

Sustainability and Natural Resources Committee

1.14.2026 Minutes

3:15 pm. City Hall Conference Room

Present: Betsy Knowles, Marge Loch-Wouters, Jason Ludwigson, Ruth Nissen, Randy Urich, Cindy Wright.

- I. Minutes from 10_22_2025 were approved
- II. Old Business
 - A. Combined committee planning in 2026. The Green Step Committee and Natural Resources Advisory Group are now combined into the Sustainability and Natural Resources Committee. Confirmed current membership and discussed the possible need to adjust meeting times.
 - B. La Crescent Tree Steward Training May 2nd 2026. There is no cost to participate and individuals can sign-up at [MNTS X1001 MN Tree Steward Training | University of Minnesota](#)
 - C. 2026 MnDOT Landscape Partnership Project. Location(s) are still under consideration. The project could provide up to \$8000 for plants/trees.
 - D. 2026 proposed prairie establishment projects. Proposed areas are a steep section of S 2nd street, the city outlot south of Apple City Smoke Shop, and Larch Ave Well House area.
 - E. Trail in Vetsch Park on north end. A portion of single-track trail on the north end of Vetsch was rerouted by the city off of private property in 2025. There have been attempts by trail users to return the route to the previous trail. The rerouted trail needs to be revisited to foster use of only public property.
 - F. Project and grant updates
 1. Solar on Public Buildings Grant. This was awarded and solar installed on the pool building in August 2025.
 2. Solar on Public Buildings Grant. Solar will be installed on Wieser Park Pavilion. It will be the first Net Zero La Crescent City building.
 3. Solar on Public Buildings Grant. Solar to be installed on Stoney Point Wellhouse. Working with Clearway Solar to amend community solar subscription allocations.

4. Outdoor Recreation Grant. This grant provides funds at Wieser Park to construct a walking path and poured-in-place playground equipment, pickleball courts, and a zip line. Existing equipment will be replaced in 2026.
5. EV chargers. Working with MPCA and ZEF energy, the grant partially funds 4 plugs to be installed February 2026 on South 1st St. across from the Fire Department. La Crescent is along the corridor designated for chargers.
6. Carbon Reduction Program. Funds will purchase a police cruiser and fleet vehicle, 2027-2029 funds for LED Lighting, 2029-2030 funds for Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at Redwood Street East and South 11th mid-block crossing
7. Eagles Bluff Park Prairie Dry Bluff Prairie Signs. Viewed completed signs.
8. Shared bike station. Drift Cycle, Inc partnering with the city and Bike Shop will establish a shared bike station near the bike/ped bridge. There is an opportunity for advertising sponsors.

G. CPL Grant Projects

1. Stoney Point Phase I. The initial area will be sprayed one more time in Spring 2026, and then trees planted in Fall 2026. The fall planting will use potted trees, and seedlings will be planted in spring 2027. Need to redesign trail(s) in this area.
2. Stoney Point Phase II. This is for the area south of and below Stoney Point road toward 7 th St. Approximately 7 acres will be mowed. Neighbors will be notified.
3. Blufflands CPL grant. This is the grant for cutting and treating invasive species. The RFP is being rewritten.
4. Pine Creek Stream Restoration. The walk-through was completed. Tree planting will occur here in the spring.

III. New Business

- A. La Crescent Sustainability and Resilience Plan Team. A public outreach meeting was held January 13 and draft action plans were presented. The planning team will meet over the next four months. A link for a public survey will be posted on the city website.
- B. Active Transportation Action Plan Update/Review. MNDOT runs this grant, and there are multiple committees that are reviewing the plan. The revision will be posted on the city website.

C. Additional discussion items- future needs

1. Water bars on a heavily eroded trail in Vetsch. This is on the public works list.
2. Spring weeding of the boulevard islands by the highway. This could be a volunteer activity.
3. Thinning and pruning of existing orchard in Vetsch Park. Vision for this area is discussed. This includes preserving the existing trees and replacing dead trees.
4. Discussed selectively opening areas around small oak trees. This project needs a field trip to look at areas being considered.

D. MN Green steps has a water challenge. [Impact 26: Water Challenge!](#)

One idea is to do a mailing of a postcard about storm drain adoption.

E. 2023 and 2025 ReLeaf Grants/Applications. No word yet on the 2025 grant. Arbor Day planting will occur April 25 and swamp white oaks and lindens will be planted at the Pine Creek restoration area.

F. 2026 City Tree Plantings and Boulevard Tree Program. The city will have 50 boulevard trees for this program. The city has the opportunity to add Chinquapin to species available.

G. SHIP Grant funding changes 2026. Scope of SHIP grants is narrowing.

H. Other items. An ecological monitoring site has been established to monitor long term vegetation changes in the flood plain.

IV. Next meeting: Thursday Feb 26 Afternoon or late afternoon - to be determined.