

BEMIDJI SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, November 13, 2025

City Hall – 317 4th Street NW
3:30 PM



1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- a) September 11, 2025
- b) October 9, 2025

4) PUBLIC COMMENT

Please state your name and address; please use appropriate language and no derogatory comments towards any individuals; please keep your comments limited to 3 minutes or less; and the chair may limit speakers and times accordingly.

5) OLD BUSINESS

- c) Recap of Annual Report (City Council November 3, 2025)
- d) Member Retention and Recruitment
 - a. Election of Officers — January 8, 2026 - Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary
 - b. Positions Expiring December 31, 2025

i

- Charles Biberg
- Lisa Weiskopf
- Anna Carlson
- Jordan Lutz

- c. Recruitment of Open Position (Non-City Resident) Term Expires 12/31/2027

- e) Comprehensive Planning Updates (Anna)

6) NEW BUSINESS

- f) Reports
- g) Upcoming Events

7) ADJOURN

Call Meeting to Order

Lutz, Jordan called meeting to order at 3:34pm.

Commissioners present: Lisa W., Anna C., Charles B., Linda K. (via Webex)

City Staff / Council Members present: Jamin C., Melissa F., Audrey T.

Community Members present: CT Marhula

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Anna C., Second: Charles B.

Lisa W. motions to move F) Council Member Updates to after Public Comment period

Unanimously passed

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A.) August 14, 2025 meeting minutes (attached)

Motion: Charles B., Second: Lisa W

Unanimously passed

Citizen Comment

CT Marhula (4524 Brooks Point Drive, North Dakota) spoke to four (4) topics:

- 1.) Surface water use management and desire to see SWUM legislation passed to protect the natural environment in and around Lake Bemidji*
- 2.) Seeking to reduce plastic bag consumption and subsequent waste*
- 3.) Managing waste as efficiently as possible (currently, several haulers collect and bring materials to the Transfer Station, overseen by the County)*
- 4.) Involving community in the effort to replant our urban tree canopy*

G.) Council Member Updates – Council member Thayer yielded floor to Jamin Carlson of the Planning Department:

Jamin C. shared of services offered by McKinstry, which include guidance on initiatives that yield progress within the GreenStep Cities program.

[Explored McKinstry’s website, with a retelling in broad strokes of Jamin’s conversation with McKinstry representatives.]

Jamin C. shared of the City Manager’s (Rich S.) encouragement for the Sust. Commission to be the primary point of contact with McKinstry.

Discussion revolved around who holds decision-making authority for partnering with McKinstry and, if not held by the Sust. Commission, why the Commission is asked to serve as primary point of contact. Jamin’s recommendation is for the Commission to serve as an initial filter, working with McKinstry to identify the top three (3) to five (5) projects, then present these to City Council.

Jordan L. agreed to discuss the topic with Rich, convey the Commission’s concerns about not having decision authority, and solicit any “hard no’s” or guardrails prior to scheduling an ad hoc meeting with McKinstry OR have McKinstry present during the October Commission meeting.

Old Business

B.) Proposed Bylaws Amendment—VII. Voting

In B., insertion of “or their designee” after “The City Manager...”

~~_____ (B. The City Manager or their designee and 1 (one) Bemidji City Council...)~~

C.) Recap August 15th Tree Inventory App Training (Charles, Jordan, A. Thayer)

Charles B. shared of the opportunity to meet with Dr. Sam Jones (BSU) and Scott Schroeder (Parks Dept.) and learn to use the tree inventory app. Dr. Jones is actively engaging her students in the process of inventorying trees and stumps around campus and neighboring areas.

D.) Recap September 8th Planning Board Meeting (Linda)

Linda K.

E.) Comprehensive Planning

i. Upcoming engagement opportunities (Anna)

Anna C. shared of the upcoming Latin Block Party at BSU's AIRC (Wed. Sept. 17th) and discussed weekly stakeholder sessions to begin in November: Housing (11/4), Transportation (11/11), Energy (11/18), and Education & Economic Opportunity (11/25).

ii. Other...

F.) Recap Past Citizen Comment Topics

i. Water Surface Use Management

Decided to table this conversation amid the ongoing discussion around possible annexation of lakeshore properties plays out.

New Business

H.) Upcoming Events

- i. Thursday, Oct 2nd (4:00-6:00pm) EV Car Show
 - Where: Beltrami Electric Cooperative
 - What: Consider hosting a table and/or helping spread the word
 - Who: *Linda K. and Jordan L. agreed to represent the Commission*
- ii. Thursday, Oct. 14th Planning Board Meeting (Linda)
 - Where: Bemidji City Hall
 - What: Discussion about MN Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP)
- iii. Saturday, Sept. 27th MN Forest Resource (free tree distribution)
 - Where: Sanford Center
 - What: free saplings distributed to residents (10 per household)

Charles B. agreed to work with Michelle to schedule annual report presentation to Council for November or December

Adjourn

Motion: Charles B., Second: Lisa W.

Unanimous decision at 5:01pm

City of Bemidji Sustainability Commission

October 9, 2025 starting at 3:30PM at the Bemidji Public Library

Commissioners Present: Jordan, Charles, Anna, Lisa, Linda (remotely) , Josafina

Commissioners Absent: Ken

City Liaisons: Audrey Thayer, Melissa Fahrenbrush,

Guests: Adam Seidel and John Neville, both from McKinstry.

Meeting was called to order by Jordan at 3:37 in the library, with Linda, and guests joining via Webex.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA - M/S by Charles/Lisa to approve as presented, motions carried

APPROVAL OF MINUTES September 11, 2025 - M/S by xxx/Linda to approve. M/S by Jordan/Anna to table to combine two versions, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

OLD BUSINESS

McKinstry Presentation: Adam Seidel and John Neville shared a slide deck with an overview of McKinstry's services and examples of projects in Minnesota. Some key messages include:

- McKinstry offers energy services starting with a no-risk, no obligation assessment.
- Typically, they can find between 10 and 30% efficiency improvements in buildings
- These services align with 2 of the 5 goals the Sustainability Commission presented to City Council in August.
- Projects for efficiency and clean energy production are guaranteed to pay for themselves and to cash flow each year.
- McKinstry handles financing and contracting services, reducing the burden on city staff.

Annual Report Prep (Mon. November 3rd @ 6pm) All members are encouraged to attend.

Jordan, Charles and Linda will work on slides and presentation.

Comprehensive Planning a. Upcoming engagement opportunities (Anna)

- Series of meetings that were planned to start in November are postponed and a new schedule will be available at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Member Retention and Recruitment

a. Election of Officers will take place at the February meeting for – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary

b. Commission positions expiring Jan. 1, 2026: - commission members talked through how to apply to be re-appointed to the commission.

Reports

a. MNDNR ReLeaf Grant (Parks and Planning) — (Melissa)

Scott Schroeder and Melissa are working on a ReLeaf Grant from MNDNR. It includes stump removal, planting trees, developing a forest plan, and aligning city code - Section 14 and part of 28. Sustainability Commission, Planning Commission and Park Board will review.

ADJOURN