

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES  
CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS**

City Council Chambers – 8150 Barbara Avenue  
Thursday, October 23, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Goodman called the Environmental Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Sara Goodman (Chair)  
Nick Ruiz (Vice-Chair)  
Jon Wallerick  
Marjorie Savage  
Tracie Killion  
Patti Mikulski

Commissioners Absent: Ted Trenzeluk  
Kevin Sethre  
Nichole Boehmke

Staff Present: Liz Kramer, Environmental Specialist

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Savage, Second by Ruiz, to remove the Presentations item and Approve the remainder of the Agenda as Published.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion Carried.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Minutes of the September 25, 2025, Environmental Advisory Commission Meeting**

Motion by Mikulski, Second by Wallerick, to Approve the Minutes as Published.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

**5. REGULAR BUSINESS**

**A. Xcel Energy Partners in Energy MOU – 2026 Implementation Extension**

Environmental Specialist Kramer asked the Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) to review the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy MOU - 2026 Implementation Extension and consider recommending it for City Council approval.

Background

- March 2021
  - Energy Action Plan (EAP) with community engagement and municipal leadership goals adopted
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining how Xcel would support implementation approved
- December 2022

- Original MOU expired, then was extended for a year (it has since been extended several times to allow the City to continue receiving direct technical assistance).

The draft 2026 MOU details how Xcel Energy will support the City in achieving the goals of the EAC throughout 2026, including:

- Provide business outreach related to energy audits, electric vehicle charger installation opportunities, renewable energy, and available energy credits and rebates
- Provide residential and multi-unit outreach related to energy audits, assistance for energy-burdened households, and available energy credits and rebates, with a focus on strategies related to natural gas conservation
- Review community energy data reports provided by Partners in Energy
- Support the Sustainable IGH Awards program
- Support existing City environmental programming, including partnerships with GreenStep Cities and SolSmart

Environmental Specialist Kramer said there was limited progress on most goals in 2025 due to staffing limitations, but information about energy conservation is made available on the City's website, and materials were distributed via tabling at community events.

Staff recommends the EAC consider recommending City Council approval of the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy MOU - 2026 Implementation Extension.

Commissioner Mikulski asked when the Business Expo is held.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said early September; she also has a contact in the Chamber of Commerce that she can work with business outreach year-round.

Commissioner Wallerick asked whether the \$2,000 in funding was used last year.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that she was not sure, but in the past, the funding was used for printing materials. This year, the funding could be used to update the materials. She asked the Commissioners to share ideas for other uses.

Commissioner Killion asked for more details about SolSmart.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that SolSmart is an organization dedicated to helping local governments expand solar options by providing expert technical assistance.

Commissioner Killion asked whether SolSmart or another organization could help with adding wind power to residential properties.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said she was not aware of organizations providing that kind of assistance, but she said she would look into it. She mentioned that zoning restrictions would likely limit wind installation in residential areas.

Commissioner Killion mentioned that her understanding is residential wind power is typically used for homes that are off grid.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said she could research it for further discussion at a future meeting.

Chair Goodman said that representatives from SolSmart did a presentation for the EAC about two years ago; it is her understanding that the City is already a SolSmart designee.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that she thought cities had to renew their SolSmart designation every year, but she said she would look into it further.

Commissioner Savage said that she would like to revisit the Sustainable IGH Awards parameters.

Environmental Specialist Kramer suggested discussing the award parameters at a future meeting. She said that Partners in Energy had funded the printing of yard signs for the Sustainable IGH Awards program.

Commissioner Ruiz commented that there were different levels of recognition for different levels of impact.

Environmental Specialist Kramer confirmed that (bronze, silver, gold, and special); past awardees can also apply for more advanced levels of recognition.

Commissioner Killion commented that Xcel owns some streetlights in Inver Grove Heights. She said that turning off, shielding, or dimming streetlights might be another way to conserve energy.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said streetlight energy conservation could be a separate conversation with Xcel and the City. She said she would gather information on that.

Commissioner Mikulski said that she would appreciate more specific strategies under each item, but she is in favor of the MOU.

Commissioner Wallerick seconded that; he also said that he is in favor of being proactive in work with Xcel.

Commissioners Killion, Goodman, and Savage expressed their support for the MOU.

Commissioner Ruiz asked why this program is called "Graduate Support".

Environmental Specialist Kramer said Partners in Energy is typically an 18-month program. Once completed, participant cities are called Graduates, and support can then continue indefinitely.

Motion by Mikulski, Second by Ruiz, to recommend approval to City Council of the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy MOU - 2026 Implementation Extension.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0      Motion carried.

## **B. Discussion on the Draft 2026 EAC Work Plan**

Environmental Specialist Kramer asked Commissioners to comment on the 2026 EAC Work Plan, which summarizes annual priorities (in alignment with duties and functions as assigned by City Code).

Commissioner Ruiz asked whether the Annual Stormwater Pollution Prevention Meeting was held this year.

Environmental Specialist Kramer confirmed that it was held in May or June 2025.

Commissioner Ruiz suggested including salt reduction efforts under the stormwater pollution prevention item.

Commissioner Wallerick said the work plan looked good, and he suggested editing item 1.a. (about extending the MOU for 2026).

Environmental Specialist Kramer suggested replacing it with wording like “work towards the goals of the 2026 MOU.”

Commissioner Savage said that she sees opportunities to make the topic of stormwater pollution prevention more engaging and fun – it’s something that everyone can play a role in.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that she agreed, and staff members who work on stormwater are trying to find more ways to publicize the Pollution Prevention plan and make people realize how it affects them.

Chair Goodman said that she would like the EAC to have more opportunities to review developments and offer environmental guidance while projects are in the planning stages. She said that the EAC is not currently set up to allow for that, and she asked Environmental Specialist Kramer to find more ways for Commissioners to provide input.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that she would discuss it with other City staff and look for ways to involve the EAC more.

Commissioner Ruiz seconded what Chair Goodman said, and added, as an example, that chemicals (e.g., road salt) are often used to try and deal with ice issues, when a retrofit (e.g., adding more drainage) would be a more long-term and sustainable solution. It’s most cost-efficient to make retrofits during construction, so having the EAC’s perspective on development projects while they are in planning stages is important.

Commissioner Killion said that the EAC could also help ensure that existing developments have environmental recreation opportunities where possible (e.g., adding lake access points).

Commissioner Wallerick said that adding steps to the approval process was unlikely to succeed, but he suggested that the EAC could provide periodic presentations to the commissions that review developments.

Commissioner Mikulski said that the work plan goals look achievable.

Environmental Specialist Kramer summarized the suggestions:

- Edit Item 1.a. to include work on the Energy Action Plan goals
- Look for ways for the EAC to offer guidance, input, and/or education to commissions that review developments

She said she would have a revised version ready at the next meeting.

### **C. Discussion on Holding a 2025 EAC Work Session**

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that a work session would be a good opportunity to discuss topics of interest more informally.

Commissioner Mikulski said that a work session would be useful for adding more specific goals and strategies for achieving them. She suggested that it be held in early January.

Commissioner Wallerick suggested the Sustainable IGH Awards as another topic.

Commissioners Wallerick, Killion, and Savage, as well as Chair Goodman, said January 2026 would work well.

Commissioner Ruiz asked whether the work meeting would be open to the public.

Environmental Specialist Kramer confirmed that it could be. She read comments from Commissioner Sethre that were also in favor of holding a work session and scheduling it for early 2026.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said details on the work session could be finalized at the next meeting.

### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **7. COMMISSIONER AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Commissioner Ruiz asked to see the noise level contour maps that are used to evaluate eligibility for airport noise reduction retrofits. He commented that outliers can provide important information, and he would like to see the concerns of the household responsible for the majority of the complaints addressed if possible. He added that he recently attended a two-hour informative meeting on stormwater pollution prevention.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said she knows the local watershed district passes out small cups to help educate people about how much salt is needed for a driveway. She said she would look into that program.

Commissioner Killion asked about alternatives to salt.

Commissioner Ruiz said brine spray and ionized water softener can be used. He added that when parking lots are redesigned, gradients can be put in to minimize ice accumulation proactively.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that sometimes alternative chemicals have limited functionality in lower temperature ranges, which makes them less helpful in Minnesota. Sand can be useful for adding friction, but it does not have melting capability.

Commissioner Ruiz said dust/sand can be swept up in warmer seasons and scattered in the winter to add friction. He said that chloride is difficult if not impossible to remove from the watershed, and because it sinks, it can harm streambeds and lakebeds. He said there will be more free Zoom meetings on salt reduction offered later this year.

Chair Goodman suggested that paper towels be collected as organic waste in the Community Center.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said she would look into it.

Commissioner Ruiz said he thought paper towels were already being collected in some restrooms within the Community Center.

Commissioner Killion said that many people don't know that you can't drain a freshly-treated pool – she suggested adding information on pool drainage regulations to Insights Newsletter in future years.

Commissioner Mikulski said that she would like to know when the sound level contour maps were last updated. She said that new homes have been added under common flight paths, which may be leading to more complaints.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said that the November and December meetings will be held one week earlier than usual due to the holidays. She also said there would be an article in Insights and eNews postings about smart salting. She said that eNews monthly bulletins are now active again, and she asked Commissioners to send along relevant items (community events related to environmental work). She mentioned that anyone can sign up to receive the newsletter.

Chair Goodman said it would be good to advertise the eNews signup on social media.

Commissioner Ruiz said that there are lots of great programs through the Community Center and library, but there isn't currently a good way of getting information out widely about them. He suggested adding information on environmental programs to the large screen in the Community Center because of its visibility.

Environmental Specialist Kramer said she could contact Veterans Memorial Community Center staff about displaying environmental event information there.

Chair Goodman said that sometimes Parks events are advertised on that screen.

Commissioner Ruiz said small TV screens could also be added to the exercise rooms to inform people.

## **8. ADJOURN**

Motion by Savage, Second by Killion, to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0      Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Will Clashe, Recording Secretary