

Environmental Commission

August 24, 2020 – 6:30 pm

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

This meeting will be held via Cisco Webex in accordance with the local emergency declaration made by the City under Minn. Stat. § 12.37. The public may monitor this meeting by calling 1-415-655-0001 and entering the meeting code 133 703 2251. For technical assistance, please contact support staff at 763-593-8007 or webexsupport@goldenvalleymn.gov. If you incur costs to call into the meeting, you may submit the costs to the City for reimbursement consideration. Additional information about for monitoring electronic meetings is available on the City website.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **New Member Felix Fettig (5 min)**
4. **Approval of Agenda**
5. **Approval of July 27, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes (5 min)**
6. **Old Business**
 - A. Partners In Energy Update (5 min)
 - B. Curbside Organics Collection Update (5 min)
 - C. Environmental Justice Collaboration Update (10 min)
7. **New Business**
 - A. Using Goats for Vegetation Management (20 min)
 - B. Energy Update (15 min)
 - i. GreenStep Cities Step 4-5 Energy Metric (10 min)
 - C. Program/Project Updates (5 min)
 - D. Council Updates (5 min)
 - E. Other Business (5 min)
8. **Adjournment**



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Environmental Commission

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

This meeting will be held via Cisco Webex in accordance with the local emergency declaration made by the City under Minn. Stat. § 12.37. The public may monitor this meeting by calling 1-415-655-0001 and entering the meeting code 141 267 1740. For technical assistance, please contact support staff at 763-593-8007 or webexsupport@goldenvalleymn.gov. If you incur costs to call into the meeting, you may submit the costs to the City for reimbursement consideration. Additional information about for monitoring electronic meetings is available on the City website.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Seys at 6:32.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners present: Scott Seys, Debra Yahle, Tonia Galonska, Dawn Hill, Jim Stremel, Shannon Hansen

Commissioners absent: Wendy Weirich

Council Members present: Larry Fonnest

Staff present: Eric Eckman, Environmental Resources Supervisor;
Emma Pierson, MN GreenCorps Member;
Carrie Nelson, Administrative Assistant

3. Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Commissioner Galonska, seconded by Commissioner Stremel to approve the agenda of July 27, 2020 and the motion carried.

4. Approval of June 22, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Yahle, seconded by Commissioner Galonska to approve the minutes of June 22, 2020 as submitted and the motion carried.

5. Old Business

A. Partners in Energy Update (PIE)

- i. About 18 applications have been received so far with more expected. The selection committee will review them later this week and select the 12-member team.
- ii. The first workshop will take place mid-August – Virtual meeting



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B. Curbside Organics Collection Update

- i. A draft of the contract should be ready for the EC by Sept/Oct.
- ii. It will go to a council manager's meeting one more time.
- iii. RFP late this year.
- iv. Award contract early next year.
- v. Will have almost a year to prepare and promote this.
- vi. City of Edina 2020 roll out:
 1. Has had 1 full month of city-wide use.
 2. Everyone has a 35-gallon bin with a big sticker of what you can and can't recycle that resident say has been very helpful.
 3. 30% participation.
 4. Very low contamination rates.
 5. They will be testing out 13-gallon bins in the future. This was put on hold because of Covid-19. Older residents have mentioned wanting smaller carts.
 6. 10-12% of residents have returned their bin at contractor's expense.

