



**Sustainability Commission Agenda  
Jan. 16, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.  
City Council Chambers – Minnetonka Community Center**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**4. Approval of Minutes:** Nov. 21, 2023

**5. Agenda Items**

A. Sustainable Minnetonka Awards

- Recommendation: Review submittals, listen to presenters (if available), and vote on winners for each award category
- Presenter: Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

B. Earth Day Programming

- Recommendation: Listen to the presentation and provide recommendation on the 2024 Earth Day programming
- Staff Member: Kessa Andrews, GreenCorps Member serving at the City of Minnetonka

C. 2024 Public Outreach and Volunteer Campaigns

- Recommendation: Provide staff with guidance on 2024 sustainability commission public outreach and volunteer campaigns.
- Staff Member: Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

D. Everything Electric Review

- Recommendation: Provide comments/suggestions for the 2024 “Everything Electric” event.
- Staff Member: Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

**6. Report from Staff:**

A. CAAP Update

B. Organics Charging Requirements

C. Upcoming: Community Solar Workshop on March 12<sup>th</sup>

D. Upcoming: EV Workshop on Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>

E. PW Tour scheduled for 4:30 pm (before 3/19 sustainability commission meeting)

**Sustainability Commission Agenda**

**Jan. 16, 2024**

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**7. Report from Sustainability Commission Members**

**8. Other Business**

**9. Adjournment**

**Unapproved  
Minnetonka Sustainability Commission  
Minutes**

**Nov. 21, 2023**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Golob called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Sustainability commissioners Justin Anderson, Brian Golob, Matt Henry, Diane Meier, Amanda Norman and Ashley Pattain were present. Edwin Avalos and Molly Birr were absent.

Staff present: City Planner Loren Gordon, Staff Liaison Drew Ingvalson, Natural Resources Manager Leslie Yetka and Minnesota GreenCorps Member Clare Grilley.

Presenters Lydia Major and Becky Alexander from LHB and Abby Finis from Local Climate Solutions attended the meeting.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

Henry moved, second by Norman, to approve the agenda as submitted with additional information on the community survey and draft actions provided in the change memo dated Nov. 21, 2023.

Anderson, Henry, Meier, Norman, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Avalos and Birr were absent. Motion carried.

**4. Approval of Sustainability Commission Sept. 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Meier moved, second by Norman, to approve the minutes as submitted.

Anderson, Henry, Meier, Norman, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Avalos and Birr were absent. Motion carried.

**5. Agenda Items**

**A. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Presentation**

Ingvalson introduced Lydia Major and Becky Alexander from LHB and Abby Finis from Local Climate Solutions who gave a presentation on the climate action and adaptation plan. The presentation covered the project's schedule and engagement; greenhouse gas goals; strategy development; and next steps.

Ms. Alexander stated that the online survey responses are overwhelmingly positive. The proposed greenhouse gas goals are:

- To reduce 2018-community-wide-greenhouse-gas-emission levels by 66 percent per person by 2030 and achieve net-zero-greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050.
- All new buildings to be electric and as energy efficient as possible.
- To have energy-efficient retrofits and electrification for one out of every four buildings by 2030.
- For there to be no use of fossil fuels in buildings by 2050.
- Electricity to be carbon free by 2040.
- Eliminate two out of every five vehicle trips by 2030.
- By 2030, one out five vehicles to be electric.
- All vehicles to create zero emissions by 2050.
- Each person cut their waste by 1.2 pounds per day and 75 percent of waste to be recycled or composted by 2030.
- By 2050, 90 percent of waste to be recycled or composted.

Ms. Finis provided a list of possible remedies.

Henry supports stricter building codes for new construction and providing easy-to-understand instructions on how to implement emission-reducing substitutes like a heat pump.

Chair Golob likes the information clearly laid out with graphics. He is concerned that delaying mowing may be counterproductive and cause more emissions than routinely maintaining a lawn.

Meier suggested the city provide motivation for individuals to purchase and utilize electric vehicles by providing more electric-vehicle chargers; requiring businesses to complete an energy-smart assessment; and enlisting neighborhood watch leaders to attend sustainability commission meetings and share the information learned with their neighbors.

Norman likes the clear and concise organization of the complex information. Page five is a little overwhelming. She suggested material be shared with teachers and staff in schools including cafeteria and janitorial staff. The information provided in the hyperlinks is amazing. A hyperlink may be used track and show how far the city is to meeting a goal. She appreciates the great work.

Pattain appreciates the hard work put into the plan. She found it very inviting to look at and read. She noted that it would make a large impact if employers would allow workers to work remotely at least two days a week. Reducing garbage refuse would have less of an impact, but would be easier to achieve. She does organics recycling. She would like it to be more financially accessible to residents at home. She appreciates the thought put into determining what needs to happen and outlining how it could be done.

Chair Golob strongly supports encouraging employers to allow employees to work from home to decrease emissions.

Meier thought a work group with other cities would be beneficial to discuss implementation of some of the goals. Chair Golob agreed.

Henry supports making single-use plastics compostable.

Ms. Finis continued the presentation and provided information on climate-ready businesses and climate-friendly properties.

Chair Golob suggested changing “back-up power” to “back-up commercial generator.” The checklist is an excellent summary of useful information. The links are helpful and the information is well laid out.

Norman suggested businesses track the amount of time vehicles spend parked idling in loading docks.

Ms. Finis continued the presentation focusing on strategies a city could use to reduce greenhouse gas and promote climate adaptation and resilience.

Henry supports specific language to require a reduction in salt use on roads.

In response to Henry’s question, Ms. Finis provided Ann Arbor Michigan as a good example of a website that encourages residents to implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gases.

Henry suggested doing research to see if cloud seeding and other practices being done in one state would impact rain in other states.

Norman found the list very helpful. She would like the strategies tied to a data-feedback system to set priorities based on possible impact. It would be nice to see the strategies broken down by season to know when to do each strategy. She appreciates the amazing work done so far.

Ms. Finis shared next steps. Ingvalson invited commissioners to send any additional comments to him within a week’s time.

Chair Golob opened the public input portion of the meeting. No one chose to speak. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

Chair Golob thanked the presenters.

## **B. Salt Reduction Best Practices for Winter Maintenance**

Yetka reported.

Meier suggested that the city provide sand for residents to utilize for slippery sidewalks. Yetka supports that idea.

Henry confirmed with Yetka that the city tracks salt use for roads. The use of salt does depend on the weather. The winter months are warming which will create more freeze-thaw cycles each year. Dealing with that will need to be addressed.

In response to Henry's question, Yetka answered that Minnetonka's only body of water that meets the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MNPCA) standards of being impaired by chloride is Minnehaha Creek. A body of water must exceed the MNPCA's standards for at least three years to be considered impaired. Crane Lake has a high chloride level that is close to exceeding the standard. There is funding budgeted in 2026 to explore opportunities for mitigating the chloride entering Crane Lake from the surrounding paved areas. Henry supports posting the chloride levels on the sustainability website. Yetka stated that the watershed districts report on the water quality of each body of water. The city's website could provide links to that information. Henry would like a snapshot of Minnetonka's water bodies on Minnetonka's website with links to additional information. Yetka noted that as lakes turn over and discharge downstream, salt is transported down to the Mississippi River and the Gulf. Henry would like the public to be made aware of an overall increase in chloride levels.

In response to Henry's question, Yetka explained that salt from water softeners discharges into the sanitary-sewer system. Water-treatment plants do not remove salt from the discharge which continues to flow into a river and downstream. An on-demand-water softener only runs when needed and contributes less salt than older water softeners. Reverse osmosis is the only way to remove salt from water. Henry and Yetka support encouraging residents to utilize on-demand water softeners.

Chair Golob suggested commissioners provide literature to residents on salt-use reduction at the upcoming farmer's markets. Yetka stated that natural resources staff have flyers and salt cups that they handed out at the city open house that commissioners are welcome to utilize.

In response to Henry's question, Yetka explained that Eden Prairie has a centralized water-treatment system.

Henry would like the city to coerce or reward businesses for reducing salt usage on parking lots. Yetka explained that legislation has been introduced at the state level to limit liability for slip and fall cases that occur at a location that uses salt appropriately, but the legislation has not passed. Minnetonka City Council approved an ordinance that requires proper salt storage. Proper salt storage is also required by the state stormwater permit.

Henry supports the city council amending policy 11.17 to include salt as a pollutant and pledging to limit salt use while maintaining public safety.

In response to Henry's question, Yetka explained that sodium chloride deposited on a street will wash down a storm drain. Public works staff will sweep up salt piles and store it to be reused. Homeowners may call public works to have them retrieve a pile of salt.

Yetka invited those interested to attend the annual salt symposium held on-line every year in August that covers chloride best practices and new technologies.

Yetka stated that a public service announcement will be displayed on an electronic, dynamic sign in Minnetonka in December to promote smart-salting practices.

Pattain enjoyed the presentation and learned a lot. She looks forward to sharing that information with residents at the farmer's market.

Norman stated that Japan uses reclaimed-heated-water bubblers to deice the roads. She would be interested in finding out the cost to implement that system. Anderson supports building one and testing it.

Chair Golob noted that one teaspoon of salt contaminates five gallons of water. He thanked Yetka for the presentation.

Chair Golob opened the public input portion of the meeting. No one chose to speak. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

### **C. 2023 Work Plan**

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommend commissioners recommend approval of the 2023 work plan to the city council.

Anderson recommended putting an empty bullet-point circle in front of incomplete tasks and a solid bullet-point circle in front of completed tasks to help differentiate them from each other.

Chair Golob confirmed with Ingvalson that the commission did not complete choosing webinar topics in 2023. Ingvalson will add that task to the 2024 work plan.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public hearing was closed.

Henry moved, second by Anderson, to recommend that the city council approve the 2023 work plan. Anderson, Henry, Meier, Norman, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Avalos and Birr were absent. Motion carried.

