



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Municipal Center Council Chambers
1616 Humboldt Ave, West St. Paul, MN 55118

Date
Time

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call

2.A. Welcome And Introduction To New And Reappointed Members

3. Community Comments

4. New Business

4.A. Approval Of January Meeting Minutes

Documents:

[ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES JAN 2026.PDF](#)

4.B. Election Of Chair And Co-Chair

Documents:

[MEMO ELECTION OF OFFICERS- 03.04.26.PDF](#)
[21-024 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE BYLAWS \(ADOPTED 02.22.21\).PDF](#)

4.C. Review Salting Best Practices

Documents:

[MEMO WINTER SALTING- 03.04.26.PDF](#)

4.D. Sustainable Foraging

Documents:

[MEMO FORAGING- 03.04.26.PDF](#)

4.E. 2026 Community Engagement 03-04-2026

Documents:

[MEMO 2026 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION.PDF](#)

5. Old Business

6. Updates

6.A. Staff

6.B. Subcommittee

6.C. City Council

6.D. Park & Recreation Committee

6.E. Planning Commission

6.F. Other

7. Adjourn

*If you need an accommodation to participate in the meeting, please contact the ADA Coordinator at
651-552-4108 or email ADA@wspmn.gov at least 5 business days prior to the meeting
www.wspmn.gov EOE/AA*

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee
Meeting Minutes
6:00 pm, January 7, 2026
West St. Paul Municipal Center- City Council Chambers**

1. Call to Order

- 2. Roll Call:** Committee members in attendance: Chair Joshua Przybylski, Kelly Gibson, Ashley Khondakar, Julie Lyford, Stephanie Moline, Liz Pearson, Emily Vergin
Non-voting members in attendance: Robyn Gulley, Jess Hall, Melissa Houtsma, Courtney Selstad, Eric Weiss

3. Citizen Comments: NA

4. New Business

- a. Approve October 1, 2025 Minutes-** The minutes from the October 1, 2025 meeting were approved.
- b. Code Language Review- Landscaping Requirements –**
Houtsma made a presentation regarding updating city code regarding landscaping requirements for new site applications. The items for review included the list of allowable plantings, inconsistent language regarding plant replacement and property landscaping requirements, tree size minimums in different zoning districts, and language on preservation of existing trees. Houtsma asked the committee members to rank priority/focus areas for the landscaping city code ordinance changes with a 1-5 rating scale. Houtsma related that the city Comprehensive Plan will soon be reviewed. The review will be a 2–3-year process. The Comprehensive Plan will also examine all planning code. The [new] landscaping codes could be rolled into the Comprehensive Plan review.
- c. Site Plan Review- 424 Butler Avenue**
Houtsma gave a background on the 424 Butler Avenue East site plan. A general overview of the project included building three townhome buildings for a total of 13 units. The site plan details removing 116 trees; the replacement requirement at 30 percent would be 144 trees, (at 2.5 caliper inches). The proposed replacement falls shy at 61 trees After the presentation, the committee recommended asking for pedestrian park access to Thompson County Park, larger size (caliper) tree replacement, and some other shrub species that are pollinator-friendly and beneficial to birds, mixed in with the service berry.

5. Old Business: NA

6. Updates

a. Staff Updates

i. Courtney Selstad, Recycling Program

- 1.** The five cities of West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Lilydale and Sunfish Lake diverted over thirty tons of material from the landfill. There were twelve West St. Paul reuse and recycling events and seven education events. Highlights include the seventy percent increase in mattress collection and the first building materials collection in the

south metro. There was also a pilot program for hazardous waste pickup for apartment buildings for residents that have limited access to transportation. A postcard will be sent to residents regarding recycling events including shred events and the art and crafts supply swap. The city is also on track to achieve Step 4 in the GreenStep program.

ii. **Jess Hall**

1. **Met Council Tree Grant-** The city has started to perform tree removal this winter. The city has sent out an RFP to take down 15 street trees; the rest of the removals will be park trees. Replanting will happen in spring.
2. **Tree inventory-** The street inventory was completed by the Climate Impact Coordinator last fall. Hall has completed the park tree inventory with the exception of Marthaler and Garlough Parks. Most public trees have been inventoried.
3. **Grant applications-** The city is applying for a DNR ReLeaf Grant and a MPCA planning grant for a climate action plan.
4. **Commissions and Committee Vacancies-** There are vacancies on the committee, and it is now time to reapply to the committee if terms are ending. Applications are on the website.
5. **Smart Salting-** Hall encouraged committee members to attend the January 28 MPCA virtual training for smart salting.
6. **Winter Salt Week, January 26-30-** The week is a cross-state, cross-organizational effort to promote best salt practices. West St. Paul does outreach during the week to its residents. It is an education requirement of the MS4 permit.

