

City of Birmingham
Regular Meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Committee
September 15, 2025

Rooms 202-203
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Environmental Sustainability Committee held on September 15, 2025. The meeting convened at 5:30 p.m.

1) Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Debra Horner; Committee Members Harvey Bell, Lara Edwards, Joe Mercurio, Trenton Chapman; Student Representative Penelope Graves

Absent: Chair Jess Newman; Committee Member Sara Rubino; Student Representative Abhishek Thota

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

2) Minutes

Motion by Bell

Seconded by Edwards to approve last month's minutes.

Motion carried, 5-0

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Edwards, Mercurio, Chapman, Bell, Horner

Nays: None

3) Review of the Agenda

4) New Business

A. Single-Family Stormwater Management – Study Session

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

ESC members raised the following points during discussion:

- Rain barrels could be a great way to detain stormwater temporarily and to increase infiltration. It could be a good community engagement opportunity for individuals or organizations looking to carry out community service.
- Residents can receive a discount on their stormwater charges if they make substantial stormwater management improvements to their properties.
- Leading discussions about these changes with a focus on credit incentives would likely increase the amount of interest. The Committee should also explore ways of clarifying the credit incentive process. An educational campaign around these incentives would be appropriate.

- Current credit incentives from stormwater management are renewed every three years. The City could perform a check at that time to ensure that the necessary stormwater management is in place in order to continue receiving credits.
- There are two different target audiences in this discussion – those planning construction on a lot who will need to do some stormwater management, and those with no construction plans who are interested in receiving credits for stormwater management.
- An educational campaign would also be appropriate for publicizing that construction or building on a lot usually requires a permit, and that any permitted building would also require stormwater management if these changes are implemented.
- The Committee will likely need to clarify how it will define the stormwater management categories of natural versus constructed, retention versus infiltration, and/or other measures.
- Finding a way to incentivize natural stormwater infiltration measures could help Birmingham retain and even increase its tree canopy. Via this process, the City could also attempt to retain more established, adult trees even in the context of new builds.
- Retaining older trees in the City may also require a discussion with DTE.
- While it may not be possible with this program to ensure that all new residential stormwater management efforts would be maintained over the long term, even the maintenance of some of these efforts would represent an increase of stormwater management over the present baseline.
- One ESC member's rain gardens were designed to have a capacity higher than the presently proposed "first-flush" one inch rainfall standard. During three different storms in 2025, this member's cisterns and rain gardens have nearly overflowed, despite having a higher retention rate than the presently recommended one inch. Consequently, it may be worth considering increasing the "first-flush" management requirement beyond one inch.
- It would be necessary to consider how much incremental value would be gained from increasing the "first-flush" management requirement beyond one inch.
- In a past study, the City's lots were sorted into six different categories based on the average amount of pervious and impervious surface present. It would be helpful to use the most common lot type from this study to calculate how many one inch "first-flush" management systems would be required to reach the City's goal of infiltrating an additional 500,000 gallons of stormwater, just to provide a sense of the numbers.
- This effort would not be the only way of increasing the amount of stormwater infiltration in the City.
- An ESC member will locate the study that categorized the City's lots by pervious/impervious surfaces, and will forward that to staff for provision to the ESC.
- It would be helpful to understand whether infiltrating an increased 500,000 gallons of stormwater within the City would cause residents' water/sewer bills to decrease.

5) Miscellaneous Communications

A. Appointment to the SEMCOG Flooding Task Force

The ESC recognized PD Dupuis for his appointment to the SEMCOG Flooding Task Force.

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

7) Adjournment

No further business being evident, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Summer Aldred-Arens, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by two 'A's.

Summer Aldred-Arens, City Planner

Handwritten signature of Laura Eichenhorn, appearing as a cursive 'L' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist