



OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department
Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal
Corporation, or Sub-unit thereof.

Meeting: SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE

Members: John Kroll (C), Carol Lukens, Scott Charette, Jay Coldwell, Mary Kluz,
Jesse Kearns, Jean Abreu

Location: Board Room of Wausau City Hall, 407 Grant Street.

Date/Time: Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Public comment
3. Approve minutes of August 3, 2023 meeting
4. Discussion and Possible Action: No Mow May alternatives for 2024
5. Discussion and Possible Action: Environmental Justice resolution
6. Discussion and Possible Action: Sustainability on the City website
7. Next meeting date: October 5
8. Adjourn

It is likely that members of, and a quorum of the Council and/or members of other committees of the Common Council of the City of Wausau will be in attendance at the abovementioned meeting to gather information. **No action will be taken by any such groups.**

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261- 6622 or ADAServices@ci.wausau.wi.us to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.

Questions regarding this agenda may be directed to the City Planning Office @ (715) 261-6760.

This Notice was posted at City Hall and emailed to the Media on 09/05/2023

Any person wishing to offer public comment may email City Clerk Kaitlyn Bernarde at clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us with “SEEC comment” in the subject line prior to the meeting start. All public comment, either by email or in person, will be limited to items on the agenda at this time. The messages related to agenda items received prior to the start of the meeting will be provided to the Chair.

Other Distribution: Media, Alderpersons, Mayor, City Departments

MINUTES

August 3, 2023

Members Present: John Kroll, Jay Coldwell, Mary Kluz, Jean Abreu

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Andrew Lynch, Matthew Rosenbloom-Jones

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting started at 5:15pm

2. Public Comment

N/A

3. Approve minutes of July 6, 2023 meeting

Coldwell asked that a sentence in #7 be clarified with the phrase “still an option” inserted. Motion/second by Kluz/Coldwell to approve minutes as amended. Vote unanimous in favor.

4. Updates: GHG Baseline and next steps, Riverside Park clean up, Environmental Justice resolution

Lynch reported that he had found the correct contact at WPS and now has the previous 2.5 years of electricity and gas use for City of Wausau accounts. He will check the information to make sure it is comprehensive. Lynch is also working on getting information from fleet managers for Metroride and DPW.

The Riverside Park clean up is complete. The last few remaining pieces of equipment are clearing out this week and Parks will restore the bike polo boards. Kluz asked what substance had contaminated the Park. The committee could not recall the specific issue.

Lenz recalled the history of the resolution, that it had originally started in this committee but ultimately been worked on in the Committee of the Whole. Kroll suggested the committee read up on the resolution further and it can be addressed further at a future meeting. Lynch noted that the mapping requirement may be obsolete with the new EPA EJ screen maps available.

5. Discussion and Possible Action: Food Resiliency and Security – Municipal support for local initiatives

Coldwell mentioned having a discussion with Ben Lee from the United Way. There is a program that will use the community gardens at the former Neighbors Place to host demonstrations on planting gardens, maintaining them. First group would meet August 15th and future sessions could expand the number of people involved and topics covered. Kroll asked who they could bring in to talk about this program. Coldwell volunteered himself as the contact for the program. The workshops are, for now, free for the community. Lynch offered that the City could help spread the word for the workshop via Facebook or

newsletter. Kluz thinks it would be ideal to have more people growing more food in their front yards. Coldwell would like the future programs to cover cooking and preserving the food grown.

6. Discussion and Possible Action: Metroride Fleet Electrification

Transit Director Rosenbloom-Jones presented on the history of electric transit vehicles. Merrill, WI was the first city in the US to use electric buses. After WWII there was a shift to diesel. Now Federal funding for buses is geared toward hybrid and full electric. Metroride was not able to purchase new diesel buses but did have 3 hybrids donated from Duluth. He noted the challenges with the current transit garage facility for future full electric use since it does not have enough electric capacity and is in a flood zone. Metroride will have a facility feasibility study performed and will work towards transitioning the fleet to hybrid and electric buses.

Coldwell asked if there was any thought, due to the cost and environmental implications of the batteries, of returning to the overhead wire to power vehicles. Rosenbloom-Jones noted that the wires were a large infrastructure cost, could be objectionable for many reasons and don't allow for flexibility which is why they are no longer used widely. Kluz asked about his comment that hybrids won't save a lot of fuel. He explained that the optimal hybrid profile to recharge the battery may not be on Wausau routes. Lynch will post and distribute the presentation to the committee.

8. Next meeting date: September 7

Kroll asked about the possibility of a Sustainability page on the City website.

9. Adjourn

Motion/Second by Kluz/Coldwell. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:12pm

Carol M. Lukens
District 1 Alder
City of Wausau

In my role as teacher, two colleagues and I attended trainings last summer at UW-Madison in connection with the U.S. Forest Service, UW-Madison Arboretum, Monarch Joint Venture, World Wildlife Fund, and others from both the U.S. and Mexico. The trainings were rigorous, expansive (in both breadth and depth), and focused on the science of insects, pollinators, their habitats, benefits to us, and human-insect interactions. My colleagues and I have been teaching much of the content we learned throughout this year in several classes to all students at our school and we also are receiving a grant to create pollinator habitat on the grounds of the Wausau East campus property.

In brief, pollinator insects have experienced a disturbing decline. Between 1994 and 2015, Eastern (East of the Rocky Mountains) monarch butterfly populations declined by 80% (National Wildlife Federation statistics and the situation hasn't improved) and what is happening with monarchs represents what is happening with pollinator species in general.

Why should we care? Because 75-80% of flowering plants need pollinators to reproduce and one out of every three bites of food we eat needs to be pollinated. Thus, *our survival* depends in great part on pollinators.

My daughter has also been working in this realm since transferring from UW-Marathon County and obtaining employment at the University of MN Monarch Lab in 2013. Since graduating in 2016, she's continued working, researching, and collaborating with scientists, educators, government agencies nationally and internationally in that realm and will be starting a Ph.D. program to further her work in August. As I've been learning from her and elsewhere over the past 10 years, the importance of policies and practices to protect pollinators and their habitats has become ever more pertinent to me.

Last year (I believe), Mayor Rosenberg signed on to the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and I'm extremely grateful for that. Part of that pledge is agreeing to take specific actions, one of which was No Mow May. While I've participated in that myself the past couple of years (and participated in the citizen science research with the professor in Oshkosh), my hope is that we could do more to educate the public about these practices and also educate ourselves.

Most important - if we or anyone are really going to make a difference - are policies and practices. While I know we can't force anyone to participate in protecting pollinators and their habitats, I firmly believe there are many things we can do in municipal operations and perhaps even in implementing policies.

Some specific examples that would be helpful are to:

- Assess the pesticides and herbicides we use in municipal operations, reduce their use to what is absolutely only necessary, and make sure we're using substances that don't harm pollinators whenever possible.

- Assess the increase in mosquito extermination companies that are going door to door. There seems to be a proliferation of signs in resident lawns over the past few years. Whenever we spray our lawns to kill other insects, we end up killing the pollinators as well.
- When new commercial developments submit proposals, could a policy be created to require the establishment of native pollinator habitat on the grounds?

The main three factors responsible for the tragic decline in pollinators are *habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change*. Thus, the more we can reduce our use of pesticides and herbicides and the more we can establish native pollinator habitat wherever possible, that can even help with climate change. Because native pollinator plants have deep tap roots, they are not only much more resistant to droughts but also helps sequester carbon which helps mitigate climate change!

I have a plethora of information/resources from what I've learned over the past ten years and from what we've been using at school. Below are a number of links to information (including information for municipalities and for policy-making) in case any of you find it helpful.

All of this content aligns well with the recently-approved clean energy resolution so my hope is that we continue the momentum to create a healthier environment for all.

