



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

December 10, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Mendota Heights City Hall
Council Chambers

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Adopt Agenda**
- 4. Student Commissioner Introductions**
- 5. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Approve meeting minutes from the September 10, 2025 Natural Resources Commission Meeting.
 - b. Approve meeting minutes from the October 8, 2025 Natural Resources Commission Work Session.
 - c. Approve meeting minutes from the November 13, 2025 Natural Resources Commission Work Session.
 - d. Approve meeting minutes from the June 11, 2025 Natural Resources Commission Meeting.
- 6. Citizen Comment Period (for items not on the agenda)**
- 7. New Business**
 - a. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) 2025 Annual Report
 - b. 2026 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Dates and Format
 - c. 2025 Oak Awards
- 8. Old Business**
 - a. 2026 Work Plan
 - b. 2025 Natural Resources Year in Review
- 9. Staff Announcements**
- 10. Committee Reports**

11. Commission Comments

- a. 2025 Reflections

12. Adjourn



**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MENDOTA HEIGHTS CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Draft Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at Mendota Heights City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve.

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Stein called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter called the roll. Present: Vice Chair Stein, Commissioners Daul, McCaslin, Sheets (arrived at 6:04 p.m.), and Thuening (arrived at 6:04 p.m.).

Commissioners Absent: Chair Knosalla, Commissioner Husbands.

Staff present: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter.

3. Adopt Agenda

*Motion to approve the agenda by Commissioner Daul, second by Commissioner Sheets.
Motion passed 5-0.*

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Approve meeting minutes from the July 9, 2025, Natural Resources Commission Work Session Meeting.

*Motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented by Commissioner Thuening, second by Commissioner McCaslin.
Motion passed 5-0.*

5. Citizen Comment Period (for items not on the agenda) - NONE.

No one appeared to address the Commission.

6. New Business.

a. Trick-or-Teeing Event.

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the City's Trick-or-Teeing event, which is an annual event held at the Par 3 City Golf Course that offers candy and giveaways at each hole on the course. It is a free event that is open to the public. The Commission participated in the event in 2024. Last year's participation was focused on stormwater education and the Adopt-a-Drain program. Ms. Spreiter noted that some Commissioners participated in the event last year. This year, the event will be held on Saturday, October 18th, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The Commission will be moved to the first hole in the course.

Staff have been discussing how to incorporate the Partners in Energy program at this year's event, as well as promoting sustainability in general. Some ideas proposed include education on organics and recycling, as well as promoting Home Energy Squad visits and other Partners in Energy programs offered for residents and businesses in Mendota Heights.

The Commission should discuss its level of interest and determine individual participation for this year's event.

Commissioner Daul stated this is a good opportunity to share information. She noted that last year, a free energy audit was given away and asked if that would be possible this year. Ms. Spreiter stated she will check with Partners in Energy to see if they are still offering free home energy visits through the Fall, and if not, the City could sponsor one to be given away.

Vice Chair Stein noted the materials for the booth are pretty well prepared.

Commissioner Sheets stated we need to think about how to engage at the hole, providing the materials we have. She would be available to participate this year.

Commissioner Thuening asked if the materials were still available, and Ms. Spreiter stated that, since the focus had changed, those materials could not be used. Ms. Spreiter suggested costumes may be worn. The Education Committee could help assemble the materials.

Vice Chair Stein suggested the Education Committee help decorate the hole and develop the materials. Ms. Spreiter asked the Commission to commit to helping at the hole and promoting Partners in Energy. She would like individual commitments by the end of September.

*Motion to have the Commission sponsor a hole and the Education Committee design the hole by Commissioner Daul, second by Commissioner Sheets.
Motion passed 5-0.*

b. Geothermal Planning Grant.

Ms. Spreiter reviewed that, in 2024, the Minnesota Legislature established the Geothermal Planning Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to local government agencies and other eligible applicants to determine the feasibility of installing geothermal energy systems.

The City applied for a grant with the State of Minnesota to assess the installation of a geothermal system at the public works facility, but was placed on a waiting list. Recently, the MN Department of Commerce notified the City that Mendota Heights had been selected and accepted into the program. The City has been awarded up to \$150,000 for the planning of a geothermal energy system that heats and cools the City's Public Works Facility.

Ms. Spreiter displayed a graphic showing how Geothermal Energy works and explained it in detail.

Eligible expenses include:

- Analysis of the heating and cooling demand of the building that consumes energy from the geothermal energy system.
- Evaluation of equipment that could be combined with a geothermal energy system to meet the

- building's heating and cooling requirements.
- Analysis of the geologic conditions of the earth in which a geothermal energy system operates, including the drilling of one or more test wells to characterize geologic materials and to measure properties of the earth and aquifers that impact the feasibility of installing and operating a geothermal energy system.
- Preparation of a financial analysis of the project.

The City has 16 weeks to enter into a contract with a consultant to lead and implement the project. Staff is currently developing a Request for Proposals to be made available to eligible consultants.

Vice Chair Stein stated that this type of system was installed in his house in 2010, and it heats and cools the house. It has been extremely reliable, efficient, and low-cost. He thanked the Staff for putting in the effort to obtain this grant for the City.

Commissioner Sheets congratulated Ms. Spreiter and asked how the results would be shared with residents who may be thinking of doing something like this in their homes. Ms. Spreiter stated the report will be posted on the sustainability page of the website.

7. Old Business.

a. Shoreland Management Ordinance Development

Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter reviewed that the Commission is requested to continue the discussion of the development of a Shoreland Management Ordinance.

As an initiative of Goal 1 – Ordinance and Policy Development, of the Commission's 2025 Work Plan, the Goal 1 committee is working to develop a Shoreland Ordinance for recommendation of approval by the City Council. The Shoreland Ordinance, if adopted, would be included in Title 15. Environmental Standards of the Mendota Heights City Code. A shoreland ordinance would help to protect natural water bodies within the City that are not already protected under the current city code. The Commission previously discussed the development of a shoreland ordinance at its February work session meeting and again briefly at its July work session meeting. The Goal 1 Committee is currently reviewing the recommended example ordinance created by the DNR as an example to follow in developing a city ordinance. The committee is requesting input from the rest of the commission regarding any edits or additions that may be suitable to include in a shoreland ordinance in Mendota Heights.

At the July work session, the Commission discussed the need to obtain information on public waters within Mendota Heights to better develop regulations around them. One water body that may be challenging is Lake Augusta, due to the rising water level that is well above its established Ordinary High Water level. Staff has reached out to the MN Department of Natural Resources area hydrologist for Dakota County to request guidance. Staff may also reach out to the WMO for their input.

Non-public water bodies that the Commission discussed adding to the proposed shoreland regulations are Ivy Falls Creek and Interstate Valley Creek.

The Shoreland model ordinance with commentary was provided for Commission consideration. Commissioners are requested to write comments on the draft ordinance that was provided.

Vice Chair Stein commented that the view of the Ordinance Committee is that the model is quite comprehensive, and they do not have many changes. They have some suggestions to clarify some of the

language.

Commissioner Thuening referred to the optional text that is printed in blue in the draft. The Committee felt comfortable keeping those options in the Ordinance.

Vice Chair Stein referred to page 13 and stated the comment should refer to all decks.

Commissioner McCaslin suggested that it be included for consideration.

Commissioner Thuening referred to pages 47-49 and would like to tie the Urban Forestry to this document. On page 48, 8.2.4 line A – Vegetation to be maintained should be maintained at 100%.

Vice Chair Stein requested the Commissioners' flag for future discussion points on the draft. Ms. Spreiter stated that the draft provided is the most updated copy, and if there are other points, please provide them for her to include in the next draft.

Vice Chair Stein noted this Ordinance covers impervious surfaces within the City along the water bodies.

Commissioner Thuening noted there were a few options that do not pertain to Mendota Heights.

Ms. Spreiter displayed the 12-4A-6 Impervious Surface Requirements section of the Ordinance for the Commission.

b. Interstate Valley Creek Stabilization and BMP Project Tour.

Ms. Spreiter reviewed in August that the Commission participated in its annual project tour. For the 2025 project tour, Joe Barten from Dakota SWCD and Lower Mississippi River WMO led a tour of the Interstate Valley Creek Stabilization and BMP Project, which was substantially completed in June of this year.

The project included making stormwater infrastructure repairs, stabilizing two separate reaches within the creek where severe streambank erosion occurred, installing two infiltration basins, and installing a weir downstream of the wetland just north of the baseball field in Valley Park. The project was funded by a Clean Water Grant and is a partnership between the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization and Dakota County. The project has now been substantially completed, including stabilization of both Reach 1 and Reach 2, with grading, stabilization, and cross vanes installed, as well as installation of both infiltration basins and weir structure. Erosion control measures have been installed, and all disturbed areas have been seeded with native graminoid and forb species.

Planting of the infiltration basins and re-vegetation of woody species, including shrubs and trees along reach 1 and reach 2, as well as all disturbed areas, will be completed once the River to River Greenway Trail project has concluded.

The Commission visited four of the five project areas, including the Park Place infiltration basin, the Valley Park wetland weir, and both Reach 1 and Reach 2 creek bank stabilizations. Each project area was discussed in detail, including design, methods, and projected outcomes.

More restoration is to be done with this project. The creek project is very close to completion.

Commissioner McCaslin stated that this came together quickly, and a lot of good work was completed.

Vice Chair Stein stated it was good to see it in person. More waterfowl are being seen in the wetland.

Commissioner Daul stated she was very impressed with the project. She suggested a before-and-after placard be displayed in the area.

Commissioner Sheets stated it is a very neat project, but the scale is difficult to see in pictures. It will make a difference to the water flow in the area. We need to share why this project was important.

Vice Chair Stein stated they could see the invasive species taking over the area. The native plantings were prioritized for maintenance.

8. Staff Announcements.

Ms. Spreiter announced that the opening for a new student commissioner has been posted. She was very impressed with the work that Student Commissioner Trudeau did. She was with the Commission for two years. The posting is located on the website. The term runs from October 2025 to August 2026. The deadline for applying is September 19, 2025.

9. Commission Comments - None.

10. Committee Reports

Ordinance and Policy Development – This has been reviewed during the meeting.

