

**Sustainability & Energy Commission (SEC)
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417**

Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2026

6:00 PM

**Location: Grand Haven City Hall Council Chambers
519 Washington Street**

Meeting called to order: Chairperson Dan Small called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Roll call: Ryan Cotton, James Hagen, Jean Madden, Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, and Dan Small. Eric Law was present as liaison.

Absent: Pamela Blough was absent due to travel, Andrei Skelly

Call to Audience : Jan O'Connell attended the meeting representing the Sierra Club and reported on oral arguments scheduled about the Campbell Plant's emergency operating orders. Lewis Lybrook attended as a member of the public also.

Approval of previous meeting minutes: Chairperson Dan Small made an approval motion, supported by Jean Madden. Approved unanimously.

1. Forrest Management – Jean Madden

a. **Mulligan Hollow Deer Enclosure Update:** Jean Maden reported that Bill Pushaw and Chris Roberts are setting the posts right now on the enclosure. Plants arrive on May 27th. Jean asked if Eric Law had talked with Ashley on trail cameras. Eric Law provided approval. Orchard grass is being removed thanks to equipment Eric Law lined up.

b. **Meeting on Right-of-Ways Between Sidewalks and the Street Regarding More City Trees with Eric Schmit:** Jean Madden and Larry Burns met with Eric Schmit to encourage people to let the City know if they have a gap and so the City can catalog more tree planting possibilities.

c. **Composting Subcommittee:** Jean Madden reported that the 4th highest SEC priority was organic composting. Muskegon has a composing drop-off site at their Farmers Market. Jean Madden proposed a subcommittee on composting through "Organicycle," a curbside composter in Grand Rapids. Jean Madden volunteered to coordinate. Patti Nelsen, Nancy O'Neill, and Jean Madden will be on the subcommittee and will meet with Brittany Goode also.

d. Newsletter: Newsletter suggestions were requested. Jean Madden said she will put in an enclosure picture in and more information on the “Parks Connected” program involvement. The subscriber list is up to 150.

2. Tree Canopy – Inventory/Survey Update – Eric Law

Eric Law reported that a \$60,000 line-item was included in the recommended budget. There have been no objections to date. He said the City also received good news that there are more General Fund reserves than expected available for capital projects. Budget is scheduled for adoption on Monday, May 18th. Relatedly, Ryan Cotton reported that getting the canopy assessment done by Ottawa County GIS will not work out, since their only data is for when the leaves are off; hopefully the City will find a competitive contractor to accomplish it instead.

3. Deer Management: Eric Law said Derek Lemke will be taking over deer management starting with the drone survey. Eric Law was warmly thanked by the SEC for his good work. Ryan Cotton reported he had thanked the City Council for deer management at the Budget Public Hearing.

4. Community Energy Planning - Ryan Cotton

a. BLP/City Council Joint Meeting Update: Ryan Cotton said that a BLP Strategic Plan work session is scheduled for May 18th. It was reported and that a near-shortage of electricity supply occurred in January. Ryan Cotton shared copies of his subsequent email to City Council and the BLP regarding matters associated with the Community Energy Plan (community solar appreciation, Green Energy Program rates, including reducing green solar energy rates due to solar being the cheapest energy in the world now, the need for more Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) discussions, and appreciation for the coal burning power decommissioning that reduced Grand Haven’s community carbon pollution by 25%. James Hagen mentioned the need for more dispatchable power also.

b. Home Energy Retrofit Program Possibilities: Ryan Cotton reported that James Hagen and he are waiting on BLP’s response on an email from March about seeing what the Holland 101 program does. Ryan Cotton also reported that Council Member Sarah Kallio mentioned the Community Energy Plan at the Joint Meeting and then after the meeting asked how it could be implemented. Patti Nelsen and Ryan Cotton later met with her and provided hard copies of the plans (summary and full plan) and answered questions. Ryan Cotton shared with Council Member Kallio

that the City of Ferrysburg buys BLP's Green Energy for their municipal buildings and has continued to do so even after their trial program.

5. Other Business

Citgo PFAS Discussion: Eric Law showed maps of the possible drainage flow based on surface land contours, yet it was unknown if there is a plume under the ground. Citgo is responsible for clean-up. Eric Law is in contact with multiple assisting agencies to investigate and address. Eric Law's biggest concern is where it is discharging into the river -- 8900 parts per trillion is significant load. The Citgo site needs a hydraulic study to find the drainage flows and contain them until the entire site can be cleaned up. Eric Law's data shows some correlation with seasonal drainage yet also dredging of the river bottom for deep draft vessels. The MCL limit is 8 parts per trillion (which is being tightened further and going to 4 ppt in 2027). The intake water has generally averaged at 2 parts per trillion or less. This information is posted on the NOWTP web site. The annual running average is 2.53 parts per trillion. Anthracite coal is used for direct filtration now, yet granulated activated carbon would be needed for a PFAS reduction.

Community Clean-Up – Eric Law will see what day during the day would work for the SEC members/volunteers and the city crew to work together. More to follow.

Comprehensive Review of Ordinances: Patti Nelsen said the City Manager had said there was going to be a review of ordinance. It was mentioned last year. Eric Law said there is a grant available for that type of activity (\$50,000). Eric Law said that sustainability is on the table regardless.... Like "How to make the community energy plan live within the ordinances," for example. Patti Nelsen suggested more review on clear-cutting trees on private property also. James Hagen mentioned remediation/replacement of trees was needed.

James Mathews Memorial Tree: Nancy O'Neill spoke with his spouse and determined that a White Pine is desired and a fall planting near his burial site is desired. Ryan Cotton is searching for the best tree and Larry Burns had said the City will assist.

Periodic Reporting to the City Council?: Patti Nelsen asked if it would be helpful? She was told that there are regular presentations from other Boards and Commissions. Dan Small said it was not necessary since through others, including the Mayor, see the Minutes. Eric Law said there is also a weekly bulletin sent by the

City Manager to the City Council. Jean Madden suggested that SEC information could also be shared via the newsletter. Eric Law said he will ask about it.

Number of Vacancies and Total Possible Members: The total authorized number is either 11 or 13. The SEC has 8 members now. Current SEC Members are OK in mentioning to others they can fill out a volunteer form if we know someone who is qualified and interested. (Author's Note: See attached form).

Final Call to Audience: No more public input.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Cotton

Rotating Minute Taker