Thank you.

Please do not "reply all" to this email.

Carol M. Lukens
District 1 Alder
City of Wausau
715-261-6831

The Why, What, When, Where, Who, How of Pollination:

<https://gardens.si.edu/gardens/pollinator-garden/why-what-when-where-who-how-pollination/>

Pollinators 101:

<https://ento.psu.edu/research/centers/pollinators/resources-and-outreach/pollinators-101>

Monarch Importance:

<https://monarchjointventure.org/faq>

How neonicotinoids kill pollinators: <https://xerces.org/pesticides/understanding-neonicotinoids#:~:text=Danger%20to%20Pollinators&text=The%20impact%20of%20this%20class,pollinators%20that%20feed%20on%20them.>

<https://xerces.org/publications/scientific-reports/how-neonicotinoids-can-kill-bees>

MONARCH CONSERVATION IN AMERICA'S CITIES:

https://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/monarch_conservation_in_americas_cities_guide_121715.pdf

Urban Monarch Conservation Guidebook:

https://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/urban_monarch_guidebook_final_050217.pdf

Pollinator-Friendly Parks

<https://xerces.org/publications/guidelines/pollinator-friendly-parks>

Effective Mosquito Management: <https://xerces.org/pesticides/effective-mosquito-management>

Model Policy to Protect Pollinators from Pesticides:

<https://xerces.org/pesticides/model-local-resolution>

Managing Roadsides and Rights-of-Way for Pollinators:

<https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/roadsides>

Mowing and Management - Best Practices for Monarchs:

<https://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/MowingForMonarchsUpdated.pdf>

Switching from No Mow May to Slow Mow Summer:

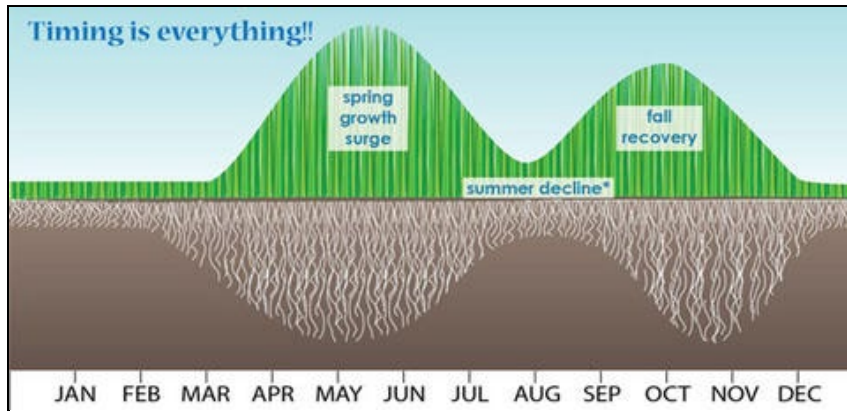
Following are some notes I took from a webinar about why we should move to a Slow Mow Summer rather than No Mow May. I planned to use the info for school so it's likely much more than you need, but for expediency, just copied and pasted.

Main take aways:

- Switching from No Mow May to Slow Mow Summer sustains rather than harms lawn health
- Pollinator habitat is necessary throughout the entire summer so adding plants that bloom at different times is important
- Best to help pollinators (and protect our food supply) - slowly transition turf lawns into bee lawns

James Wolfin, Turfgrass Science, UMN

- Turf grass goes through four cycles each year as shown below.
- In spring, turf roots are long and full of stored nutrients from the fall. Turf grass is in a fast-growing mode and uses that stored energy to grow.
- The rule of thumb for turf health is to never mow more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the plant in one mowing.
- If grass grows unmaintained during its active growth period and grows so tall it is mowed by more than $\frac{1}{3}$ at No Mow May end, its resources will then shift from roots to leaf tips to help them recover. This can severely limit growth, cause dead spots in lawns, and stresses the lawn just as it enters the already stressful season of heat and drought.



Take-aways and suggestions to encourage pollinators:

- Use low-input turf instead. Tall and fine fescues are preferred. Both UMN and Twin City Seed Co. have bee lawn mixes as well.
- Never mow more than one-third of the plant in one mowing.
- Mow based on *when it is needed*; not the day of the week.
- Use a higher mowing height whenever possible. As you increase mowing height - up to 4 inches, you increase the amount of time between needed mowings. Raising mowing height increases root depth.
- Recycle/mulch clippings whenever possible.
- **Mowing in the evening, if possible, helps reduce the threat to pollinators as they are less likely to be rummaging in lawns at that time.
- Not mowing your lawn for a month when the turf grows really fast can harm your lawn.
- No Mow May could result in a stressed lawn going into a stressful season.

Bee Lawns:

What's so exciting about No Mow May is how attainable it is for everyone to be involved. However, bee lawns can do the same!

We have three times more acres of lawn in the U.S. than we do irrigated corn.

Good plants for bee lawns:

- Self-heal (In their study, more than 95% of the bee visitors observed on self-heal plants were native species).
- Creeping thyme - small, open blooms
 - Drought tolerant
 - Latest to bloom of all bee lawn flowers (it's best to have different species of staggered bloom time so that pollinators have flowers available as long as possible)
- Dutch white clover - great source of pollen and nectar; nitrogen fixer
 - Clover is a critical source of forage for both honey bees and native bees

Early spring:

- Mow lawn as short as possible
- Rake to rough up the soil
- Spread seed
- Keep moist for a few weeks

Ben Ziegler, UMN Department of Entomology:

Anything we find delicious (fruit trees, shrubs, plants), pollinators love as well so put them in our yards.

Hop hornbeam is a good plant to provide tissue (leaves) for pollinators to eat and then they pupate on the plant. Make sure to check any plant that has holes in its leaves before just thinking a pest is eating them because it could be from pollinators.

Some pollinators will nest in trees.

It's helpful to leave woody stems a few feet high because pollinators use them to nest in.

Be careful list - look at DNR noxious weed

<https://trees.umn.edu/plant-database>
<https://beelab.umn.edu/actions-help-bees>
<https://www.feis-crs.org/feis/>
<https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/>

Elaine Evans - UMN Extension:

Why is early spring important for bees?

- They're coming out from hibernation
- They need food when they're coming out

Some solitary bees come out for a few weeks only but their entrance is staggered (some will come out at one time, some will come out a bit later, etc.); thus, the need for protection/habitat all season.

1. Native plants sustain more wildlife
2. Plant now for the future climate
3. Messy corners in a lawn can be important refuges for pollinators
4. Bees and other creatures need habitat year round

Aaron Irber - MN Department of Agriculture:

Pollinator patches were planted by the City of Minneapolis in 2016.

Monitored community gardens for bees and native plants.

- Collected over 3000 bees (98 species - 7 of which were non-native)
- 112 host species of plants

Non-native bees tend to be cavity-nesting bees because they're easy to transport in different things from one place to another.

Species they collected bees from:

Oregano
Pumpkin
Bee Balm

Weeds:
Creeping Charlie
Common Dandelion

Here is a handout about creating stem-nesting habitat. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PUNONY2PliLyVfCO3P_UfvDiy1jhE9M/view

@Robert Roulston and Cane have combined for some really neat publications on the nutritional quality of different flowers for pollinators.

Bees can be very creative in the holes they choose to nest in. Some will also use stems. If you are able to leave standing stems in your yard (8-12 inches long), that can help provide nesting spots.

A great link for instructions on planting and maintaining a bee lawn: <https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/planting-and-maintaining-bee-lawn>

Plants by zipcode - NWF has plants sorted by value to wildlife, a great resource

Russian Sage is a great pollinator as is prairie blazing star.

