



# 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, October 5, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.**

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1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Public comment
3. Approve minutes of September 7, 2023 meeting
4. Updates: GHG Baseline, Slow Mow information, WLGCC update
5. Discussion and Possible Action: Environmental Justice resolution
6. Discussion and Possible Action: Sustainability items for the City website
7. Discussion: Chair Kroll presentation to Stevens Point Council
8. Next meeting date: November 2
9. 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 09/29/2023**

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

September 7, 2023

Members Present: John Kroll, Mary Kluz, Jesse Kearns, Carol Lukens

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Andrew Lynch

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

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**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting started at 5:03pm

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**2. Public Comment**

N/A

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**3. Approve minutes of August 3, 2023 meeting**

Motion/second by Lukens/Kearns to approve minutes as amended. Vote unanimous in favor.

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**4. Discussion and Possible Action: No Mow May alternatives for 2024**

Lukens discussed the discussed the large amount of research and data provided in the packet. She recommended that the best case would be to reduce the amount of turf grass and have more native plants. Native plants are better for drought conditions and pollinators. She acknowledged that this is not possible for many people and the next best alternative is a Slow Mow Summer where the grass is longer and only cut back by 1/3 of the height. Lukens noted that education is important for any effort and that changing the culture about lawns is difficult. She has almost completely replaced her lawn with native plants and bee lawns. Lukens would also like to reduce, either through education or ordinance, the use of pesticides and mosquito fogging. Kroll felt it was important to find out the role local government would play. Lenz noted that the No Mow resolution suspended the enforcement of the grass height ordinance but that would not be needed for a Slow Mow effort. Lynch suggested doing some research on limiting the use of pesticides and fogging. Kluz suggested the City lead by example and wants to understand the spraying and plant selection policies of the City and Parks departments.

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**5. Discussion and Possible Action: Environmental Justice resolution**

Lynch noted that the actionable items of the resolution were located in the 'be it resolved' sections. One of the requests was to maintain an inventory of ej areas in Wausau using the EJ screen tool from the EPA. The committee viewed this tool on the EPA website and it is very comprehensive. Lynch posed the question of what information should be provided to the alders at the beginning of their terms. GIS staff could put together both district and city wide data. Kearns asked if there is a possibility of training during the alder onboarding process. Lukens said there was already a lot to learn and a report would be more helpful. Committee will consider specific items for the report in the future. Kluz asked if there was a city plan for public engagement and how ej principles were used in policymaking. Lenz and Lynch noted that there was

not a city plan but the departments often had different requirements on their level of engagement that would fulfill the goal of the resolution. That would depend on the type of project or type of funding involved. Lukens feels that the ej principles are used in the policymaking at the committees she is on. Lenz suggested looking at the new Strategic Plan for guidance on the public engagement. Committee will consider this issue in the future.

**6. Discussion and Possible Action: Sustainability on the City Website**

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Lynch reported that there is no restrictions on creating more webpages on the City site but that maintenance items should be kept to a minimum. Kroll noted that a Sustainability section on the website could be a good resource for residents and could link to the committee agenda every month. Lynch pulled up webpages from Eau Claire, LaCrosse County, and Madison as examples. He asked the committee to develop some specific ideas of items for the City site. Kluz noted that it was important to post what was relevant to the City which includes past accomplishments as well as education. Kluz suggests a brainstorming session at the next meeting.

**8. Next meeting date: October 5**

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**9. Adjourn**

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Motion/Second by Lukens/Kluz. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:04pm

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GARDENING > GARDEN DESIGN > NATURE LOVERS' GARDENING

# After No Mow May, Should You Do a Slow Mow Summer?

No Mow May is a start, but there's much more you can do to help pollinators.

By [Benjamin Vogt](#) | Published on June 14, 2023



### In This Article

▶ **No Mow May's Shortcomings**

Focus on Plant Diversity

Avoiding Bad Bugs

Next Steps



The last few years have seen the spread of [No Mow May](#), a campaign that encourages folks to mow their lawns and meadows less in order to reduce fossil fuel emissions and water use as well as help wildlife. On the face of it, it seems almost too good to be true—you could do a lot of good things for the environment by doing literally nothing. So perhaps it's not surprising that [letting your lawn grow for a month](#) has fallen short of its promises.

However, No Mow May has provided an important stepping stone for rethinking what pretty means in urban and suburban landscapes, and how [these spaces can provide valuable habitat](#) and other environmental benefits. Our yards have the potential to support butterflies, bees, and birds while also cleaning and cooling the air, rebuilding compacted soils, and reducing urban flooding through [landscapes that absorb more storm water](#). To take the next step into creating healthier landscapes for our families and neighbors, we have to understand the flaws of No Mow May and look at these goals with more nuance.

RELATED: [Are Robotic Mowers the Future of Lawn Care?](#)

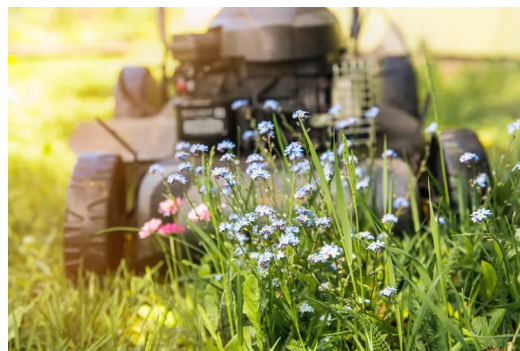


PHOTO: HELIN LOIK-TOMSON / GETTY IMAGES

## Why No Mow May Isn't Such a Great Idea

No Mow May has a few issues that may actually do the opposite of its intended goals. For example, according to Sheila Colla, associate professor at York University and a conservation scientist, the initiative to mow less each May began in the UK, where not mowing "doesn't

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One challenge is that most of us live on highly altered urban and suburban lots where there is no native plant seed bank. [Native plants are critical](#) to feeding butterfly and bee larvae because they co-evolved with many native insect species. What is likely present in the soil are invasive weed seeds—think Canada and musk thistle, as well as [aggressive annual weeds like crabgrass](#)—that will provide few resources for wildlife.

## Only Temporary Support for Native Bees

In addition, Colla points out that some bee species nest above ground, such as the once-common but now-threatened American bumblebee (*Bombus pensylvanicus*). Their homes will be destroyed when the mowers come back in June.

One primary study often cited as showing the benefit to bees in the United States was conducted on unmown lawns in Appleton, Wisconsin. It argued that there was a significant diversity of bees present on a diversity of native flowers. The [paper has actually been retracted](#) due to errors in plant and bee identification, yet the piece is still often cited.

RELATED: [5 Easy Ways to Create Gardens for Bees That You'll Enjoy Too](#)

## Promotes Less Valuable Flowers

Heather Holm, author and pollinator conservationist, notes that one of the predominant flowering species we'll see in our lawns are non-native [dandelions](#). While these plants make [tasty additions to our salads](#), and their taproots help amend soil, their pollen is "nutritionally inadequate to support bee larvae on its own, primarily due to the low protein count."

So even if there are lots of dandelions around, bees still have to expend more energy gathering resources from a [greater diversity of flowers](#), which may or may not be present in an unmowed urban lawn. Bees often exhibit floral fidelity when foraging, which means they tend to stick to one species in bloom to make things easier on themselves and use less energy. But when the primary resource lacks the nutrition to support bee larvae growth and development, a lawn full of dandelions may end up in giving us fewer pollinators.

## Focus on Plant Diversity

Scientists at the [University of Minnesota Bee Lab](#) suggest an alternative: "Slow Mow Summer." This concept advocates for mowing infrequently all summer long while [reducing lawn spaces](#) in general. This is where you can take the next, exciting step in your landscape to help wildlife. Consider diversifying your space with an increased number of plant species and plant types (herbaceous perennials, grasses, sedges, shrubs, trees), and not just replacing one monoculture with another.

For example, many folks are [broadcasting dutch white clover into their lawns](#) as a [lawn alternative](#) in the hopes it also provides floral rewards for insects. However, it's still a near monoculture that also doesn't serve as a host plant for caterpillars (and caterpillars are important baby bird food in nesting season, not to mention those caterpillars turn into butterflies if they survive the birds).

Holm also points out that exotic clover, which honey bees evolved with and thus commonly use, may act as a "pathogen spillover between honey bees and native bees." Due to their large numbers and range, honey bees harbor a variety of diseases that they lay on flowers as they pollinate: when a native bee, such as a bumblebee, comes to forage it picks up those pathogens<sup>[1]</sup>, which can lead to illness, deformity, or death for the bee and its young.

Taken collectively, our native bees provide superior pollination compared to honey bees, while some 25% of them are specialists with specific groups of native plants (meaning the plant and bee rely upon one another as they co-evolved to use each other either for pollen or pollination). One of the best things you can do after being inspired by No Mow May is to garden with plants native to your zip code, and to include a diversity of species that provide floral resources from spring through fall.

RELATED: [10 Native Prairie Plants That Attract Birds and Butterflies](#)

## Avoiding Bad Bugs

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wooded ones. A 2-year study by the US Forest Service in Massachusetts showed that even lawn/meadow spaces at 10 inches high did not harbor tick populations.<sup>[2]</sup>

Best practices will always include spraying yourself with a repellent and doing a body check after being outdoors, but there are a few design strategies that also can help:

- 1. Create wider paths through the landscape.** Paths help show intention and provide access points, but making them wider helps you avoid brushing up against vegetation where ticks "quest" on leaf edges, reaching out to hitch a ride.
- 2. Increase plant diversity and habitat cover.** Encourage predators of species that serve as disease vectors by including habitat for them. Think owls, foxes, and coyotes, who prey on white-footed mice, a vector for lyme disease that ticks catch when feeding on the mice.
- 3. Choose shorter plants.** Keep your plants under 2-3 feet tall. Pollinators still will have plenty to forage, but it will reduce the attractiveness to ticks.

TIP


When creating a diverse landscape in place of lawn, a sign explaining what's going on and why helps a lot when it comes to staying on good terms with your neighbors and your local weed ordinance enforcers. A few [habitat certification programs](#) offer sturdy ones.

## Taking the Next Step

What No Mow May began in other parts of the world we can take to the next level wherever our home landscapes may be. By reducing lawn and using a diverse mix of native plants matched to the site (soil, light, moisture), [you'll use less water](#) and fertilizer while [supporting bees](#) and caterpillars. You'll also increase ecosystem services through that plant diversity such as mitigating storm water runoff via dense, layered landscapes that also help clean and cool our urban air.

So go ahead and take a Slow Mow Summer if you want to as you think about how you can really move the needle in your yard. I suggest visiting a meadow example nearby wherever you live to get inspiration from the plant species that thrive there. Watch as native bees forage on blooms and birds nab caterpillars and beetles to feed their young. Then, through organizations such as [Pollinator Partnership](#), the [Xerces Society](#), [Wild Ones](#), [Audubon](#), and the [National Wildlife Federation](#), learn more about those plant species and the wildlife they support so you can recreate the ecosystem in your yard.

Why? Because your landscape matters and can help turn the tide for a healthier, more resilient future that a monoculture of lawn (mowed or unmowed) will never provide.

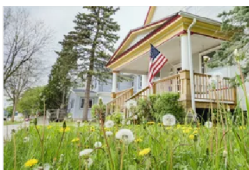
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SOURCES 

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## Related Articles



CARING FOR YOUR YARD

**5 Ways to Participate in "No Mow May" and Help Bees This Spring**

By Anne Readell



POLLINATORS

**Native Plants Help Pollinators, But Experts Say Be Wary of "Nativars"**

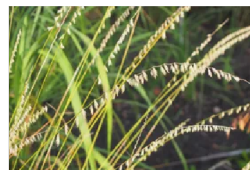
By Lynn Coulter



NATURE LOVERS' GARDENING

**Create a Backyard Wildlife Habitat**

By Viveka Nevelin



PLANT ENCYCLOPEDIA

**How to Plant and Grow Sideoats Grama Grass**

By Judy Nauseef

**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

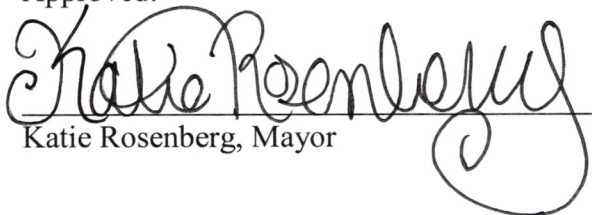
**WHEREAS**, the City of Wausau seeks to affirm our commitment as good partners to all citizens, residents, visitors, and businesses who seek to live and thrive in the city by committing to work with the DNR and EPA in our respective authorities to ensure our work together meets environmental justice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



# COHESIVE AND CONNECTED CULTURE

## Strategic Goal

Foster a community culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity so that all who live in and visit Wausau feel welcomed.