- b. **Subcommittee-** Vergin reported that the subcommittee has not met since the last committee meeting.
- c. **Park & Recreation Committee-** Vergin reported that December meeting was an untelevised worksession. It was centered on a discussion regarding the Park System Plan implementation and related topics.
- d. **Planning Commission-** NA
- e. **City Council-** Gulley reported that Council is focused on new developments including 424 Butler Avenue and 150 Thompson Avenue.

7. **Other -NA**

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield**

Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Prepared By: Jess Hall, Natural Resource, Sustainability, & Environment Specialist

Subject: 2026 Chair and Co Chair Election

Background

Per the Environmental Committee Bylaws (attached); the committee will vote for the chair and co-chair positions annually each year.

Please review the bylaws and be prepared to vote for chair and co chair.

Requests

Members may nominate themselves or another committee member for either position. If more than one nomination is received for a position, the committee may choose to vote via ballot.

Attachments:

EC Bylaws

- **WEST ST. PAUL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
BYLAWS**

I PURPOSE

The purpose and responsibility of the Environmental Committee is to review all matters referred to it by the City Council on issues related to landscaping, greening, sustainability, and natural resources.

II MEMBERS

The Committee shall consist of eight (8) members who are West St. Paul residents. Ex-officio non-voting members include one City Council member and one City Staff member. The City Council member shall be available to address any questions raised by the Committee regarding items on the agenda.

III APPOINTMENTS, TERMS, VACANCIES

- A. Appointments. All appointments shall be made by the City Council.
- B. Terms. Members of the Committee are appointed for a term of three (3) years. Members shall hold office until March 1 of their expiring terms or until their successor is appointed.
- C. Vacancies. A vacancy may occur by death, resignation, disability or removal. A member with three (3) or more absences in a year shall be subject to removal by the City Council. Any member may be removed by the City Council with or without cause.

IV OFFICERS

The Committee will elect a chair and vice-chair from among its members for a term of one year. The chair, or in the absence of the chair, the vice-chair, presides at meetings so as to keep them moving as rapidly and efficiently as possible and shall remind members and guests to only address the subject matter on the published agenda.

V DUTIES

The duties and functions of the Committee shall be:

- A. To perform fact-finding tasks as requested by the City Council regarding environmental issues.
- B. To act in an advisory capacity to the City Council and the Planning Commission in matters assigned to the Committee.
- C. As requested by the City Council, to study and recommend policies to the City Council on improving the quality of the environment.

- D. Other duties as assigned by the City Council.

VI STAFF

The City Manager shall appoint the appropriate City Staff members to review, approve and prepare all agendas, to make recommendations to the members, to advise them on all matters on their agenda, and to prepare all reports. The City Staff members shall keep the City Manager apprised of all matters concerning the Committee. The City Manager shall appoint a recording secretary to take minutes of the meetings or shall arrange for such minutes to be taken.

VII MEETINGS

- A. Regular Meetings. The Committee shall prepare a regular meeting calendar and place of meetings, which shall be approved by the City Council on an annual basis.
- B. Special Meetings. When deemed necessary by the City Manager, a special meeting may be called by the chair or any three (3) members of the Committee. Notice of any Special meeting must be posted at least three (3) days in advance and Committee members shall be provided at least three (3) days' notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting.
- C. Notice. All meetings of the Committee are open to the public and shall comply with the Open Meeting Law for posting and publishing all meetings. No business shall be considered at a special meeting unless specified in the notice. Notice of all meetings shall be sent to the City Council.
- D. Minutes of Meetings. The Committee shall keep minutes of its meetings. Copies of all minutes, motions and resolutions shall be available to the public upon request, unless such information is nonpublic data pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

VIII RULES OF PROCEDURE

- A. Roberts Rules of Order. The most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the Committee so long as they are not inconsistent with these bylaws or any special rules of the Council.
- B. Amendment. These Bylaws may be amended by the City Council.
- C. Temporary Suspension of the Bylaws. In special circumstances, the Committee may suspend a specific rule of the Bylaws by 2/3 vote.

IX COMMITTEE EXPECTATIONS

Each member shall agree to and sign the West St. Paul Committee Members' Expectations.

Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Prepared By: Jess Hall, Natural Resource, Sustainability, & Environment Specialist

Subject: Review of Smart Salting Best Practices and Discussion

Background

Salt prematurely ages vehicles, roads, and bridges and degrades our freshwater lakes, streams, and drinking water. It is necessary, however, to maintain safe and open roads during snow and ice events. Just a teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of water.

West St. Paul is working this winter to implement the following smart salting practices: staff training, calibrating equipment, and incorporating the use of salt brine to avoid the overapplication of salt. Staff provide resident education in accordance with our MS4 permit requirements.

This being said, there is room for improvement. Staff are seeking the input of the environmental committee to guide the future of the Smart Salting program in West St. Paul.

Requests

Environmental Committee should:

- Discuss current practices and suggest ways to improve, with special consideration for resident outreach

Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Prepared By: Jess Hall, Natural Resource, Sustainability, & Environment Specialist

Subject: Discussion of Foraging on City Property

Background

Foraging, defined as the taking, harvesting, or collecting of berries, nuts, mushrooms, and wild plants, has a long history in Minnesota. For this discussion, maple tree tapping will be included when discussing foraging.

Foraging served as a source for food and medicine for Minnesota's indigenous inhabitants. As successive waves of settlers and immigrants moved to Minnesota, each brought their own foraging traditions. Most recently, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in foraging among Minnesotans. Foraging is deeply rooted in the many cultures that make up Minnesota, both historically and today, yet it does not have the same recognition in the state constitution as similar practices like hunting and fishing do. For many, foraging goes beyond an activity and becomes an experience or even a facet of life.

West St. Paul does not currently have any guidelines, policies, etc. in place regarding sustainable foraging on city lands. This was brought to our attention when approached by a resident interested in tapping trees for maple syrup. In the past, staff have considered requests on a case-by-case basis but are hoping to set clear guidelines and procedures moving forward.

There is currently a sustainable foraging task force at the state level that is writing guidance for state managed lands such as state forests and parks. It is time to consider how we can adapt these policies for local public lands.

Requests

Environmental Committee should:

- Review the MN Sustainable Foraging Task Force prior meeting agendas, notes, and resources here: <https://www.lcc.mn.gov/foraging/meetings.html>
- Consider sustainable foraging best practices and rank importance in developing guidelines
- Discuss any concerns with allowing foraging on city property.
- Brainstorm educational materials and consider aiding in development of these materials for residents.

Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Prepared By: Jess Hall, Natural Resource, Sustainability, & Environment Specialist

Subject: Discussion and Planning for 2026 Community Engagement

Background

Each year the Environmental Committee (EC) engages with residents in a number of different ways, including in-person events, website information and through the City Newsletter. This communication and engagement takes lots of planning, particularly the in-person events. It is important to begin discussion and planning for each of the events taking place in 2026.

Requests

Discussion

Sustainability Spring Fling!- This is a new event put on by the city. On Saturday, April 25, from 9am - 12pm at Harmon Park, join us for a citywide litter clean up lead by Council Member Armon; presentations from experts on native plantings, recycling, and more; tree planting (weather permitting); and games and crafts for kids. Staff hopes that some or all of our Environmental Committee could

Explore WSP Days – This event takes place June 4-7, 2026. In past years the EC has been a part of the parade and WestFest event on Saturday morning and early afternoon. This has been another way for the committee to share information with residents regarding trees, the environment and other sustainability issues in the City.

WSP Pride – The EC has been a part of this event the past few years share information regarding trees, the environment and other sustainability issues in the City, with the residents of WSP. The 2026 event will be held in July.

Regular Volunteer Events- It is a goal of staff to start up regular natural resource related volunteer and educational activities. Staff would love ideas that the committee may have and also help planning and running the events once they get off the ground.