

BEMIDJI SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, January 8, 2026

City Hall – 317 4th Street NW
3:30 PM



1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- a) November 13, 2025
- b) December 11, 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.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

6) OLD BUSINESS

- c) Member Retention and Recruitment
 - a. Commissioners Appointed and Expiration Dates

i Renewed

- Charles Biberg 12/31/2028
- Lisa Weiskopf 12/31/2028
- Jordan Lutz, BSU Rep 12/31/2026

Continuing

- Linda Kingery 12/31/2026
- Josefine Li 12/31/2027

Vacant

- Non-City Resident 12/31/2027
- Non-City Resident 12/31/2028

- d) Comprehensive Plan
 - a. Upcoming Engagement Opportunities
 - b. Other

7) NEW BUSINESS

- e) Goal Setting for 2026
 - a. Review of Past Goals & Best Practice Accomplishments
 - i
 - Native Landscaping
 - Waste & Recycling
 - Energy Efficiency
 - ii New Goals
 - f) Reports
 - g) Upcoming Events or Grant Opportunities

8) ADJOURN

City of Bemidji Sustainability Commission

November 13, 2025 starting at 3:30PM at the Bemidji City Hall

Commissioners Present: Jordan, Charles, Lisa, Linda, Josafina

Commissioners Absent: Anna and one open seat

City Liaisons: Audrey Thayer, Melissa Fahrenbruch

Guests: Elise Monson, Kathryn Burke

Meeting was called to order by Jordan at 3:30 at the City Hall

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 11, 2025 - M/S by Lisa/Charles, carried.

October 9, 2025 - M/S by Lisa/Linda, carried

PUBLIC COMMENT - Discussion with a couple of community members. People can request to be added to the mailing list to receive the agenda by contacting Melissa.

OLD BUSINESS

c) Recap of Annual Report (City Council November 3, 2025)

Linda, Charles and Jordan attended the presentation to the Council. The Council made remarks of appreciation. The report included updates on the work of the Commission, referencing Work Plan priorities. At the work session, we focused on five Green Step Actions as priorities. This time we advocated for working with McKinstry on the no-cost, no-obligation initial assessment. Adam and John from McKinstry were on the Zoom call and answered some questions. Charles and Jordan reiterated the need for a dedicated position or portion of an FTE to work with the Commission. Council expressed concern about the budget choices they are facing. Council expressed support and interest for the work of the commission. The McKinstry situation is clouded by an earlier commitment through a GESP contract through 2030. We do not have access to the contract. Rich will bring MOU to council on 17th. Jordan noted that he has stressed that the SC does not have the capacity to lead or advise, and would lean on city staff.

d) Member Retention and Recruitment

a. Election of Officers — January 8, 2026 - Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary

The Commission elects its officers. Linda is willing to serve as Sec for another term.

Jordan plans to be on a sabbatical during most of the academic year. He will be here through August 2026. BSU will appoint a person to fill Jordan's seat while he is away.

Discussion held that developing capacity for commissioners and developing leadership succession will be an important part of planning in the coming year. Also a reminder that all council members should receive reminder email about meeting with City Council and other events.

b. Positions Expiring December 31, 2025

- Charles Biberg
- Lisa Weiskopf
- Anna Carlson
- Jordan Lutz (serves annual term)

Michelle will send an email to all existing members asking if you wish to renew. Just a simple response to the email is all that is needed.

There is one open seat, term expires 12/27. New applicants need to submit an application.

City Council will approve appointments Dec 15, 2025 or Jan 5, 2026.

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

Commissioners brainstormed a few potential members they can contact in the coming month or so.

e) Comprehensive Planning Updates - Anna was not present

NEW BUSINESS

f) Reports -

Melissa - planning cases

Kodiak builders

Tamarac Woods Apartments - comment on energy efficiency, suggest including solar (SC should develop boiler plate language for energy efficiency, solar, ev charging, etc)

First City Cannabis

Very short timeline, due by 2pm tomorrow.

Melissa - Grants:

City of Bemidji is applying for "Solar on Public Buildings" grant.

Still also working on the grant for electrifying the city fleet in partnership with Great Plains Institute.

Waiting to hear results of Re-Leaf Grant from DNR

g) Upcoming Events

7) ADJOURN at 4:58kpm m/s by Lisa/Jo, carries.

City of Bemidji Sustainability Commission,

December 11, 2025 starting at 3:30PM at the Bemidji City Hall

Commissioners Present: Jordan, Charles, Anna, Lisa, Linda, Josafina

Commissioners Absent: (one open seat)

City Liaisons: Mark Dickinson, Melissa Fahrenbruch,

Guests: Kathryn Burke, Sami Holm, both from HRDC

The meeting was called to order by Jordan at 3:34 at City Hall .

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

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES a) November 13, 2025 (Postponed)

PUBLIC COMMENT: During the Public Comment time, Linda Kingery reported on CCL Lobby Days in November. She noted that the House Natural Resources Committee, including Representative Stauber, had passed the SPEED bill, a component of permitting reform, with strong bipartisan support.

OLD BUSINESS

a) Member Retention and Recruitment:

- Jordan Lutz represents BSU Environmental Advisory Committee and is reappointed by BSU for another year.
- There are three commission members whose terms end in December 2025. Charles Biberg and Lisa Weiskopf will renew for another 3-year term. After serving for about 15 years on the sustainability committee and commission, Anna Carlson is not renewing but will be a partner to the commission in the future.
- There are two open seats to be filled, one is a partial term with 2 years remaining, the other is a 3-year term. Both seats can be filled by a person inside or outside of city limits. Jordan and Linda noted having conversations with three recruits.

b) . Election of Officers will take place on January 8, 2026.

- Officers start terms on February 12, 2026.
- Three offices are up for election: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary.
- During 2026, it will be a commission priority to build capacity for leadership.

c). In addition to member recruitment, there was discussion of strengthening the network of partners and stakeholders. This will be another priority for 2026. An example might be follow up re Energy Efficiency work may be carried out by McKinstry, Jordan will meet with Rich.

Comprehensive Planning

1. Interactive process of conversations with the council and other community leaders. This has led to a re-structuring of the topic-oriented community outreach plan. Moving from a list of 8 topics to 4 themes and connecting threads.

- a. Housing
- b. Transportation and Mobility
- c. Business and Economic Development
- d. Quality of Live

With crossing threads of Environmental Assets, Community Engagement, Safety, Security and Emergency Response.

2. Report to Sustainability Commission in January or February re the summary of community engagement input to date and the schedule for listening sessions.
3. Recent Housing Summit hosted by Nate Dorr from MN Rural Housing brought together a lot of people in the community
4. Melissa noted that she has created a list of plans that need to be updated, it was represented to the comp planning team. Land use plan and future land use map is an example. These plans help to support the comp plan. Then the zoning ordinance can support the comp plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Reports

- No report from City Council member Dickinson
- Melissa reported that the planning office was awarded a Solar on Public Buildings grant from the Dept of Commerce for 4(5) solar array locations. All about 40KW in size. To be accepted on Monday. 70% from state of Minnesota, 30% from Federal IRA.
 - Water Treatment by Airport
 - Sanford Center
 - Fire Department 2 on Lake Ave.
 - Curling Club
 - Warming House

Upcoming Events - none noted

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. M/S by Charles/Lisa to Adjourn, carried