Resources from Wild Ones Central Wisconsin:

https://issuu.com/wisconsinnaturalresources/docs/wnr_spring_2023_singles/20?fbclid=IwAR2dSq8Hex6WQCSN0H7_0fQb60lnKkT0eO_anW_bmDOtQgv5UNkoEOeK8KU

https://pollinator.org/guides_code?c=54481&fbclid=IwAR0ePYMEzCGePGttLYSTAqeGTYRW1h-EzoX_erkfEy4PvECDuep95fL3T0I

<https://mnlcorp.com/lawns-to-legumes/>

<https://mnlcorp.com/product/mnl-bee-lawn/>

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Supporting Environmental Justice

Committee Action: Approved 10-1

Fiscal Impact:

File Number: 21-0808

Date Introduced: September 28, 2021

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Wausau has affirmed our commitment to being a community for everyone in aspiration and in reality, including building an inclusive, and welcoming place to live, learn, work, and enjoy life; and

WHEREAS, we continue to rise to meet the challenges that misunderstandings about our diverse experiences may present. We seek to listen to understand each other. We aspire to learn from each other about our diverse experiences and barriers so we can empathetically and soundly inform our community's policies; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wausau is committed to engaging the community on policies that affect residents, citizens, workers, employers, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the principles of environmental justice can help build public policy based on respect and equity for all people, free from discrimination or bias; and

WHEREAS, Environmental Justice is defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wausau seeks to actualize the goal of ensuring residents, citizens, workers, employers, and visitors enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has iteratively established robust policy addressing the fair treatment of all citizens, residents, visitors, and businesses with special focus on how policies may impact minority and low-income areas across departments and divisions from the Civil rights Act of 1964 to the Environmental Protection Agency's 1992 establishment of an Environmental Justice Office to President Joe Biden's 2021 Executive order 12898; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reaffirms the state of Wisconsin's commitment to clean air and healthy landscapes as foundations of Wisconsin's environment and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, both the EPA and the DNR are vested with wide regulatory authority to ensure public and private land users and businesses are adhering to the laws, guidelines, and orders that protect our air, land, and water quality in addition to obeying standards as they relate to investigation and cleanup of environmental contamination and redevelopment of contaminated properties; and

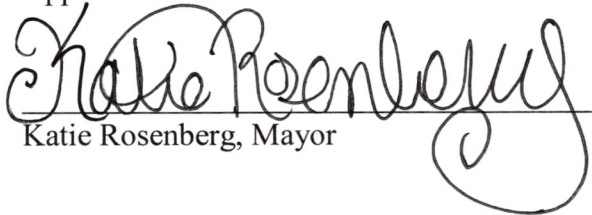
WHEREAS, the City of Wausau seeks to affirm our commitment as good partners to all citizens, residents, visitors, and businesses who seek to live and thrive in the city by committing to work with the DNR and EPA in our respective authorities to ensure our work together meets environmental justice standards; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wausau has supported work toward achieving these goals over the last decade through policy writing, participation in, supporting the East Riverfront Brownfields Area-Wide Plan and application for the EPA planning grant in 2013, the 2015 the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Regional Livability Plan, the 2017 Metro Region Economic Development Assessment, the 2019 resolution supporting HR763 – the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, and the 2021 We Are Wausau resolution supporting our diverse community; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Wausau, Marathon County, Wisconsin that The City of Wausau will use environmental justice principles during policymaking and develop a plan with clear goals for meaningful public engagement. The plan should ensure that those responsible for decisions that could affect the quality of life for residents, citizens, workers, employers, visitors, neighborhoods and our City at large hear and consider meaningful, timely, inclusive, accessible public comment, with the intention of being responsive to that public input; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City will develop and maintain an active GIS-based inventory of environmental justice areas in Wausau using the EPA's EJSCREEN, the EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool. The inventory will be updated every two years and be provided to city alders at the beginning of their terms as well as city staff as appropriate.

Approved:


Katie Rosenberg, Mayor