Education and Outreach – Commissioner Daul stated they will be meeting soon to discuss the Trick-or-Teeling Event. Commissioner Thuening stated it would be helpful to hear from the public what they would like to see from the Commission.

Urban Forestry and Restoration – Commissioner McCaslin stated that a meeting is planned soon.

Strategic Planning – Commissioner Thuening stated they have had a busy year. They are creating a strategic plan for Valley Park. They met with all the stakeholders a month ago and will meet again in December. The Committee decided to delay the site-specific management plan for Valley Park until the work is done. That will be done in 2026-2027. The Committee has looked at the Climate Action Planning Grant.

Sustainability – The video that was produced by Town Square was shown. This was filmed at Vice Chair Stein's home.

11. Adjourn.

*Motion to adjourn the meeting by McCaslin, second by Daul.
Motion passed 5-0.*

Vice Chair Stein adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

DRAFT WORK SESSION MINUTES

6:00 PM

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights

1. Call to Order

Chair Knosalla called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance: Chair Knosalla, Vice Chair Stein, Commissioners Daul, McCaslin, Husbands, Sheets and Thuening (joined at approximately 6:15 p.m.).

Staff in attendance: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter.

3. Discussion

a. Shoreland Ordinance

Discussed Waterbodies to include in the ordinance. All public water lakes will be included. Discussed including Valley Creek and possibly its tributaries, as well as Ivy Falls Creek. Looked at the PWI map and found that the majority of both creeks are included on the map, but shown as a dotted line, which is implied that it is not included as a public water.

KS to follow up with DNR to determine public water status on Ivy Falls Creek and Valley Creek.

Discussed including Marie Creek and Wentworth Creek.

Discussed cross-referencing impervious surface ordinance requirements with requirements in shoreland ordinance.

The Commission discussed comments in draft document. Comments 1-5 were accepted, with the change of 'The City' is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the ordinance.

Comment 6: KS to determine what other structures are already designated 'accessory' in city code. Comment 7: remove 'animal feedlot' as animal feedlots are not an allowable use in the city. Comment 8: Provide or create maps not already included in MRCCA.

Discussed Deck definition. Eliminate 'three-feet above ground' language.

Comment 9: Keep 'Forest land conversion' definition. *When referencing, add language that where conflicts exist between this ordinance and the Urban Forest Preservation Ordinance, the more stringent will take precedence.

Comment 10-12: KS to research. Add cross-reference regarding impervious surface.

Comment 13: KS to reach out to Area Hydrologist.

2.557: Compare Steep Slope definition to MRCCA. Accept suggested strike out of language and accept suggested language proposed in the model ordinance.

3.4: KS to ask Community Development Manager if should be eliminated.

3.10: Do not need to add examples.

Commission planned to table the discussion, continuing at 4.0 at the next work session.

b. Trick-or-Teeing

Discussed promoting Partners in Energy (PiEd) at the Trick-or-Teeing event. Xcel has provided PiE giveaways. The city will provide Home Energy Squad sign-up and giveaway (drawing), costumes? 3:30 arrival time, event runs from 4-6p. Commissioners Daul and Sheets plan on attending.

c. Committee Reports

Goal 1: Discussed under item 3.a.

Goal 2: Trick-or-Teeing discussion under 3.b.

Goal 3: The committee met regarding potential tree planting at the Village. It was decided that planting will be held off until after River to River Greenway project is finished. Discussed Volunteer Tree Planting event at North Kensington. Discussed shrub plantings under trees. KS to follow-up with PW.

Goal 4: Discussed Rogers Lake shoreline enhancement. Climate action planning grant - no updates. Valley Park meeting in December with the County and WMO to continue the discussion on partnerships and on-going and future projects. Discussed re-vegetation after River to River Greenway project is complete. Explore potential funding from MH Community Fund.

Goal 5: Discussed Geothermal Planning Grant. RFP to go out this evening.

d. Work Plan Review

Coordinator Spreiter gave an overview of the 2025 work plan and what has been accomplished. Committees to meet in November to discuss potential items for 2026.

Adjourn 8:20p



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

DRAFT WORK SESSION MINUTES

6:00 PM

Thursday, November 13, 2025

1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights

1. Call to Order

Chair Knosalla called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The Commission introduced themselves to the two new Student Commissioners, Alia Alizadeh and Anabella Bisanz. The student commissioners then introduced themselves.

2. Roll Call

In attendance: Chair Knosalla, Vice Chair Stein, Student Commissioners Bisanz and Alizadeh, Commissioners Husbands, McCaslin, and Thuening. Absent: Commissioners Daul and Sheets.

Staff in attendance: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter.

3. Discussion

a. Trick-or-Teeing Event Recap

The Commission discussed the city's annual Trick-or-Teeing event held October 18th at the Par 3 city golf course. Commissioners Daul and Sheets participated with Coordinator Spreiter to promote Partners in Energy (PiE). Giveaways were provided as well as information on Home Energy Squad, and other PiE programs. Data was also presented on program participation and energy savings in Mendota Heights through June of 2025, provided by PiE. The data was discussed. Commissioner Stein offered that some beneficial electrification

efforts, such as EVs may not be reflected in the data but contribute to the city's Energy Action Plan goals. Suggestion was made for more visuals on the PiE webpage. Request was made for a presentation by PiE or Xcel Staff to explain data. Student Commissioner Alizadeh recommended creating a youtube video to help promote the program.

b. Shoreland Ordinance

Discussed what is required to include in the ordinance. Coordinator Spreiter shared that she met with the city attorney as well as Community Development Manager Madden to discuss the ordinance and requirements. Some requirements include incorporating waterbodies listed as Public Waters and a maximum impervious surface requirement of 25% for residential lots.

Commission discussed including streams and tributaries (non-public waters) by requiring buffers instead of setbacks. Commission agreed to use the same buffer parameters in respect to buffer width as required by the city's wetlands ordinance. Commissioner McCaslin presented some on-line mapping tools to the Commission for reference and discussion.

c. 2026 Annual Work Plan

The Commission reviewed the current goals and initiatives of the 2025 Work Plan. The Commission then discussed items to remove and add under each goal for its 2026 Work Plan.

Additions included:

Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development

Commission agreed to remove 'Review Planning Review Checklists...' and add 'Development of a Landscape Standards Ordinance'

Goal 2: Education and Outreach

Add 'Create a community engagement strategy'. Add 'Create a Natural Resources event and volunteer event calendar'. Suggestion to pin calendar to Instagram. Student Commissioners also volunteered promote through the online school newsletter.

The Commission agreed to remove the initiative 'Create and hold a community engagement event incorporating Partners in Energy' and add 'Increase Social Media Outreach'. The Commission also agreed to invite city council and other commissions to the site tour of a natural resources site.

Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration

The Commission agreed to specify 'Friendly Hills Park' in the initial 'Complete a turf-to-native vegetation conversion project within a city park'. Also under Goal 3,

the initiative 'Host tree planting event' was agreed to be changed to 'Host a restoration event'.

Goal 4: Strategic Planning

Add 'Identify opportunities for collaboration and outreach between other city commissions and government entities as appropriate'. The Commission agreed to change the initiative 'Explore...' to 'Initiate development of a Natural Resources Management Plan for Valley Park.

Goal 5: Sustainability

Add initiative of 'Geothermal planning grant implementation'

d. MPCA Climate Action Planning Grant Update

The MN Pollution Control Agency has opened its last round of grant funding for the Climate Planning Grant Program. Staff intends to apply for the grant program to develop a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan for the city.

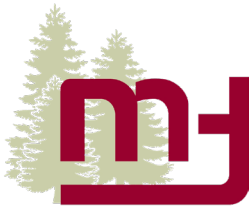
e. *Town Square Talk* Guest Opportunity

The Commission has received an invitation for two commission members to be guests at the Town Square Talk show *Town Square Talk*. The show is in interview format, with some prepared questions and some follow-up. Some suggested topics that the Commission could address are:

- Partners in Energy
- Curb-cut raingardens
- Oak Awards program
- Earth and Arbor Day celebration Urban Forestry Ordinance
- Valley Park restoration and collaboration

The Commission discussed the opportunity and asked for commissioners to volunteer as guests. Commissioners Thuening and Knosalla volunteered to participate. They will meet with Assistant Administrator Torkelson to discuss the opportunity before participating.

Chair Knosalla adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.



**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MENDOTA HEIGHTS CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Draft Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at Mendota Heights City Hall; 1101 Victoria Curve.

1. Call to Order

Chair Knosalla called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter called the roll. Commissioners present: Chair Knosalla, Commissioners Daul, Husbands, McCaslin, Sheets, Stein, and Thuening.

Commissioners Absent: Student Commissioner Trudeau.

Staff present: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter.

3. Adopt Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Commissioner Stein, second by Commissioner McCaslin.

Motion passed 7-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approve meeting minutes from the March 12, 2025, Natural Resources Commission Meeting.**

Chair Knosalla noted Ms. Pilgrim proposed to “strengthen” the landscape ordinance.

- b. Approve meeting minutes from the April 9, 2025, Natural Resources Commission Work Session.**

Commissioner Thuening asked if there is an update on the proposal for a Natural Resources outreach event? Ms. Spreiter stated Staff is working with the City Council on that and there are no updates.

- c. Approve meeting minutes from the May 14, 2025, Natural Resources Commission Work Session.**

Motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented by Commissioner Daul, second by Commissioner Husbands.

Motion passed 7-0.

5. Citizen Comment Period (for items not on the agenda) - NONE.

6. New Business - NONE.

7. Old Business.

a. Approve Preliminary 2026 Natural Resources Budget Recommendations.

Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter reviewed the draft of the 2026 Natural Resources Budget Recommendation, which the Natural Resources Commission is asked to review and approve. At the May 14, 2025, Commission Work Session, the Commission discussed potential recommendations for the 2026 Natural Resources budget. The current 2025 budget was discussed, including Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) priority projects and existing programs.

