



# EAST LANSING AGENDA

## Commission on the Environment Meeting

6:30 PM - Monday, April 20, 2026

Hannah Community Center - 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823

Public Comment - Email: [cwalls@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:cwalls@cityofeastlansing.com)

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<b>2. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	
<i>Public comment is limited to 3 minutes per speaker. Commissioners give full attention to every speaker; while direct responses during the meeting are not customary, all input informs the Commission's work.</i>	
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<b>10. ADJOURNMENT</b>	
<i>As a courtesy to members and the public, the Commission works toward an 8:00 p.m. adjournment. This is not a hard rule or limit, but a shared commitment to efficient and respectful use of everyone's time. Items requiring additional time will be accommodated as needed.</i>	



# MINUTES

## Commission on the Environment Meeting

6:30 PM - Monday, March 16, 2026

Hannah Community Center - 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823

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The Commission on the Environment of the City of East Lansing was called to order on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 6:30 PM, in the Hannah Community Center - 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823, with the following members present:

**PRESENT:** Helana Nelson, Danielle Beard, Jill Steiner, Barb Andersen, and Commissioner Eileen Lederle

**EXCUSED:**

### 1. OPENING

Roll Call

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Barb Andersen, seconded by Jill Steiner, to approve the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Danielle Beard, seconded by Eileen Lederle, to approve the minutes as presented.

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

#### 3.1 DRAFT Administrative Guidance - Ordinance 1558: Native Garden and Native Lawn Standards

The Commission discussed the draft policy guidance and offered feedback.

There were general positive comments shared, noting the importance of the side by side images for comparing conditions. There was also discussion regarding how this guidance sets the regulatory floor, but there is future opportunity for expanding education and "how-to" guidance beyond the policy framework. The Commission discussed inviting the Parks Advisory Board to collaborate on how the private property guidance can inform practices on City properties.

Moved by Eileen Lederle, seconded by Jill Steiner, to recommend that City

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Council adopt the set of documents (Ordinance 1588) with an amendment to preface that the document will evolve over time as the City has more residential properties taking advantage of native gardens and native landscaping.

Beard offered a friendly amendment to recommend that City Council adopt the ordinance pending legal review.

Vote on Amendment: All in favor

Vote on Main Motion: All in favor.

#### **4. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 Native Plant Outreach**

Walls said he met with Eric, STEAM lead at the East Lansing Public Library and discussed available dates to host an event introducing these new guidelines; however, a date has not been selected yet. He said Carolyn Miller from Beal Gardens has been confirmed as a panelist. The Commission discussed the kind of resources that could be provided to residents at the event. Walls continued that he anticipates a casual event including a question-and-answer session and allow for one-on-one discussions. He said he would like to see the event grow each year, potentially including future native plant sales to make it easier for residents to implement.

##### **4.2 Wetland Ordinance Updates discussion**

The Commission discussed the wetland ordinance changes and how a recent U.S Fish and Wildlife project was eligible for administrative exemption under the new ordinance as a habitat restoration project. There was discussion regarding future development of policy guidance that establishes formal criteria for determining whether a habitat restoration or invasive species removal project meets the intentions of the ordinance change.

#### **5. COMMITTEE REPORTS - NONE**

#### **6. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Beard said she would come up with a presentation to includes a brief history of the Commission, current priorities, Comp Plan priorities, and Robert's Rules of Order for the new commissioners.

#### **7. STAFF REPORTS**

Walls said the Wet Weather Resiliency Plan virtual open house is on the web and open to residents.

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Danielle Beard, seconded by Barb Andersen, motion to adjourn.



## Commission on the Environment **AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

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**To:** Commission on the Environment  
**Subject:** Written Communications  
**Meeting:** Commission on the Environment - 20 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Public Works  
**Staff Contact:** Cliff Walls, Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency Manager

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Written Communications received by the Commission.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[Mail - Cliff Walls - Outlook](#)



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**For the Commission on the Environment**

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**From** Molly Szpunar <mhobey@gmail.com>  
**Date** Thu 4/9/2026 9:49 AM  
**To** Cliff Walls <cwalls@cityofeastlansing.com>

CAUTION: This message originated from an email address outside of the organization. Please use caution before clicking any links or responding. Verify that you know and trust this sender prior to proceeding.

Good morning Mr. Walls,

I want to thank you and the Commission for the really terrific native landscapes initiative as well as all the new trees!

Also I would like to share some photos from my walk this morning, on Abbot, Forest, and Sunset streets. Unfortunately there is trash all over these areas of town. I don't think this is demonstrating good stewardship, and some of it is going to go into end up in our waterways.

This is basic environmental care and I think these property owners and tenants could do better.

Maybe the Commission will have some ideas on how to address.

Thank you,

Molly Szpunar



4/16/26, 4:41 PM

Mail - Cliff Walls - Outlook



4/16/26, 4:41 PM

Mail - Cliff Walls - Outlook



Sent from my iPhone



## Commission on the Environment **AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

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**To:** Commission on the Environment  
**Subject:** New Commissioner Welcome/Orientation  
**Meeting:** Commission on the Environment - 20 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Public Works  
**Staff Contact:** Cliff Walls, Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency Manager

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Commission will welcome its new members and present on the role, history, and current work of the group.



## Commission on the Environment **AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

**To:** Commission on the Environment  
**Subject:** Commission Goals and Committee Assignments  
**Meeting:** Commission on the Environment - 20 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Public Works  
**Staff Contact:** Cliff Walls, Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency Manager

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Commission maintains a framework of near-, medium-, and long-term priorities that guides subcommittee organization and current efforts. While priority setting was conducted earlier, this item revisits that framework to orient the four newest members to the Commission's established goals and working structure, and to invite them to identify areas of interest, ask questions, and consider participation in existing or new subcommittees ahead of the next meeting. No action or formal decisions are required; this item is informational and deliberative in nature.



## Commission on the Environment **AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

**To:** Commission on the Environment  
**Subject:** Staff Report  
**Meeting:** Commission on the Environment - 20 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Public Works  
**Staff Contact:** Cliff Walls, Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency Manager

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

***Sample of staff efforts/updates since our last meeting that may be of interest to the Commission:***

- Continued FY27 budget development and preparation
- Development of RFP/contract language for DPW solar array; anticipated to be published this week
- Issuance of RFP for Tree Planting contract
- Coordinating Arbor Day activities including school plantings and MSU student art collective installations in the downtown
- Preliminary implementation logistics and coordination for establishing a lay-down yard in Lansing for regional urban wood utilization
- Presented native garden guidance package to City Council; Council adopted Policy Resolution 2026-24 formalizing the year-round compliance framework and retiring the annual No Mow May enforcement pause; guidance documents now final and published
- Coordinating April 30 public education event at East Lansing Public Library; panel confirmed including Carolyn Miller (Beal Botanical Gardens / Wild Ones), U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Michigan Audubon, and ADAPT Ecology
- Continued Wet Weather Resiliency Plan project coordination, including EGLE grant agreement extension processing and modeling review; EastLansingFloodStudy.com virtual open house extended in response to recent wet weather events
- Post-flood response coordination and communications
- Received Council approval of sole-source contract with Davey Resource Group and MSU for Downtown Tree Canopy Revitalization Project
- Recycle Rama event coordination and planning (Saturday, April 25 at Ingham County Health Department)
- Grant close-out activities for Recycling Infrastructure Grant
- Coordination with University of Michigan School of Information students and partner firm on metric-based climate plan tracking dashboard; user interface testing
- Participation in Library "Sustainable Library Initiatives" certification effort
- Media interviews
- Site plan reviews and permitting