



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE
ROOM

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2026

6:00 PM

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Monday, June 22, 2026 Agenda
3. Approval of the Tuesday, May 26, 2026 Minutes
4. Items for Discussion
 - A. 2026 Faribault Heritage Days Recap
5. Routine Business
 - A. Grant Updates
 - B. Data Center Updates
6. Commissioner Reports and Updates
7. Adjournment



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE
ROOM

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026

6:00 PM

Call to Order

The City of Faribault Environmental Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Lee Nordmeyer at 6:00 pm. Commissioners in attendance include Lee Nordmeyer, Kevin Theis, Teresa DeMars, Yvette Marthaler, and Miranda Lamb. Commissioners absent include Ann Schultz. Others in attendance include Adam King – Environmental and Water Resource Coordinator.

Approval of the Tuesday, May 26, 2026, Agenda

There were no additions or corrections to the Tuesday, May 26, 2026 Agenda. Motion by Marthaler, seconded by Lamb to approve the agenda as presented and carried unanimously.

Approval of the Monday, April 27, 2026, Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes

King presented the Monday, April 27, 2026 Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes. The Commissioners discussed the minutes. There were no corrections to the Monday, April 27, 2026 Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes. Motion by DeMars, seconded by Theis to approve the Monday, April 27, 2026 Environmental Commission Meeting minutes as presented and carried unanimously.

Items for Discussion

Faribault Heritage Days Booth

King reminded the Environmental Commission that the Faribault Heritage Days festival will be held June 11-13th 2026, and provided sign-up sheets. The commissioners discussed what should be at the booth, and how the displays could be set up. King stated that we will be holding the public comment period for the city's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP), and River Bend Nature Center will partner with the Environmental Commission on promoting the MN DNR ReLeaf grant along with taking program signups. King said that the City has some historical items that could be displayed, and that he can locate the stormwater plinko game for kids to play. DeMars included that she has pollinator displays and pollinator seed packets that she can provide at the booth. Motion by Theis, seconded by Marthaler to move forward with the displays and booth schedule and carried unanimously.

Routine Business

Grant Updates

King provided an update on grants that he has submitted. The Mayor has received and signed the grant agreement between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the City of Faribault for the MN DNR ReLeaf grant. We should be receiving the executed grant agreement shortly. We will need to start promotion of the ReLeaf grant quickly once the agreement is executed. Outreach ideas include door knocking and going on the AM Minnesota program. We continue working on the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) grant to produce video vignettes on home energy conservation practices. King has reached out to a local videographer for the video vignettes. King has prepared and submitted a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Projects and Practices Clean Water

Fund (CWF) grant for a raingarden at the Golden Meadows Apartments, and the BWSR will approve the selected applications for funding at their June BWSR Board meeting.

Partners in Energy Community Energy Dashboard

King presented the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2025 Community Energy Dashboard and Executive Summary. The dashboard shows electricity and gas savings, along with program participation, greenhouse gas emissions avoidance, and where the City is in relation to its Energy Action Plan goals. King noted that the dashboard will be updated annually. The commissioners discussed the Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2025 Community Energy Dashboard.

Commissioner Reports and Updates

The commissioners provided reports and updates to projects they are working on. Teresa DeMars reported that there's a Women in Conservation event about invasive species held at the Forest Town Hall on Wednesday, June 17, 2026. More information is on the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District website. Native Plant Kits will be arriving on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, and there will be a prairie planting event at Jefferson Elementary School the afternoon of Monday, June 22, 2026 with 2,200 native pugs to be planted. Kevin Theis reported that Richard 'Dick' Johnson, a very active person and volunteer in Faribault, passed away on May 19, 2026. Lee Nordmeyer, Yvette Marthaler, and Miranda Lamb did not provide a report.

Adjournment

Motion by Marthaler, seconded by DeMars, to adjourn the Environmental Commission meeting and carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Approved:	Date:	Recorder:
	06/22/2026	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: June 22, 2026
SUBJECT: 2026 Faribault Heritage Days Recap

Background:

The Environmental Commission had a booth and participated in the 2026 Faribault Heritage Days held June 11 – 13th 2026. The booth included pollinator information and seeds provided by the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District, energy efficient light bulbs provided by Xcel Energy – Partners in Energy, historical information and displays, and stormwater plinko with nightlights as prizes.