## Current State

After Wausau and Marathon County made national headlines in May of 2021 when the County Board voted down a resolution embracing diversity, the City has embraced a leadership role in tirelessly promoting Wausau as a “community for all.” The City Council passed the “We Are Wausau” resolution to acknowledge that people’s differences are not consistently respected and to express the determination to move above and beyond all forms of bias and exclusion. With this resolution the City acknowledged there are policies and practices that have created barriers that disproportionately affect refugees and other marginalized segments of the community and that more work is needed to counteract racism and create more opportunity for community members who are under-served or adversely affected by practices that are not equitable.

## Future State

Wausau’s communications and community engagement activities and events are welcoming, accessible and culturally responsive. Community members feel welcome and heard and the City uses the input and feedback we receive from the community’s diverse voices in our planning and decision-making. City programs and services protect Wausau’s vulnerable residents, populations and neighborhoods and a mix of amenities are available that are inviting and interesting to all communities that call Wausau home.



## Objectives

1. Create a capable, accessible, and reliable communication system in the community to foster transparency and involvement.
2. Market the fun and vibrant social, cultural, and natural recreation opportunities in our community so that people feel a sense of belonging.
3. Create and support innovative programs to better connect newcomers to Wausau to their community.
4. Create innovative shared services with our partner communities resulting in greater regional success and efficiency.

## Performance Measures

- Satisfaction of Wausau newcomers with their life in the community (survey on arrival and one year later)
- A multi-channel system for communicating with the community is in place
- A marketing strategy to promote social, cultural and recreational opportunities has been created and implemented
- % increase in resident satisfaction with City communication and engagement (community survey – establish baseline and trend over time)
- % increase in residents overall trust in City government (community survey – establish baseline and trend over time)
- % increase in residents satisfaction with City-sponsored events and activities (community survey – establish baseline and trend over time)



# City of Wausau website example

## Sustainability items:

- Municipal energy use
- Solar initiatives (Task force)
- Slow Mow/etc
- Awards
- Get involved
- ...

The screenshot shows the City of Wausau website. At the top left is the Wausau Wisconsin logo. To the right are links for 'JOBS', 'CONTACT US', and 'SIGN UP'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'ABOUT WAUSAU', 'FOR RESIDENTS', 'YOUR GOVERNMENT', and 'SERVICES'. A search icon is also present. The main content area is titled 'GARBAGE & RECYCLING' under the 'Your Government > Public Works >' breadcrumb. A left sidebar lists 'PUBLIC WORKS' categories: Annual Street Projects, Garbage & Recycling (selected), Yardwaste, Snow Removal, Street Maintenance, Surplus Auction, and Fall Leaf Pick Up. The main text states: 'The city provides curbside pick-up of household garbage weekly and recyclables bi-weekly. The city contracts with Harter's Fox Valley Disposal for these services. You can find more details in each of the drop downs below.' Below this are four expandable sections: 'GARBAGE', 'RECYCLING', 'RECYCLING & HAZARDOUS WASTE', and 'DISABLED CART SERVICE'. The 'DISABLED CART SERVICE' section is expanded, showing a 'Special Cart Service for Disabled Residents' heading, a paragraph about the program, a list of qualification requirements, and guidelines for cart placement. At the bottom, contact information for the City of Wausau is provided.

Wausau Wisconsin

JOBS CONTACT US SIGN UP

ABOUT WAUSAU FOR RESIDENTS YOUR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

YOUR GOVERNMENT > Public Works >

### GARBAGE & RECYCLING

Font Size Share & Bookmark Feedback Print

The city provides curbside pick-up of household garbage weekly and recyclables bi-weekly. The city contracts with Harter's Fox Valley Disposal for these services. You can find more details in each of the drop downs below.

- GARBAGE +
- RECYCLING +
- RECYCLING & HAZARDOUS WASTE +
- DISABLED CART SERVICE -

#### Special Cart Service for Disabled Residents

In order to assist residents with disabilities who do not have another person to help them with their property responsibilities, the City has established a program to help residents manage cart placement on collection day.

To qualify for the roll out cart service a resident must:

1. Be unable to wheel their cart to the curb for collection
2. Have no one else who can assist them
3. Be certified by a physician as needing assistance
4. Fill out and return the required [Application for Residential Disabled Roll Out Service](#)

Guidelines:

1. On collection day your carts must be placed where they can be seen from the street
2. In the winter, a path must be clear of snow and ice so workers can safely transport the carts to the street and back.

Once completed the [application](#) should be returned to: City of Wausau, Customer Service, 407 Grant Street Wausau WI 54403. If you have additional questions about the disabled program please contact 715-261-6610.