vehicle infrastructure
 - b. Expanded urban tree canopy
 - c. Preserve pervious and indirectly connect impervious surfaces, minimize directly connected impervious surface
 - d. Maintain stormwater infrastructure
 - e. Add compost hauling for residents
 - f. Reduce irrigation and water usage for turf grass

Housing Policies

1. Create incentives and programming to increase tree plantings on private lots and in public right of way.
2. Develop an ordinance to allow alternative turf grass/ground covers.
3. Develop a resiliency checklist to ensure that all projects consider energy efficiency, sustainability and resiliency elements before they start. Find a way to promote the checklist so homeowners are aware of it at the beginning of any project.
4. Create a policy to include informational resources on efficiency, resiliency and sustainability with any permit pulled.
5. Consider requiring new construction of multi-family and residential housing units to include Electric Vehicle readiness.
6. Develop a policy to define dilapidated and vacant properties and ordinances to promote redevelopment of these properties and a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.
7. Develop an ordinance to allow pollinator habitats and rain gardens within the City boulevard.



ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	March 13, 2023
Agenda Item	C-3
Attachment	See below.
Submitted By	Hannah Lynch, Community Development Coordinator

Item	No Mow May Discussion
Description	<p>From the BeeCityUSA.org website: The goal of No Mow May is to allow grass to grow unmown for the month of May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators. In addition to benefiting pollinators, reducing mowing frequency saves on water, helps lawns become more resilient to drought, and reduce emissions from gas-powered lawn equipment that often lacks the emission reduction equipment found on larger engines.</p> <p>No Mow May was first allowed by the City of Falcon Heights in 2022. A Resolution was adopted by City Council to temporarily suspend the requirements of Secs. 22-19 and 22-21 of Falcon Heights City Code.</p>
Budget Impact	None.
Attachment(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution 22-19 - Resolution Supporting The No Mow May Initiative 2022 By Temporarily Suspending the Regulation Requirements of Sec. 22-19 and Sec. 22-21 of the City Code For A Period Ending May 31, 2022. • Sections 22-19 and 22-21 of the Falcon Heights City Code
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests the Environment Commission discuss last year's No Mow May and whether or not it should be considered as an annual event, in which case it would need to be added to City Code.

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

May 11, 2022

No. 22-19

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE NO MOW MAY INITIATIVE 2022 BY
TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING THE REGULATION REQUIREMENTS OF SEC. 22-19
AND SEC. 22-21 OF THE CITY CODE FOR A PERIOD ENDING MAY 31, 2022**

WHEREAS, the City Council and the Environment Commission have an ongoing commitment to protect the environment and the natural habitat within the City; and

WHEREAS, the City Council and the Environment Commission recognize the importance of bees and other pollinators in the process of growing a diverse and healthy ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, recent research suggests that bee pollinators make use of no mow spaces as key floral resources during early spring in the upper Midwest United States; and

WHEREAS, pollinators and floral resources have a positive relationship, where the increase in pollinators can increase the amount of flora and vice versa; and

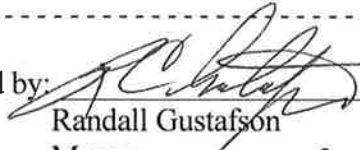
WHEREAS, the Falcon Heights City Council and the Environment Commission finds it is in the public interest and consistent with adopted City policies, including the City's Beekeeping Ordinance 20-05, for the City to demonstrate its commitment to a safe and healthy community environment through the implementation of initiatives that help increase the pollinator population.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Falcon Heights, Minnesota:


1. To proclaim the remainder of May 2022 as No Mow May, and encourage all residents of the city who wish to participate in this initiative to refrain from mowing their lawns in the month of May to provide vital early spring flowers for bees that emerge from hibernation, and
2. To temporarily suspend enforcement for No Mow May relating to the requirements of Sec. 22-19 and Sec. 22-21, specifically that "...weeds or grass growing to a height of greater than six inches" from a period beginning May 12, 2022 to May 31, 2022, while continuing to enforce the Minnesota State Mandate regarding the management of noxious weeds, and
3. Beginning on June 1, 2022, the temporary stay on enforcement will expire and the regulation requirements related to Sec. 22-19 and Sec. 22-21 of the City Code will resume enforcement.

ADOPTED by the Falcon Heights City Council this 11th day of May, 2022

Moved by: *Meyer*

Approved by: 
Randall Gustafson
Mayor

GUSTAFSON 4 In Favor
LEEHY 0 Against
MEYER
ANDREWS
WEHYEE

Attested by: 
Jack Linehan
City Administrator

Sec. 22-19 - Causes of blight or blighting factors

It is hereby determined that the uses, structures and activities and causes of blight or blighting factors described herein, if allowed to exist, will tend to result in blighted and undesirable neighborhoods so as to be harmful to the public welfare, health and safety. No person shall maintain or permit to be maintained any of these causes of blight or blighting factors upon any property in the city owned, leased, rented or occupied by such person.

- (1) *Inoperable vehicles.* In any area zoned for residential purposes, the storage upon any property of inoperable vehicles is illegal. For the purpose of this section, the term "inoperable vehicle" shall include any motor vehicle, or part of a motor vehicle, not stored in a garage, which is either:
 - a. Unusable or inoperable because of lack of, or defects in, component parts;
 - b. Unusable or inoperable because of damage from collision, deterioration, or having been cannibalized;
 - c. Beyond repair and not intended for future use as a motor vehicle;
 - d. Being parked on any street or alley, for a period exceeding 48 consecutive hours; or
 - e. Without valid and current license plates issued by the proper state agency attached.

- (2) *Special permits.* The city council in its discretion, upon receipt of an application showing hardship in special circumstances may, in the instance of an inoperable vehicle, issue a special permit with appropriate conditions attached permitting an individual to keep such vehicle for a period not to exceed 60 days.

- (3) *Junk, trash, rubbish and refuse.* In any area within the city, the storage or accumulation of junk, trash, rubbish or refuse of any kind, except refuse stored in such a manner as not to create a nuisance for a period not to exceed 14 days is illegal. The term "junk" shall include, but not be limited to, parts of machinery or motor vehicles; unused stoves or other appliances stored in the open; remnants of wood; decayed, weathered or broken construction materials no longer suitable or safe; approved building materials; common household items; metal or any other material or cast off material of any kind whether or not the same could be put to any reasonable use.

- (4) *Noxious weeds, vegetation and substances.* No owner agent or occupant of any premises shall permit upon his or her premises any noxious weeds as defined in Minn. Stats. § 18.77, weeds or grass growing to a height greater than six inches or which have gone or are about to go to seed, fallen trees, dead trees, tree limbs or items which are a fire hazard or otherwise detrimental to the health or appearance of the neighborhood.

- (5) *Structures.*
 - a. *Unfit structure.* In any area the existence of any structure or part of any structure that because of fire, wind or other natural disaster, or physical deterioration is no longer habitable as a dwelling, nor useful for any other purpose for which it may have been intended is illegal.

- b. *Vacant structure.* In any area zoned for residential purposes, the existence of any vacant dwelling, garage, or other outbuilding, unless such buildings are kept securely locked, windows kept glazed or neatly boarded up and otherwise protected to prevent entrance thereto by vandals is illegal.
- (6) *Graffiti.* No owner agent or occupant of any premises shall allow or leave on the premises any graffiti, which shall mean any writing, printing, marks, signs, symbols, figures, designs, inscriptions, or other drawings which are scratched, scrawled, painted, drawn, or otherwise placed on any surface of objects such as buildings, walls, fences, sidewalks, curbs, trees, rocks, or other permanent structures or objects on public or private property or the interior surfaces of those parts of a building accessible to the general public and which have the effect of defacing the property. An owner agent may request the city to remove the graffiti by providing a waiver to the city to allow for the removal of graffiti on the owner agent's property. The owner agent will be billed for the cost.
-

Sec. 22-21 – Abatement

- (a) In case of failure to remove any blight as defined in section 22-19 after notification and within the time prescribed, the administrator or clerk may order city employees or a contracted party to abate the blighted condition. The responsible person shall be billed for the costs. If the bill is unpaid, the cost shall be certified to the county auditor as a special assessment against the property for collection in the same manner as other special assessments.
- (b) In case of failure to remove any blight as defined in section 22-19(5)a and 22-19(5)b, after notification and within the time prescribed, the council may direct the administrator or clerk to proceed as defined in Minn. Stats. §§ 463.15—463.261 regarding the repair and/or removal of hazardous and substandard buildings on property.