River Bend Nature Center had an adjacent booth, and were taking sign-ups for the ReLeaf grant and volunteer dead tree removal program.

Recommendation:

We spoke to many in the community and surrounding areas. Are there other areas or items we want to promote in the future?

Attachments:



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator
MEETING DATE: June 22, 2026
SUBJECT: Grant Updates

Background:

Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator, continues to work on the following grants:

- The MN DNR ReLeaf Grant – The MN DNR executed the grant agreement between the MN DNR and the City of Faribault on Tuesday, June 2, 2026. The City and River Bend Nature Center had a kickoff meeting on Monday, June 8, 2026 and announced the signup. River Bend Nature Center is taking the sign-ups for the low-income ReLeaf Grant, with King taking sign-ups for the voluntary dead tree removal program. River Bend Nature Center will work with all landowners getting the forms signed and trees marked. The voluntary dead tree removal program deadline is July 15th, while the low-income ReLeaf program will be first come first serve up to 100 trees, or until September 30, 2026, whichever occurs sooner.
- The Clean Energy Resource Team (CERTs) grant - King has completed the mid-grant review and spoke with Troy Temple at Heritage Days. Temple said he could do the videos, and King will get the topics over to him.
- The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Golden Meadows Apartments – grant application was submitted and the BWSR has reviewed and ranked the submitted grants. The grant is not recommended for funding at their June 24, 2026 BWSR Board Meeting.

Recommendation:

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Attachments:



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission
THROUGH: David Wanberg, Community & Economic Development Director
FROM: Adam King, Environmental and Water Resources Coordinator
MEETING DATE: June 22, 2026
SUBJECT: Data Center Updates

Background:

King brought Resolution ENV2026-01 Recommendation to Adopt an Interim Ordinance to Study the Development of Datacenters to the Tuesday, April 21st City Council Work Session. The City Council tabled the agenda item until after the lawsuit ruling.

The MN Court of Appeals ruled on Monday, June 08, 2026 reversing the negative declaration on the Archer Data Center. The Court held that the City's decision not to require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was not supported by substantial evidence in the record. The bottom line is the City's environmental review is not over, and the City must take the decision up again under the Court's rules/reasoning, which are further described below.

The Court decided the case on the single ground the record did not support the City's conclusion the project would have no significant environmental effects, which alone required reversal. The Court found the record fell short in three areas:

- *Air quality and noise.* The MPCA and others said the EAW lacked detail on emissions and on current and anticipated noise levels. The responses largely "noted" the comments and repeated earlier language, and the revised EAW described the equipment and noise sources less specifically than the draft had. The Court concluded the City had not shown what equipment would be used or what emissions and noise to expect, so it could not explain why the effects would be insignificant.
 - *Greenhouse-gas emissions.* The estimated emissions fell roughly 98% between the draft and revised EAWs and the purchased-
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electricity input dropped sharply even though the building-size input rose. The only explanation in the record was a "calculation error," but the Court found the record did not explain the figures or why the lower estimate was the reliable one.

- *Cumulative effects.* The Court found no evidence the City actually evaluated nearby water and energy users, or even defined the relevant area.

On remand, the rule the Court cited—Minn. R. 4410.1700, subp. 2a—gives the City two options to address situations where it is presented with insufficient information necessary to a reasoned decision: (1) make a positive declaration and require an EIS that includes studies to develop the missing information; or (2) postpone the EIS decision for up to 30 days, or another period agreed with Archer, to obtain that information.

The opinion does not direct which option the City must choose, sets no other deadline, and does not address cost or the likelihood of any particular outcome.

Staff have been working on updating the City's ordinances to include development standards for data centers, and are hoping that we can have the ordinance updated before an interim ordinance would be needed.

Recommendation:

Attachments: