

Inver Grove Heights Environmental Commission
8150 Barbara Avenue
Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Environmental Advisory Commission of Inver Grove Heights met in City Council Chambers on Thursday, May 26, 2022. Vice Chair Sarah Brass called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Sarah Brass; Commissioners Brian Barner, Larry Moehring, Todd Kruse, Nichole Boehmke

Absent: Chair Ted Trenzeluk, Commissioners Pat Todd, Matt Mills, Kathrine Teiken (excused)

3. Presentations

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of Thursday, February 24, 2022, Environmental Commission Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Todd, seconded by Commissioner Barner to approve the minutes from Thursday, February 24, 2022 as submitted.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

5. Regular Agenda

A. Discussion on Future Environmental Initiatives

Environmental Specialist Ally Sutherland presented the item to the Commission. The Commission was asked to discuss the preliminary list of future environmental initiatives included in the agenda packet and provide comments and suggestions to staff. It was noted that the City's current environmental and sustainability efforts are guided by regional trends and programs such as the Minnesota GreenStep Cities, Xcel Energy Partners in Energy, Dakota County Community Waste Abatement Grant, and more. Background information and links to additional resources were included in the of potential environmental initiatives list provided in the agenda packet. The list of items is in no particular order, and additional research is still required for all items before they could move forward. Feasibility of projects will vary based on requirements related, but not limited to, staff time, project costs and available funding, support from other departments, and City Council approval. The following items were noted as ideas for future environmental initiatives: participating in SolSmart, participating in Dakota County's Organics Drop Off program, developing Residential and/or Business Sustainable Recognition Programs, supporting No Mow May, hosting an annual Litter CleanUp Event, providing Home Energy Squad® Buy-Downs, and joining the Electric Vehicle Ready Certification Program.

The Environmental Commission provided the following comments to staff:

- City departments should collaborate on environmental and sustainability initiatives when possible.
- The Environmental Commission is interested in getting more directly involved with future initiatives, such as helping to recruit volunteers for an event like the Litter Clean Up Day, for example. It was suggested to involve schools, such as Simley Highschool and Inver Hills Community College, in these types initiatives. It was also suggested to pair this with existing community events such as IGH Days or initiatives such as Adopt a Park.
- The Commission is happy to hear over 400 Inver Grove Heights residents already participate in the Organics Drop Off program and feel like this is evidence residents would like an IGH site. They also recalled the resident that spoke to the Commission requesting an IGH Organics Drop Off at a previous IGH Environmental Commission meeting.
- The Commission thinks the City should consider participating in the programs that have no cost to participate, aside from staff time, such as the Organics Drop Off program and SolSmart, when possible.
- Suggested the City combine No Mow May with education about less temporary ways to support pollinator habitat.
- City can consider promoting a "Turn off the Light" event to reduce light pollution.
- City can consider promoting unique environmental features in Inver Grove Heights to the community that they may not be aware of, for example the Macalester weather box located in the city.
- The Commission asked to review examples of Home Energy Squad buy downs and SolSmart participation. The Commission noted that as residents, they don't receive education on renewable energy options for their house. It was noted this is a gap the City should continue to fill.

The Environmental Commission concluded the discussion noting it was most interested in the City researching the potential to pursue participation in Dakota County's Organics Drop Site program and SolSmart. However, the Commission was aware three new Commissioners would be joining in June 2022. The Commission requested the discussion was continued in June to incorporate feedback from new Commissioners. The Commission also requested Staff begin discussing these two programs internally with staff and provide feedback to the Commission at the June 26, 2022 Commission meeting.

6. Public Comment

7. Commissioner and Staff Comments

8. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Barner, seconded by Commissioner Boehmke to adjourn at 8:03 p.m.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.