



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22,
ROOM 2025

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Monday, September 22, 2025 Meeting Agenda
3. Approval of the Monday, July 28, 2025 Minutes
4. Items for Discussion
 - A. Tree Grant Updates
 - B. Moratorium Discussion
 - C. Outreach Opportunities
5. Commissioner Reports and updates
6. Adjournment



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE
ROOM

MONDAY, JULY 28, 2025

6:00 PM

Call to Order / Introductions

The Environmental Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Teresa DeMars at 6:02 PM. Commissioners in attendance include Teresa DeMars, Lee Nordmeyer, Ann Poe, Kevin Theis. Commissioners absent include Richard Huston. Also, in attendance include Adam King – Environmental and Water Resource Coordinator, Harry Davis, AICP – City Planning Manager. Each commissioner and staff introduced themselves.

Approval of the Monday, July 28, 2025, Agenda

Motion by Nordmeyer, seconded by Poe to approve the agenda as presented and carried unanimously.

Approval of the Monday, June 23, 2025, Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion by Poe, seconded by Nordmeyer to approve the Monday, June 23, 2025 Environmental Commission Meeting minutes and carried unanimously.

Items for Discussion / Action

Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for Archer Datacenters

King presented the Response to Comments, the updated EAW, and Resolution ENV2025-01 Approving the Findings of Fact and Record of Decision for Archer Datacenters Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Negative Declaration Concerning the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the commission. The commissioners discussed the updated EAW and Resolution ENV2025-01. DeMars presented an additional resolution to the commission. The commissioners discussed the additional DeMars resolution, with staff providing guidance on what the City can and can not do, and the process of how changes in policy and ordinances are made. The commissioners amended the additional DeMars resolution and named it Resolution ENV2025-02. Davis updated the commission with the proposed timeline of bringing the decision of the project to the Planning Commission on Monday, August 04, 2025, and bringing the Environmental Commission and Planning Commission resolutions to the City Council at their Tuesday, August 12, 2025 meeting. A motion was made by Theis to approve both resolutions. Theis rescinded his motion. A motion was made by Theis, seconded by Poe to approve Resolution ENV2025-01 Approving the Findings of Fact and Record of Decision for Archer Datacenters Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Negative Declaration Concerning the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as presented and carried unanimously. A motion was made by Theis seconded by Poe to approve Resolution ENV2025-02 Requesting Strengthened Environmental Commitments for the Archer Datacenter Project as amended and carried unanimously.

Energy Action Plan Implementation Update

King presented the Partners in Energy Community 2024 Data Dashboard Year-End Program Summary, and the Partners in Energy Community Dashboard 2024 Executive Summary. The commissioners discussed the 2024 year-end summary and 2024 executive summary.

Commissioner Reports and Updates

King informed the commissioners that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is updating the Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy and has released the draft for public comments. The commissioners provided reports and updates to projects they are working on.

Adjournment

Motion by Poe, seconded by Theis, to adjourn the Environmental Commission meeting and carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM.

Approved:	Date:	Recorder:
	08/25/2025	Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator
MEETING DATE: September 22, 2025
SUBJECT: Tree Grant Updates

Background:

Priority number four for the Environmental Commission is to promote and replace ash trees within the city.

The City of Faribault has advertised and reached out to residents that are interested in having their diseased tree(s) removed in a collective bidding process. Residents approached the city to have 176 trees removed, and the city was split into four quadrants: A – 46 trees, B – 49 trees, C – 40 trees, and D – 41 trees. The city accepted the bid with From the Ground Up, coming in lowest for all four quadrants for a total of \$157,600. If the landowner accepts the quote, the total will be split and assessed to property taxes over a few years, with the landowner having the option to cover the costs in one payment. So far, approximately half of the landowners have accepted the quote to have their diseased trees removed and tree removal has begun. There has been interest from other landowners in the city that would like to participate in the program. With some landowners dropping out, there may be an opportunity for those to be added to the list.

The Parks & Recreation Department has also received a grant from Great River Greening to help remove and replace trees in some of the city's parks. The focus is on the west side of the Straight River, and North and South Alexander parks in particular. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has put funds towards diseased tree removal and replacement and plans to continue to support dead and dying tree removal and replacement.

With the success of these programs in 2025, the city is looking to offer it again in 2026. The MN DNR Forestry grants, including the Community Tree Planting and ReLeaf Community Forestry grants, have been made available to remove and replace dead and dying trees on public and private property. A grant application for the ReLeaf Community Forestry grant is currently being worked on and in draft form. This grant will cover the cost of tree and stump removal for low-income residents, and the replacement at two trees for every one removed. I've estimated that we'll have approximately the same interest in tree removal again, with about 200

trees and stumps to be removed. I've also estimated that 125 of those will be low-income, and at around \$2,000/tree removal, we are asking for \$250,000 for tree and stump removal. We've included some staff time, education and outreach, new trees, and tree planting supplies.

Attached is a resolution from the Environmental Commission to the City Council to approve the submittal of the grant application and accept the grant and enter into contract negotiations with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources if awarded the grant. We will continue to work with the Parks Department, the Faribault Tree Board and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Recommendation:

Approve Resolution #ENV2025-03 to recommend the City Council approve submitting the application for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources ReLeaf Grant and, if awarded the grant, enter into contract negotiations and accept the MN DNR's ReLeaf Grant.

Attachments:

1. ENV Resolution ENV2025-03 Authorize Community and Economic Development to Apply for ReLeaf Community Forestry Grant

CITY OF FARIBAULT ENVIRONMENTAL COMISSION

RESOLUTION #ENV2025-03

**REQUESTING AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO
APPLY FOR RELEAF COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT**

WHEREAS, the City of Faribault Environmental Commission Supports the grant application made to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the ReLeaf Community Forestry Grant. The application is to remove dead and dying trees for low-income residents, and replace removed trees for all residents; and

WHEREAS, the Commission acknowledges that there is no match requirement for this grant, but will use amounts that higher-income landowners contribute towards tree and stump removal as match; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FARIBAULT, if the City of Faribault is awarded the grant by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, The City of Faribault agrees to accept the grant award and enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota for the above referenced project. The City of Faribault will comply with all applicable laws, environmental requirements and regulations as stated in the grant agreement, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FARIBAULT, that the City Council should name the fiscal agent for the City of Faribault for this project as

Jessica Kinser
City Administrator
City of Faribault
208 First Ave. N.W.
Faribault, MN 55021
jkinser@faribaultmn.gov 507-334-2222, and

Date Adopted: September 22, 2025

Faribault Environmental Commission

Teresa DeMars, Chair

ATTEST:

**Adam King, Environmental and Water
Resources Coordinator**



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator
MEETING DATE: September 22, 2025
SUBJECT: Moratorium Discussion

Background:

With one data center proposed in the City of Faribault, questions were brought up at the July Environmental Commission meeting on data centers and a possible recommendation for a moratorium. The discussion focused on needing a timeframe and a specific purpose of a moratorium.

Many proposed moratoriums on data centers have been at a larger level (state, county, etc.) and have been to identify appropriate zones or areas for data centers, and develop regulations surrounding energy, water use, noise, and space.

The city already has zoning authority and has identified areas zoned as industrial. The city does not sell energy as a utility, and the area is serviced by Xcel Energy or the Steele – Waseca Cooperative. The city doesn't have an issue with space yet, as there is still undeveloped land in the city and surrounding area. The city has a noise ordinance and quiet hours of 10:00 PM – 7:00 AM with the ordinance pointing to the MPCA for state noise regulations. The city does sell water as a utility, and could potentially look into water use, and alternative designs for systems using water.

Recommendation:

Attachments:



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator
MEETING DATE: September 22, 2025
SUBJECT: Outreach Opportunities

Background:

The Environmental Commission has partnered with Xcel Energy – Partners in Energy and the Home Energy Squad on a booth at Faribault’s Fall Festival vendor and trade show. The vendor and trade show will be held on Saturday, October 04, 2025, from 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM, with set-up starting at 8:00 AM. Booths will be in the street in Downtown Faribault.

There are additional upcoming events in Faribault that could be opportunities for outreach. Outreach ideas include the promotion of energy assessment kits, providing energy efficiency kits, and pollinator information. Potential partners include Xcel Energy (Partners in Energy, Home Energy Squad), Rice County SWCD, Clean Rivers Partners, River Bend Nature Center, and others. Events include:

- Winter Fest (Saturday, December 6, 2025)
- Faribault Heritage Days (June 11 – 13th 2026?)
- Rice County Fair (July 22 – 26th 2026)

Discussion:

Determine and decide which events the Environmental Commission would like to try to get a booth at to promote energy efficiency kits, or other workplan priority areas to promote. Are there additional partners that we would like to work with?

Recommendation:

Attachments: