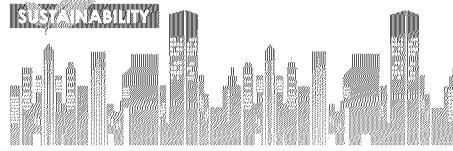


Sustainability & Energy Commission (SEC)
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN 49417



MINUTES

**GRAND HAVEN CITY HALL
519 WASHINGTON STREET**

A regular scheduled meeting of the Sustainability & Energy Commission (SEC) was held Thursday, August 12, 2026, at 6 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Grand Haven, MI.

- 1. Meeting called to order:** Chairperson Small called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.
- 2. Roll call:**
 - i. Dan Small, Jean Madden, Ryan Cotton, James Hagen, Nancy O'Neill, Andrei Skelly
 - ii. Absent: Pamela Blough, Patti Nelsen
 - iii. Eric Law attended as an ex-officio and city government liaison.
- 3. Call to Audience:** Jason Reichaedt attended regarding Agenda Item #5 on Composting. No other audience members were present.
- 4. Approval of previous meeting minutes:** Jean Madden made the motion to approve, and Jim Hagen supported. Approved unanimously.
- 5. Ottawa County Composting Presentation:** Jason Reichaedt, Ottawa County Department of Public Health and Discussion, made a presentation regarding Local Food Scraps Composting. See his PowerPoint attached. The County has undertaken a deliberative process by appointing a Committee to recommend a County-wide food scrap program next year. The goal is to increase recycling overall (including food, in this case via composting).

Jason Reichaedt provided these key statistics: 11% is the current recycling rate in Ottawa County (inclusive of food waste). Ottawa County's goal is to attempt to achieve 22%. The state's goal is 30% by 2035. Total organic residential food waste accounts for 19% of the entire waste stream.

The committee targeted specific sectors to increase recycling, in addition to composting: apartments, condominiums, and hard-to-recycle items. Importantly, four manned areas in Ottawa County allow food drop-off now for a fee. The fee is roughly \$4 per bucket.

Grand Rapids and Kent County have “smart bins” dispersed geographically that allow access via the internet and a code system to open the lids geographically. Ottawa County is applying for grants to test out in Ottawa County for 24/7 access with bi-weekly emptying/cleaning.

Incidentally, Jason Reichaedt encouraged taking Kent County’s recycling/education sorting process center tours. 9-12 recycling educators are on site for specific days.

Action: The Commission was asked if we wanted to support a recommended letter to the City Manager to support the County’s composting grant applications, with minor needed clarifications noted by Liaison Eric Law? Moved by Dan Small, supported by Andrei Skelly.

Unanimously approved.

6. **Mulligan Hollow Deer Enclosure Update:** Jean Madden reported increasing evidence that the deer population is increasing again -- now that the fawns are growing up. More data needs to be collected to determine the optimum culling number. Jim suggested that re-vegetation and reforestation should include planting more mature trees than you see typically. (Note: Jim later wrote, “Regarding mature trees. I promote planting 18 - 24” white pine trees available for a low price from ColdStream Farms in Freesoil MI which is about a 1 hr drive to our North.”)

Eric Law asked if erosion concerns created by e-bikes in the wooded areas have been observed. Several commission members presented their observations in the affirmative. The SEC agreed more education was needed and/or legislation/enforcement was needed.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for City Council legislation to ban e-bikes from wooded areas, similar to how the City just acted on e-bikes on Downtown sidewalks.

Larry Burns’ recommendations included in his attached report were supported.

Jean Madden asked about the trail system grant and if there were any updates? Eric Law had not heard of any.

7. **DTE Foundation Tree Planting Grant Program:** Ryan Cotton and Nancy O’Neill researched this program and found it strictly limited to areas with DTE gas customers. None are believed to exist in Grand Haven.
8. **Harbor Transit New Construction Solar Opportunity:** Jim Hagen presented his suggestions.

Action: A motion was called for the Sustainability and Energy Commission to recommend that the City Manager transmit the attached rooftop solar application packet to Harbor Transit and request that Harbor Transit promptly evaluate the structural, electrical, funding, federal tax-credit, procurement, interconnection, solar glare, and FAA/QE/AAA considerations associated with adding rooftop solar to the new Operations Center while construction remains underway and to otherwise take measures seem ideal, Ryan Cotton moved, supported by Dan Small.

Motion approved unanimously.

9. Other Business

- a. Ryan Cotton reported that the tree desired by the family of Jim Mathews Tree is available at a bulk purchased price at the City's preferred tree nursery for \$152. This assumes the City pick can pick up just before a potential ceremony. (**Note: This may not be possible so other efforts to transport are being researched.**) The preferred tree is a White Pine. The nursery has several 6' tall ones to choose from. Ryan Cotton will pick out (with the help of Nancy O'Neill as it turns out) and will work with Larry Burns on details and with Nancy O'Neill and Cathy Matthews on any potential ceremony.
- b. Status of BLP's Solar Garden Process: Ryan Cotton reported on the panels leased to-date based on an email update today: about 13%. Jean Madden said she will promote in a tree newsletter article. Ryan will work on a Southside Facebook page and send the copy to Jean Madden and others. Jean Madden discussed the possibility of multiple non-profits and environmentally minded organizations getting a presentation from the Board of Light and Power.
- c. Ryan Cotton thanked Larry Burns for his Status Report Tree Canopy and Tree Inventory email attached.
- d. Ryan Cotton asked about the current news on a potential Clean Up in the East End? Eric Law reported these plans still exist, yet the details are to be determined. More to follow from Eric Law at a subsequent meeting.
- e. Ryan Cotton mentioned unnecessary vehicle idling and letters to the editor. He recently saw this suggestion promoted at school pick-up zones via "Clean Air Zone" signs in Maine. Ryan said he would put an outline for more discussion/action at the next meeting.

10. Final Call to Audience: No one was in the audience.

11. Adjournment: Dan Small moved for adjournment; Jim Hagen supported. Vote was unanimous to adjourn at 7:39 PM.