The Commission agreed to include all current natural resources projects and programs that are part of the 2025 budget in the 2026 budget, adjusting for inflation, materials, and labor cost increases. The Commission also recognized that some priority projects will require additional funding, such as the Valley Park Pollinator Corridor, which necessitates further restoration. In contrast, other projects that were able to be funded through outside sources, including grant awards, will require less than the estimates provided in the Natural Resources Management Plan. Projects that may be substantially completed within the 2026 calendar year, such as the Valley Park Forest Enhancement – South-Central, may move into the management phase mid-year, and so allowances will need to be made in the maintenance line item for these projects as well. Two new projects from the NRMP priority projects scheduled to begin in 2026 are also reflected in the 2026 budget; these are the Copperfield Ponds Isthmus Enhancement and the Friendly Hills Marsh Park Turf-to-Prairie.

Other recommended items for the 2026 budget included a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan and the hiring of a consultant for the development and facilitation of a landscape ordinance. The Commission has received requests from residents to place a priority on developing and recommending the adoption of a landscape ordinance. The Ordinance and Policy Development Committee is currently working on the development of a Shoreland Management Ordinance. The Commission speculated that the development of a landscape ordinance in-house may take longer than desired. It was proposed that the hiring of a consultant may be necessary to complete a landscape ordinance for recommendation within the desired timeframe. The Commission recommends the hiring of a consultant as an additional item in the 2026 budget.

A proposal was made to include the development of a Climate Action Plan. The Commission discussed the proposal and agreed to explore a Climate Action Plan while also including a Resiliency component. Staff and the Strategic Planning Committee have researched the process and have reached out to consultants and cities with similar plans. A Climate Action and Resiliency Plan has also been included in the 2026 budget recommendations. The Met Council will be requiring a Climate Chapter as part of that process. A grant is available and will be applied for.

Commissioner Thuening added that there are two options, and she proposed applying for the grant in the Fall and having a \$5,000 line item for the Climate Action Resiliency Plan in the budget, reducing it from \$20,000.

Motion to revise the budget for the Climate Action Resiliency Plan from \$20,000 to \$5,000 by Commissioner Thuening second by Commissioner Daul.

Commissioner Stein asked if the grant is received can that feed into what is required for the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Spreiter stated that it has been brought up and if a stand-alone plan is completed, that document could be put into that chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Sheets asked what the timing for the Plan completion would be and Ms. Spreiter stated the Met Council releases their requirements in October, and then cities have 3 years to complete their plan.

Commissioner Husbands clarified we would need to have a completed Comprehensive Plan by October 2028, and Ms. Spreiter stated it would be 2029.

Chair Knosalla asked if this comes out in the Fall, are we expected to match the budget line for this year, and does a conversation need to occur with the City Council now? Ms. Spreiter stated she has been told that if there is another round of grant funding, it would be this Fall, but she is not certain. The grant matching funds are not due up front.

Chair Knosalla stated she is hesitant to remove the budget request since we do not know what the PCA will do. Ms. Spreiter stated that the Comprehensive Plan Chapter would be the backup plan.

Commissioner Thuening stated that the significant difference here is the timeline. If we want to keep it at \$20,000, we would be prioritizing it rather than waiting for 2029.

Commissioner McCaslin stated that we are doing the Partners in Energy work, which would feed into the Climate Action Plan. He suggested holding off until it is part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Husbands stated there are other actions that come out of a Plan other than carbon and asked what those would be. Commissioner Thuening stated water, land use, stormwater, waste, transportation, air quality, and heat island effect. Energy is a big part of it, also. Also, how do we address how Climate Change affects our community? Commissioner Husbands asked if there is budget money in place to develop the Comp Plan, and what part of the budget is that in. Ms. Spreiter stated it would be under Community Development.

Commissioner Sheets asked if that would encompass that chapter as well, and all of the areas are particularly important, but not all under our oversight.

Commissioner Stein stated he supports the original proposal to seek the PCA funding with the match item in the budget for \$5,000 and the backup plan is to work it into the Comprehensive Plan.

Motion passed 7-0.

Also provided for Commission consideration were the 5-Year Phasing of Mendota Heights Priority Projects Table and the 2026 Budget.

*Motion to approve the Preliminary 2026 Natural Resources Budget Recommendations as presented by
Commissioner Daul, second by Commissioner Stein.
Motion passed 7-0.*

b. Partners in Energy Update.

Ms. Spreiter reviewed Partners in Energy is a 24-month partnership between Xcel Energy and local communities in which Xcel Energy helps to develop an Energy Action Plan and assists with implementing that

plan. Mendota Heights entered the Partners in Energy program in January 2024. The Mendota Heights Energy Action Plan was developed by the Energy Action Team, which included commissioners, community members, and staff to address the City's unique energy needs, priorities, and community vision. This plan was presented to the City Council and approved at its regular meeting on December 3, 2024. The Plan has three goals for the City: Increasing energy efficiency, decreasing energy costs, and avoiding greenhouse gas emissions. The program is now in the 18-month implementation stage, in which the community is asked to take action within four focus areas to achieve its goals:

- Residential Energy Efficiency.
- Business & Municipal Energy Efficiency.
- Renewable Energy.
- Beneficial Electrification.

The City began the implementation phase of the Energy Action Plan in January 2025. A work plan has been developed, identifying strategies to achieve the goals of the plan. Members of the Sustainability Committee have been involved in several initiatives of the work plan. They attended both the Earth and Arbor Day Celebration, as well as the Touch-a-Truck event, promoting the City's strategy and goal of doubling the number of Home Energy Audits for residents to a total of 50 audits. Staff and committee members also worked with NDC4 to create an Insight 7 issue on the Partners in Energy program in Mendota Heights. The piece is scheduled to air in July 2025 and will be available online at the end of June.

Also provided for Commission consideration is the Mendota Heights Energy Action Plan.

Commissioner Stein stated he understands some Xcel Energy folks were also interviewed for the recording. The filming at his home included the technologies and advantages. He wanted footage that would save money and technologies to be more convenient. He suggested starting with the Home Energy Audit.

Chair Knosalla noted they just had their Home Energy Audit last week. A list of things that can be done to improve was provided to them. It was interesting to see what information can be provided to homeowners.

Commissioner Stein stated they had their audit redone. It is a very simple process. The report prioritizes actions to take.

Commissioner Thuening stated they had theirs done two years ago and noticed considerable savings.

Commissioner Sheets asked where people can sign up for the audits. Ms. Spreiter stated there is a Partners in Energy webpage on the City's website.

Commissioner Daul suggested putting a note in the City newsletter to remind residents.

c. Curb-Cut Raingarden Program Update.

Ms. Spreiter reviewed the City of Mendota Heights Curb-Cut Raingarden Program is offered to residents who are within an active street reconstruction or improvements project. Residents who choose to be a part of the program schedule a site visit with staff to determine if their property is a candidate. Eligible properties must be at a point in the drainage system that allows for adequate stormwater treatment. A location must also be free of obstructions such as tree roots and some underground utilities. Raingarden construction costs and materials are included and offered free of charge as part of the program. A contractor constructs the rain garden during the street improvement project, including excavation, soil remediation, and mulch installation. City Staff, area master gardeners, and water stewards then help design and plan the rain gardens. Finally,

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rain gardens are planted by residents and volunteers after construction is completed. Residents are responsible for maintenance such as weeding and watering. The City addresses any drainage or structural concerns.

The curb-cut rain gardens help to protect our surface waters by capturing stormwater (rainwater and snow-melt runoff) and the pollutants it contains, such as phosphorus, nitrogen, heavy metals, and sediment, before they enter our surface waters. Rain gardens have a significant, positive impact on the water quality of the lakes, streams, and rivers that the neighborhood drains into.

The City has installed over 50 rain gardens throughout the City as part of the program. Ten of those were planted in May 2025 as part of the Emerson/Bridgeview Road Improvements project, and 16 will be installed as part of the Friendly Hills Road Improvements Project in 2025 and 2026. Costs of the program are funded by the City's stormwater budget. Residents are responsible for watering, weeding, and maintenance. The City maintains and ensures the gardens are draining properly. Pictures of Rain Gardens were shown to the Commission.

Also provided for Commission consideration is the City of Mendota Heights Rain Garden Brochure.

Chair Knosalla stated she has had a lot of people stop and ask questions and she suggested signs be posted advertising the program.

Chair Stein asked if the number of requests has exceeded those that could be accommodated. Ms. Spreiter stated the Friendly Hills project has produced several residents interested, and she believes all have been accommodated. Sometimes people need to be turned down because of drainage issues.

Commissioner Sheets commented on the Rain Garden Brochure, and it includes the Dakota County program information.

d. 2025 Work Plan Updates.

Ms. Spreiter reviewed the Commission is requested to it approve the updated 2025 Work Plan. The Commission utilizes its work plan to help achieve goals established annually by creating initiatives for each goal. Committees are organized by goal to complete these initiatives.

The Commission's 2025 Work Plan includes multiple initiatives that create an opportunity for Committees for each goal to work together to accomplish these initiatives, including:

- Create and hold a community engagement event (Goal 2: Education and Outreach).
- Host residential energy-saving education event (Goal 5: Sustainability).
- Host tree planting event (Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration).
- Explore deconstruction policy for city-owned buildings and facilities (Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development; Goal 5: Sustainability).
- Collaborating with the Sustainability Committee to implement the Partners in Energy Action Plan (Goal 2: Education and Outreach).

There has been some discussion among individual committees on ways that they may be able to collaborate with other committees. The Commission discussed these collaboration opportunities and determined where committees can work jointly to accomplish their initiatives under the work plan at its April 2025 Work Session. It was also discussed to remove the initiative of "Exploring a Deconstruction Ordinance" and add this to a future work plan. The Natural Resources Commission's 2025 Work Plan has been updated to reflect this

discussion.

The updated 2025 Work Plan was provided for Commission review.

*Motion to approve the 2025 Work Plan as presented by Commissioner Sheets, second by Commissioner Thuening.
Motion passed 7-0.*

8. Staff Announcements.

Ms. Spreiter reminded the Commission that City offices will be closed on June 19, 2025. Parks programming has started up and can be found on the City calendar.

The Valley Creek Stabilization Project has been substantially completed. All stabilization measures are completed. There were the two best management projects installed (infiltration basins). Plantings will be done in the Fall.

9. Commission Comments.

Commissioner Husbands asked when the Plan is planned for the plantings in the Valley Creek Stabilization Project. Ms. Spreiter stated that it most likely happens in late summer. Some trees will be replaced. Prairie plants are best for stabilization. Native prairies or savannahs will be best for that area.

Commissioner Sheets asked when the bridges will be reinstalled. Ms. Spreiter stated that we will know more after the pre-construction meeting happens at the beginning of July. Updates can be found on the City's projects page on the City website or the County website.

There is a link on the Parks page for the Valley Creek Project.

10. Committee Reports.

Ordinance and Policy Development – Commissioner Stein stated they are working on the Shoreland Ordinance primarily. He has reviewed the DNR Ordinance in detail, which is very comprehensive. He feels the Committee can adopt what the DNR has put forward. Need to research which water bodies within the City this will be applied to. The DNR ordinance meets all the State requirements. Ms. Spreiter stated that if the City does not adopt its ordinance, it defaults to the State rules (DNR ordinance).

Education and Outreach – Commissioner Daul stated they have not met recently.

Urban Forestry and Restoration – Commissioner Husbands stated they had a meeting and discussed the Friendly Marsh Rehabilitation Turf to Prairie for the 2026 budget and a Wentworth planting to illustrate native plantings. They discussed changing the name of the Canopy Program to Full Service Tree Planting. They discussed a Tree Planting Event between Mendota Village and Hwy 62 on city-owned land.

Strategic Planning – Commissioner Thuening stated they have been discussing the Climate Plan and Site Specific Management Plan for Valley Park and understanding who the stakeholders are. Next steps are to hold a meeting of the stakeholders to review how to move forward. The Committee wants to have a comprehensive vision. Yesterday, they had a site visit at Seidl's Lake in Inver Grove Heights to view the restoration project. Commissioner Husbands stated she attended the site visit, and it was great to see so many people interested in rehabbing that area.

Sustainability – Chair Knosalla stated they have not met recently. Their focus is Home Energy Audits and Partners in Energy.

11. Adjourn.

The next meeting for the Natural Resources Commission will be Wednesday, May 14 (Work Session) at 6:00 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Sheets.

Motion passed 7-0.

Chair Knosalla adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Agenda Item: Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) 2025 Annual Report

Item Type: Presentation

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

The Commission is asked to hear a presentation on the city's 2025 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Annual Report.

Background:

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program is a federally mandated program established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to implement and maintain pollution prevention practices for stormwater discharges by permittees. Stormwater discharges associated with MS4s are regulated by the NPDES permitting program. The MPCA issued a new General MS4 permit in 2020, and the City's application was accepted and coverage was issued under the 2020 MS4 permit by the MPCA on October 8, 2021.

Mendota Heights is required to develop a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) that incorporates Best Management Practices (BMPs) that reduce pollutant discharges. The City's SWPPP was developed in 2003, and updated in 2013, and again in 2023 with the new requirements set forth in the 2020 MS4 General Permit. In 2006, the City adopted the Local Surface Water Management Plan (LSWMP) that outlined how the requirements of our SWPPP are to be met and established requirements for land disturbing activities. The plan was then updated in 2018 and adopted by the City Council.

There are six required components in each SWPPP, termed Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) under the NPDES program:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Runoff and Control
5. Post-Construction Runoff Control

6. Pollution Prevention and Municipal 'Good Housekeeping'

Each year the City performs several tasks and implements multiple initiatives to accomplish and fulfill the requirements of each MCM. The presentation given highlights these accomplishments throughout 2025. The public is encouraged to comment on the City's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program at any time. The full report can be found on the City's website or requested in-person at City Hall.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None.

Attachments:

None



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Agenda Item: 2026 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Dates and Format

Item Type: Action Item

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

The Commission is asked to approve the proposed 2026 Natural Resources Commission dates and meeting format.

Background:

The 2026 Natural Resources Commission meeting dates have been scheduled. The Commission will meet at 6 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise noted. The Commission will continue to hold regular meetings as well as Work Sessions held between some regular meetings, unless the Commission decides otherwise. The proposed meeting schedule and proposed format is as follows:

WORK SESSION: Wednesday, January 14th

REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, February 11th (Election of officers)

WORK SESSION: Wednesday, March 11th

WORK SESSION: Wednesday, April 8th

REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, May 13th

REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, June 10th (Approve budget recommendations)

WORK SESSION: Wednesday, July 8th

REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, August 13th (Moved for Primary Election Day)

WORK SESSION: Wednesday, September 9th

WORK SESSION: Wednesday, October 14th

REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, November 12th (Moved for Veterans Day)

REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, December 9th (Approve 2027 Work Plan)

The Commission is asked to review the current meeting schedule and proposed format. Action should be taken to approve the format as proposed, or recommend alternatives for approval.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None.

Attachments:

None



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Agenda Item: 2025 Oak Awards

Item Type: Presentation

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

None. Information Only.

Background:

The Oak Awards program was created in 2023 by the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission to celebrate leadership, education/outreach, and project efforts that advance natural resources within the City.

The Oak Awards program is now accepting applications for the following 2025 awards:

- **Acorn award** – recognizes exemplary youth leadership in the advancement of our city's natural resources. For example, a youth-led native planting project or education event. Eligible youth include individuals or groups 18 years of age and younger, or a current student in 12th grade or under.
- **Leaf award** – recognizes significant contributions of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated substantial leadership for the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For example, a community native planting effort or coordination of a neighborhood-wide Adopt-a-Drain effort.
- **Canopy award** – recognizes lifetime achievement of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership for the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For example, an individual who has initiated several or successive natural resource stewardship efforts or an organization that leads by example and has worked overtime to cultivate natural resource stewardship in the community.

