

City of Birmingham
Regular Meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Committee
May 19, 2025

Rooms 202-203
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Environmental Sustainability Committee held on May 19, 2025. The meeting convened at 5:30 p.m.

1) Roll Call

Present: Lara Edwards, Debra Horner, Joe Mercurio, Jess Newman, Sara Rubino, Trenton Chapman; Student Representatives Penelope Graves, Abhishek Thota

Absent: Harvey Bell

Staff: City Planner Aldred-Arens; Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant City Manager Fairbairn

2) Review of the Minutes

Staff noted the minutes from the April 2025 meeting would be available at the next ESC meeting.

3) Review of the Agenda

4) New Business

A. Leaf Blowers

PD Dupuis presented the item and answered informational questions from the ESC.

ESC members raised the following points during discussion:

- The ESC should study and include recommendations on four stroke leafblowers as part of this study process.
- Landscaping providers that currently service Birmingham may choose to stop servicing Birmingham instead of electing to upgrade their equipment, since they would be able to use they gas powered leafblowers in neighboring municipalities.
- Birmingham might have more success in banning some or all gas powered leafblowers if they were to collaborate with neighboring municipalities.
- The noise from two stroke leafblowers significantly impacts other residents.
- This issue should likely be addressed as part of a package of other relevant ESC recommendations rather than on its own.
- Addressing this more via community education to start could be appropriate.
- Some residents are likely more interested in banning leafblowers than they are other sustainability issues. This might be an opportunity to generate interest among those residents.
- Alternatively, it might be too narrow a topic for the ESC to focus its beginning efforts on.
- More dialogue with local landscaping providers might be useful.

- It would also be helpful to know whether there are already local landscaping companies using all electric equipment, what it would cost to transition the City entirely to electric leafblowers, how much of the City's landscaping is done by DPS and how much is contracted out, and whether there are any kinds of financial incentives available for switching to electric equipment.
- Transitioning the City to electric leafblowers makes sense, regardless of whether a further policy change for businesses and residents is pursued.
- Exploring other ways to incentivize the use of electric leafblowers over gas leafblowers could be useful. Expanded hours for electric leafblower use might be one option, and City contract offerings with a preference for electric might be another.

B. Community Engagement Plan

CP Aldred-Arens presented the item and answered informational questions from the ESC.

ESC members raised the following points during discussion:

- Being able to track and show data on impacts would be important.
- It would be helpful to have a list of constituencies specifically mentioned for engagement within the Plan.
- If the City would benefit from the support at some point, it might be useful to consider engaging a third party to assist with the Plan.
- It may be appropriate to consider creating a guide for residents who experience basement flooding.
- Putting easements and City spaces to work for sustainability benefits is a high priority.
- The City would likely be able to collaborate with sustainability students from the University of Michigan for implementing parts of this Plan.
- It would be helpful to have a more granular proposed timeline of actions for the next one to two years.
- The City's zoning update process would be an opportunity to include sustainability updates as well.

5) Miscellaneous Communications

6) Open to the Public for Items Not on the Agenda

Sam Surnow expressed his interest in learning more about sustainability.

7) Adjournment

No further business being evident, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Summer Aldred-Arens

Summer Aldred-Arens, City Planner



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist