

**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**