Any individual, family, company, or organization that has contributed to the advancement of natural resources within Mendota Heights is eligible. Nominees need not reside within Mendota Heights. Self-nominations or nominations of others are both accepted. Nominees are evaluated based on the quality of the nomination, demonstration of impact and inclusion

of collaboration or community-building efforts.

For-profit individuals and companies hired by the city are in most cases ineligible. City Staff and City officials are generally not eligible if the applicable work is related to the regular duties of their position.

Nominations are accepted until January 31st, 2026. Nominations can be submitted electronically, by mail, or by dropping the nomination off at City Hall.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None.

Attachments:

1. 2025 Nomination Form_MH Oak Award Program

Mendota Heights Oak Awards Nomination Form

Applications will be accepted through **January 31st, 2026**. Applications may be submitted in-person or via mail to City Hall:

City of Mendota Heights
Attn: Natural Resources Coordinator
1101 Victoria Curve
Mendota Heights, MN 55118

Applications may also be submitted electronically to: KSpreiter@Mendotaheightsmn.gov

Nominee	
Nominator	
Award Category (Acorn, Leaf, or Canopy)	

1. Please describe the nominee’s leadership, education/outreach, or project effort that is contributing to the advancement of natural resources in Mendota Heights (e.g., what, why, when, where, how, who).
2. How has the nominee’s leadership, education/outreach, or project efforts led to demonstrable or ongoing advancement of the City’s natural resources?
3. How has the nominee collaborated with other community members or partners in their effort to advance natural resources in Mendota Heights?
4. Please attach any supportive materials, including but not limited to project photos or drawings, education/outreach materials, or other collateral.

**Natural Resources Commission**

Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Agenda Item: 2026 Work Plan

Item Type: Action Item

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural
Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

The Natural Resources Commission is asked to approve the draft of the 2026 Work Plan.

Background:

The Commission uses an annual work plan to accomplish its goals, as well as aid in accountability, resource allocation and proceed through commission priorities. A work plan may consist of goals, priorities, tasks, programs, or projects that the Commission would like to implement. Resources, monetary cost, timeline, and benefits of each identified item should be considered.

The Commission reviewed its 2025 Work Plan at the November 13th Work Session. The Commission discussed goals and initiatives to include in its 2026 Work Plan, resulting in the current draft of the Work Plan. The Commission is asked to review and approve the attached draft of the 2026 Work Plan.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None at this time.

Attachments:

1. 2026 Work Plan

Natural Resources Commission Work Plan 2026		Timeline			
Goal	Initiative	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development	Complete draft of Shoreland Ordinance for recommendation of approval by City Council	X	X		
Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development	Develop a Landscape Standards Ordinance for recommendation of approval by City Council	X	X	X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Create a community engagement strategy	X	X		
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Increase social media outreach	X	X	X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Develop educational topics and event schedule for Earth and Arbor Day Celebration	X	X		
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Host site tour of natural resources site - Invite members of City Council and other Commissions			X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Create a Natural Resources and volunteer event calendar	X	X		
Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration	Complete a turf-to-native vegetation conversion project within Friendly Hills Park			X	X
Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration	Host a native restoration event			X	X
Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration	Support implementation of EAB Bonding Grant		X	X	
Goal 4: Strategic Planning	Identify and explore funding sources for Natural Resources	X	X	X	X
Goal 4: Strategic Planning	Explore development of a Natural Resources Management Plan for Valley Park	X	X	X	X
Goal 5: Sustainability	Implement Partners in Energy (PiE) Action Plan	X	X	X	X
Goal 5: Sustainability	Support implementation of sustainability and PiE business outreach efforts	X	X	X	X
Goal 5: Sustainability	Support implementation of the Public Works Facility Geothermal Planning Grant	X	X	X	X

**Natural Resources Commission**

Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Agenda Item: 2025 Natural Resources Year in Review

Item Type: Presentation

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural
Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

The Commission is asked to hear a presentation on Natural Resources accomplishments in 2025.

Background:

Staff will give a presentation and summarize Natural Resources accomplishments, programs, and projects in 2025. Some highlights given in the presentation include:

- Stormwater Management
- The Wetland Health Evaluation Program
- The Citizen-Assisted Monitoring Program
- Emerson Road Improvements Curb-Cut Raingardens
- Tree Canopy Program
- Mendota Heights Annual Tree Sale
- Partners in Energy
- Friendly Hills Children's Pollinator Garden

The Commission is welcome to provide feedback and discussion following the presentation.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None.

Attachments:

None

**Natural Resources Commission**

Meeting Date: December 10, 2025

Agenda Item: 2025 Reflections

Item Type: Presentation

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural
Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

If Commissioners so wish, each should provide comments and reflections on resources-related content in 2025.

Background:

Commissioners are encouraged, if each individual wishes, to provide reflections on natural resources in Mendota Heights throughout 2025. These could be personal reflections, accomplishments of the Commission, or other topics related to natural resources in Mendota Heights.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None.

Attachments:

None