C. Environmental Justice Collaboration

- i. Chair Seys discussed the high-level plan that he and the HRC subcommittee have recommended so far. It is a three-pronged approach as outlined in the agenda packet.
- ii. In order to continue the collaboration with the HRC in an efficient manner, Chair Seys offered to form a small subcommittee of 2-3 members tasked with communicating and coordinating directly with HRC's subcommittee members between meetings and up through the events in order to execute the plan. Chair Seys asked for volunteers and Debra Yahle agreed to join the group.
- iii. Council member Fonnest offered that the Commissions, or their respective subcommittees, could reach out to Joelle Allen from Rising Tides Task Force. He also inquired about the environmental inequity mapping, and asked if there is information on income strata or immigrant populations in Golden Valley? Staff discussed the information available and pointed to a couple mapping resources to help show this.
- iv. Staff showed the results of its latest analysis to look at social, economic, and environmental information and merge these data within maps to show where Golden Valley has existing inequities in green amenities and environmental resources and where future partnerships, investments, and service events could be proposed.
- v. One thing for the Commission to consider: Should the various social, economic, and environmental parameters in the maps have weighted values? Perhaps the priority partnership and investment areas in the maps would look slightly different. The Commission thought this should be something the HRC and its subcommittee could look into.

MOTION by Chair Seys, seconded by Commissioner Hill to approve the creation of a sub-committee of 2 or 3 Environmental Commission members to work with the Human Rights Commission sub-committee on the Environmental Justice Collaboration and the motion carried.

D. Downtown Study

MOTION by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Commissioner Galonska to approve the list of Environmental Considerations for the Downtown Study with the following changes and the motion carried.

- i. 5th bullet from top: Add – ...and prioritize bike/ped routes in and through new developments in the downtown area.
- ii. 8th bullet from top: Change – Require the vast majority of parking spaces... – to – Require at least 75% of parking spaces in the downtown area be contained within stacked/decked parking ramps instead of land extensive at-grade parking lots.
- iii. 4th bullet from bottom:
 1. Change – Encourage native plantings over manicured landscapes – to – Encourage native plantings in place of manicured landscapes.
 2. Add - Plant shade trees near parking areas.
 3. Add - Include edible plants and trees in the landscapes.
- iv. 2nd bullet from bottom - add Green Roofs to sentence.
- v. Add new bullet – Encourage LEED design achieving gold or platinum standard (similar to PUD Amenity Option in city code).

Staff will forward this list to planning staff and the planning consultant working on the study.

6. New Business

A. Farewell to Emma Pierson, MN GreenCorps Member

B. Pollinators – Chemical Application Practices and Procedures

- i. The staff overseeing the chemical application are trained and certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.
- ii. All products are applied according to state and federal law and label recommendations.
- iii. Phosphorus-free fertilizer and herbicides on high-use turf areas are applied on a limited, as-needed basis.
- iv. The City uses weather forecasting, instrumentation, and technology to more efficiently and effectively target and apply products.
- v. Brookview Golf Course is the only location with a regularly scheduled process.

C. Program/Project Updates

- i. On file.

D. Council Updates

- i. Election Year
 1. Vote by mail, absentee, or in person
 2. Call City Clerk – Kris Luedke - to vote by mail – 763-593-8012
- ii. Golden Valley is hiring an Equity Manager to work along with the Riding Tides Task Force and to help move forward to build an equitable Golden Valley.

E. Other Business

- i. None

7. Adjournment

MOTION by Commissioner Galonska, seconded by Commissioner Yahle to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 pm and the motion carried.

ATTEST:

Carrie Nelson, Administrative Assistant

Scott Seys, Chair

UNAPPROVED



MEMORANDUM
Physical Development Department
763-593-8030 / 763-593-3988 (fax)

Date: August 20, 2020
To: Environmental Commission
From: Eric Eckman, Environmental Resources Supervisor
Subject: Using Goats for Vegetation Management

In its 2020 Work Plan, the Environmental Commission included the following action:

- **Natural Resources Management Plan:** Continue to assist in implementation of the plan, including:
 - exploring the potential to revise City Code to allow temporary use of goats for vegetation management on public and private properties

For background, staff has received numerous requests over the past few years from residents, contractors, and public entities to utilize goats to manage vegetation on properties in Golden Valley. Staff is generally supportive of this chemical-free vegetation management method and would appreciate the Environmental Commission's input and feedback before approaching city council with a recommendation to revise city code.

To better understand this topic and what other cities are doing, staff has assembled the following resources for Commission review:

Eagan

<https://www.cityofeagan.com/goats>

Cottage Grove

https://www.cottagegrovemn.gov/departments/environment/vegetation_management.php

Maplewood

https://library.municode.com/mn/maplewood/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH10AN_ARTX_GOSH

<https://maplewoodmn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23340/GoatSheep-Permit-PDF?bidId=>

Burnsville

<http://www.burnsville.org/1956/Goat-Grazing>

<http://www.burnsville.org/DocumentCenter/View/19748/Prescribed-Grazing-For-Land-Management-Policy?bidId=>

Minnetonka

<https://lakeminnetonkamag.com/minnetonka-testing-out-eco-friendly-program-improve-parklands%E2%80%99habitat-restoration>

Hennepin County

<https://ccxmedia.org/news/hennepin-county-using-goats-to-battle-buckthorn/>

Mpls

<http://www.startribune.com/grazing-goats-fewer-pesticides-considered-to-fight-weeds-in-mpls-parks/372632591/>

Golden Valley's existing code on Animals

https://library.municode.com/mn/golden_valley/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIGEOR_CH6AN_ARTIIIKEMA

In addition to the resources above, in 2017 the City's GreenCorps Member Hannah Garry offered this summary on the use of goats for removing buckthorn and other invasive species.

Buckthorn Removal Method 6: Goats

Letting goats graze on a buckthorn infested area is a control method that is growing in popularity around the Twin Cities metro area. Goats will strip leaves and bark, causing woody vegetation like buckthorn to die back. They are able to graze on steep slopes that can be more difficult for humans and machinery to reach, and can stand on their hind legs to reach heights of up to 6 feet. Goat grazing has been found to be most effective when goats are allowed to graze in an area multiple times per season. But 80-100 goats can clear one 5 acre area of woody vegetation in one 2 week grazing period. Positives of using this method are that it is herbicide and machinery free. Goats will also leave behind fertilizer which enriches the soil



Photo Credit: Evan Frost for [MPR News](#)

and can work native plant seeds into the ground with their hooves. One possible negative is that goats will eat all woody vegetation, not just buckthorn, although they will leave more desirable grasses alone, preferring broad-leafed plants. Another negative is that depending on the length of time goats are allowed to graze, some form of follow-up control may be necessary to keep buckthorn from re-emerging. Goats need to be fenced into the area where grazing is desired, both to contain goats and deter the public from interacting with them.

Cost: [Minneapolis](#) paid Diversity Land Works \$33,000 for 80 goats to graze a 6-acre site for 10 days. May vary depending on site but that suggests a rental rate of approximately \$41.25 per goat, per day. A smaller site (1-2 acres) may need only 8-15 goats, resulting in an approximate 10-day rate of \$3,300 - \$6,188.



Staff requests that the Commission come to the August 24 meeting prepared to discuss this topic and potentially develop a list of questions or concerns that would need to be addressed before moving forward with a recommendation to Council for a proposed code change.



MEMORANDUM
Physical Development Department
 763-593-8030 / 763-593-3988 (fax)

Date: August 7, 2020
To: Golden Valley Environmental Commission
From: Drew Chirpich, Environmental Specialist
Subject: Energy Update

As part of the U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement that was adopted by Council on January 22, 2008, staff began collecting energy consumption data on Golden Valley’s buildings and facilities. The data is tracked using the Minnesota B3 Benchmarking program <https://mn.b3benchmarking.com/>. In addition to collecting consumption data, the City has been actively implementing energy-saving projects to help reduce the City’s costs and carbon emissions. These projects have been accomplished by using a combination of City funds, state and federal grant money, and public and private partnerships. As a result, the City is starting to see a reduction in the amount of energy, specifically electricity, it is consuming.

City buildings

Below is a year-over-year analysis of the amount of electricity consumed at 18 City buildings since 2007 and the corresponding change from 2007 consumption levels. This information is derived from utility bills and the B3 Benchmarking program.

