

BEMIDJI SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, April 9, 2026

City Hall – 317 4th Street NW
3:30 PM



1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a) March 12, 2026

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

b) Comprehensive Planning Updates

c) Earth Day Event Planning

a. Sanford Health Earth Day Event

b. AI & Data Center Info Session

6) NEW BUSINESS

d) Chief Sherwood — Fire Mitigation, Fire Wise, other projects

e) Age Friendly Bemidji

f) Reports

g) Upcoming Events or Grant Opportunities

7) ADJOURN

City of Bemidji Sustainability Commission,

March 12, 2026 starting at 3:30PM at the Bemidji City Hall

Minutes

Commissioners present: Jordan Lutz, Lisa Weiskopf, Jo Li, Sami Holms, Linda Kingery, Erika Bailey Johnson,

Commissioners absent: Charles Biberg

Liaisons present: Audrey Thayer, Melissa Fahrenbruch, David Wielenberg

Guests: Kathryn Burke, Pat Welle via Webex

Jordan called to order at 3:34

Linda/Lisa m/s to approve agenda - carries

Lisa/Sami m/s to approve minutes - motion carries

No public Comment

Old Business:

Comprehensive Plan Updates:

The transportation survey will go out shortly. EV questions will be included. Out for responses by March 23. It covers all transportation modalities, Who are the stakeholders who need to be surveyed?

- Anyone that works on transportation - taxi, buses, city staff that work in trails, streets, bike Bemidji
- Walkability - public health, running groups,
- Bemidji Indivisible group is about 2000 people in the Bemidji area - it could go out in a Monday e-blast.

Naomi's prompts for Questions, due to Melissa by March 19 by email.

- Big picture transportation needs
- Accessibility, equity and inclusion
- Sustainability priorities
- Outreach and engagement

Active living and well-being survey will follow.

Housing and business surveys are completed.

New Business:

Earth Day Event Planning

- 1) Sanford Health Earth Day Events
 - Sami, Linda and Erika
 - Sustainability Commission, CCL, HRDC, Birds, Bees and Butterflies,
 - Indivisible Bemidji

- 2) Event focused on Data Centers and AI

Erika reached out to MCEA, they had a panel about a situation in Farmington Beltrami Electric Cooperative - presentation to a chamber-sponsored event.

Coalition of greater Minnesota cities - There is a lot of 'pro' conversation in many communities. Indivisible Bemidji is interested in data centers. Public policy - state legislation. Indivisible Bemidji is willing to host - perhaps on April 16 or 23. Policy might be a moratorium until there is a formal review until there is a more transparent review process. Gabe Chab from HHI is another partner

Consequences are cutting across the lines.

Land use concerns

Cost of utilities

What do people have at stake? It's too early to anticipate how the situation will unfold.

Pat and Erika will connect to plan when and where.

Other activities:

State Park - Serenity Stroll perhaps on a Saturday during the week

Jordan met with Adam from McKinstry recently

- Solar carport at Sanford
- City Park - now Melissa has more data

Council Report

Audrey - hears Council members referring to the Sustainability Commission

YMCA - concern about cost of solar. The development code will be a place for details

Upcoming events

Master Gardener Spring events - April 11 at Evangelical Free Church 8:30-noon

Linda/Sami m/s to adjourn, carried