Electricity Consumption at City Buildings (normalized for weather)

Year	Electricity Consumed (kWh)	Change From Baseline
2007 (Baseline)	1,383,855	- 0%
2008	1,262,914	- 8.74%
2009	1,284,529	- 7.18%
2010	1,273,916	- 7.94%
2011	1,238,579	- 10.5%
2012	1,278,054	- 7.65%
2013	1,245,138	- 10.02%
2014	1,244,747	- 10.05%
2015	1,226,268	- 11.39%
2016	1,178,421	- 14.85%
2017	1,200,666	- 13.24%
2018	1,398,435	+ 1.05%
2019	1,275,648	- 7.82%

There were notable drops in consumption that might be explained by improvements to the City Hall campus. In 2013, the City Hall parking lot lighting was replaced with LEDs. In 2015, two 40-kWh solar arrays became operational, dropping consumption 11.39% below 2007 baseline levels.

In 2016, the City Hall lower level remodeling project was completed and two more solar arrays were added to City buildings in late 2016. The change from baseline dropped 14.85% in 2016 and 13.24% in 2017 respectively. Part of the reason for the drop might be that the solar arrays produce more energy than the City can consume at times, and the excess energy is sold back to the grid.

2018 and 2019 are interesting in that consumption was higher than previous years. This could be explained by the new Brookview Community Center coming online, hotter summers and colder winters, and the addition of more electrical technology and equipment for employees. Staff will continue to analyze these data for possible explanations.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

In looking at total CO₂ emissions at City buildings, it is apparent that CO₂ emissions due to electricity consumption follow the overall electricity consumption trend and are reducing annually. Note that CO₂ emissions from natural gas consumption fluctuates more than electricity due to seasonal conditions. As a result, the B3 Benchmarking model normalizes the emissions from natural gas consumption.

CO₂ Emissions at City Buildings (normalized for weather)

Year	CO ₂ Emissions Electricity (lbs)	CO ₂ Emissions Nat. Gas (lbs)	Total CO ₂ Emissions	Change From Baseline
2007 (Baseline)	2,396,591	1,160,794	3,557,385	- 0%
2008	2,187,143	1,096,329	3,283,473	- 7.7%
2009	2,103,211	1,072,686	3,175,897	- 10.72%
2010	1,967,763	1,098,905	3,066,669	- 13.79%
2011	1,913,180	1,167,252	3,080,432	- 13.41%
2012	1,831,230	1,150,285	2,981,515	- 16.19%
2013	1,784,067	1,122,798	2,906,866	- 18.29%
2014	1,711,779	1,075,576	2,787,356	- 21.65%
2015	1,686,367	1,211,869	2,898,237	- 18.53%
2016	1,469,561	1,193,055	2,662,617	- 25.15%
2017	1,497,303	1,209,080	2,706,385	- 23.92%
2018	1,746,414	1,412,022	3,158,437	- 11.21%
2019	1,593,073	1,437,288	3,030,362	- 14.81%

Traffic Signals

The City has also been tracking electricity consumption for all traffic signals. In 2010, a widespread LED retrofit project was initiated to convert the signals to LED bulbs. The results of this retrofit project are shown below and have made a significant difference.

Traffic Signal Electricity Consumption

Year	Electricity Consumed (kWh)	Change From Baseline
2008 (Baseline)	344,117	- 0%
2009	329,695	- 4.2%
2010	300,340	- 12.7%
2011	171,331	- 50.2%
2012	135,304	- 60.7%
2013	134,897	- 60.8%
2014	119,098	- 65.4%
2015	121,155	- 64.8%
2016	-	-
2017	119,316*	- 65.3%*
2018	106,283	- 69.1%
2019	100,790	- 70.7%

*Estimated value based upon 8 months of data. Xcel Energy in process of providing actual values and 2016 data.

Street Lighting

In 2018 Xcel Energy changed out more than 500 standard street light bulbs with new energy efficient LEDs. In 2019, the traditional decorative street lights were changed out with LED. The LED bulbs are as bright as the old lights but use far less energy, saving the City more than \$3,800 per year and preventing roughly 221,000 pounds of CO2 from entering the atmosphere per year. Based on the limited data we have so far, it appears the changeout is making a difference.

Street Lighting Electricity Consumption

Year	Electricity Consumed (kWh)	Change From Previous Year
2017	886,780*	- NA
2018	767,605	- 13%*
2019	597,928	- 22%

* Estimated value based upon 8 months of data. Xcel Energy in process of providing actual values.

Solar Production Data

In addition to reducing the amount of energy that the City uses, the City has also looked for ways to produce renewable energy. Over the past few years the City has installed four, 40-Kilowatt solar arrays on top of buildings at the City Hall campus. Arrays on top of the Public Safety and Park Maintenance Building were installed in 2015, and arrays on top of the Utility Maintenance and Streets Maintenance buildings were installed in 2016. Each array produces an average of 38,890 kWh annually for a total of 155,560 kWh coming from City solar. This is equal to about 10% of the energy consumed by the City each year.

The lifetime energy production of the panels is 614,519 kWh, which is equivalent to 430,163 kilograms of CO2 emissions abated compared to energy produced from fossil fuels.

Community Energy Consumption and Renewable Energy Production

Attached is the GreenStep Cities Step 4/5 metrics for Renewable Energy. Data is based on Xcel Energy's annual community reports and the City's solar diagnostics website. Staff will share more information about the metrics at the August Commission meeting.

#14 Renewable Energy CORE		Units	Previous Year Values (2016)	Current Year Values (2017)	Annual Change
14.1	Number of city-owned and private renewable energy generation sites	Number of sites	24	65	41
14.2	Generation capacity of city-owned and private renewable energy sites	kW	273	839	566
14.3 CO	Annual production at city-owned renewable energy generation sites	MWhr/year	88	155	67
14.4	Annual renewable energy purchases by the city	MWhr/year	0	0	0
14.5	Number of private entities participating in renewable energy purchasing/green power programs	Number of entities	438	701	263
14.6	Percent of total city energy use that is generated and purchased renewable energy	%	0.60%	0.80%	0.20%
14.7	Percent of total city energy use that is purchased from a community solar garden	%	0.00%	0.10%	0.10%

Enter any justification or explanation for variation of metrics:

14.1 - 24 private from 2016 Xcel Community Report plus 2 public sites (City Hall 2016) = 26 sites. In 2017, 61 private + 4 public = 65.

14.2 - 193 kW from 2016 Xcel Community Report + 80 kW City Hall in 2016 = 273 kW. In 2017, 679 kW + 160 kW = 839 kW

14.3 - City's solar array diagnostics website

14.5 - 2016 Xcel Community Report

14.6 - Add 1,797 MW from Xcel Community Report + 88 MW from 14.3 above, then divide by total consumption in City 336,000 MW from Xcel Community Report (this is for entire community). In 2017, add 2,457 MW + 155 MW, then divide by 320,647 MW

14.7 - In 2017, 338 MW divided by total city consumption 320,647 MW = 0.1%

PROGRAM/PROJECT UPDATES – August 2020

GREENCORPS

Member for 2020-2021 service term – The City has been informed that they have been selected to host a GreenCorps member for the upcoming 2020-2021 service term and a member has accepted the position with Golden Valley. The member will be in the Air Pollution Reduction track and will work on many of the City's sustainability and energy reduction goals.

Market in the Valley- This year City staff and our current serving GreenCorps member, helped to make the event more sustainable by providing the opportunity to recycle organics at the market, and eventually will try to move towards making Market in the Valley a zero-waste event.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Pennsylvania Woods DNR Habitat Grant – The City recently received confirmation that it was selected to receive a habitat grant for areas of the Pennsylvania Woods Nature Area that are outside of the DeCola Ponds B and C Flood Mitigation project boundaries. The project will involve the removal of buckthorn and other invasive species, and the planting and establishment of native vegetation. The contract has been awarded to Landbridge Ecological, and the project is expected to commence this fall.

Hennepin County SCORE funds- The City was recently informed that the County will be extending its existing funding agreement with cities to assist with their Recycling programs. The current allocation of funds is distributed 50% for recycling programs and 50% for organics programs.

WATER RESOURCES

DeCola Ponds Flood Mitigation Projects - The DeCola Ponds B and C Project is about 95% complete. The excavation and utility work is complete, the trails have been paved and are now open, and the City's native vegetation contractor has installed all trees, shrubs, plant plugs, and seeding except for the bare-root tree planting scheduled for September.

The City and Bassett Creek Watershed are beginning to plan and study the next flood mitigation project areas. The SEA School-Wildwood Park area has been identified as having potential for flood storage to benefit properties around DeCola Ponds D, E, and F. A planning level study to understand opportunities and challenges and develop concepts is underway and includes engagement with the community, the school, and nearby stakeholders. The Isaacson Park/Industrial Area is also being looked at for potential future flood storage. The DNR is supportive of the projects in Golden Valley and has requested flood damage reduction funding in the 2020 state bonding bill this legislative session. It is still unclear whether a bonding bill will move forward.

Look for another community engagement opportunity in the next couple weeks to review the concept plans developed for the SEA School-Wildwood Park area based on valuable input provided to date.

Medley Park Stormwater Improvements

The Bassett Creek Watershed in partnership with the City of Golden Valley is considering engaging in a feasibility study to look at options for providing water quality treatment and flood storage in the western portion of Medley Park to benefit the local area and protect and improve downstream waters such as Medicine Lake. The study will include community engagement to better understand existing conditions, issues, and needs and help develop concept plans for consideration.

PLANNING AND ZONING AND DEVELOPMENTS

July 24, 2020

Planning Commission

Comprehensive Plan Re-zonings (Batch 2)—Rezoning selected properties south of Highway 55 in order to bring them into compliance with the Future Land Use Map in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. On July 13, the Commission voted (7-0) to recommend approval of rezoning 8 properties. 10 others (in the Harold Ave, Winnetka Ave, Hwy 55 vicinity) were tabled for additional discussion. Scheduled for City Council consideration on August 4.

R-3 Zoning District Densities—A Zoning Text Amendment to adjust the densities allowed in the Medium Density Residential (R-3) Zoning District. In order to come into alignment with the density ranges approved as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission discussed increasing the maximum number of units per acre for multi-family and senior buildings in the R-3 zoning district. The public hearing was continued to allow time for staff to provide more information. Scheduled for the Planning Commission meeting of July 27.

Mixed Use Architectural and Material Standards—A Zoning Text Amendment to add Architectural and Material Standards for Mixed Use properties to the Zoning Chapter. The Commission discussed this on July 13 and asked to proceed with a public hearing at the next meeting on July 27.

Fencing and Garden Structures—A Zoning Text Amendment to clarify issues around fences, screening, and garden structures. Staff asked for input from the Commission on July 13 on topics ranging from additional fence height along frontage roads to providing clearer definitions of garden structures. Additional discussion will follow.

The Planning Commission and City Council are working through a number of property rezonings in order to bring the City's Zoning Map into alignment with the adopted 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In many cases, this simply means updating the zoning to reflect the uses that exist today, but in some cases – such as in target locations along Douglas Drive and in the downtown – it means zoning for a preferred use which will only occur with future redevelopment.

City Council

Narrow Lot Regulations—A Zoning Text Amendments to modify regulations for homes built on narrow lots (those 65 feet in width and less). The Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 8 and continued it to June 22 where they voted (5-2) to recommend approval. The City Council considered the proposed changes on July 21 and voted (3-2) to approve the amendments as proposed. Debate primarily centered on the allowance of second stories on lots under 50 feet wide.

10 West End Public Art—On July 21, staff introduced the interim report for the Public Art Committee charged with selecting the public art to be installed north of the parking ramp at 10 West End. The Council voted (5-0) to approve the recommendations of the committee. Information about this installation can be viewed on the City's public art page: <https://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/about/public-art/index.php>