### **D. 2024 Work Plan**

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommend commissioners provide recommendations to include in the work plan, discuss ideas and recommend approval of the 2024 work plan to the city council.

Chair Golob suggested changing “wastewater-treatment center” to “wastewater-treatment facility.”

Anderson suggested hosting an e-waste drop-off event on a specific day. Ingvalson will research the possibility of collaborating with Hennepin County for an e-waste drop-off event to be held in 2025. The city is currently working with Hennepin County on a joint building materials drop-off event.

Henry would like to promote the sustainability webpage to residents by providing a QR code in a brochure and Minnetonka Memo and making the webpage easier to navigate. Ingvalson will work with communications staff to consider ways to advertise the sustainability page.

Norman suggested hosting a resident-focus group to collect real-time feedback on the functionality of the sustainability webpage.

Ingvalson noted that a tour of public works is planned for the third quarter of 2024 and would provide an opportunity for commissioners to ask questions regarding salt use on roads and explore what could be changed to the salt-use policy. He will look at scheduling the tour earlier in the year.

Henry suggested inviting a salt specialist from the MNPCA to provide a presentation on best-salt practices.

Meier found the sustainability webpage easy to navigate. She suggested providing a link on the city’s home page to the climate action and adaptation plan and sustainability page. Ingvalson explained that he recently spoke with communications staff who mentioned that would be included as part of a larger, cohesive communications plan being developed.

Henry suggested having a speaker from the Center for Energy and the Environment present to the commission on details regarding energy audits for businesses.

Henry suggested touring a passive house, windfarm and nuclear power plant.

Anderson supports touring Prairie Island Nuclear Plant.

Ingvalson will include those suggestions on a list that will be referenced for 2024 and future years and conduct a vote early in 2024 to prioritize the tour locations.

Ingvalson received unanimous confirmation from commissioners in support of modifying the 2024 work plan to include reviewing ways to improve the sustainable Minnetonka webpage; moving up the tour of public works to the second quarter; scheduling a presentation from public works staff regarding salt use; adding a presentation from Hennepin County staff on e-waste; and choosing webinar topics as well as the tours and educational opportunities already included.



The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public hearing was closed.

Pattain moved, second by Meier, to recommend that the city council approve the 2024 work plan with changes to include considering ways to improve the sustainable Minnetonka webpage; scheduling the public works tour earlier in 2024; scheduling a presentation from public works staff on salt use; adding a presentation from Hennepin County staff on e-waste; and choosing webinar topics. Anderson, Henry, Meier, Norman, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Avalos and Birr were absent. Motion carried.

## 6. Report from Staff

Ingvalson gave the staff report:

- Energy Smart did receive submittals, but has not shared the results yet. MNimize did not have any sign ups follow-up with a visit.
- The one-stop-efficiency shop made 23-lighting assessments and installed 13-smart thermostats.
- The Sustainable Minnetonka Awards applications will be reviewed at the next planning commission meeting.
- The 2024 sustainability commission meeting dates will be Jan. 16th, March 19th, May 21st, July 23rd, Sept. 17th and Nov. 12th.

Ingvalson introduced Minnesota GreenCorps Member Clare Grilley. Grilley explained that she will be working with staff until August 2024 on multiple items including waste reduction, recycling and organics management. She has been attending a lot of events. She will be at the winter farmer's market on Dec. 9, 2023. She studied environmental science policy management and graduated from the UMN. She will continue to attend the sustainability commission meetings. Ingvalson stated that Grilley has been working on the Next Steps program and on promoting organics recycling in multi-family-residential buildings. Commissioners welcomed Grilley.

## 7. Report from Commissioners

Meier attended an international climate and health conference that works to find solutions for populations dealing with food insecurities, hurricanes and a shortage of healthcare workers.

Chair Golob stated that Pattain, Meier and Norman participated in the small-business blitz and received a lot of interest from business owners when they learned that the business would receive help and a rebate.

## 8. Other Business: None

## 9. Adjournment

Meier moved, second by Anderson, to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lois T. Mason  
Planning Secretary



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 5A  
Meeting of January 16, 2024**

**Title:** Sustainable Minnetonka Awards  
**Report From:** Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner  
**Submitted through:** Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director

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**Action Requested:**  Motion  Informational  Public Hearing  Vote  
**Form of Action:**  Resolution  Ordinance  Other  N/A  
**Votes needed**  5 votes  N/A  Other

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**Summary Statement**

The city has received eight application submissions for the Sustainable Minnetonka Awards.

**Recommended Action**

Review each project prior to the Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> sustainability commission meeting, listen to presenters (if available), and vote on winners for each award category.

**Background**

Voting Process: Commissioners should review all application submittals received by the city (located within this report) prior to the Nov. 21, 2023, sustainability commission meeting. At the meeting, each item will be described (either by city staff or by the applicant). After all the items have been described, the commission will complete their vote for winners via paper ballots provided by staff. Staff will count votes and announce winners at the meeting.

Application Submittals: The following pages are descriptions of each project submitted for the 2022 Sustainable Minnetonka Awards.

Category	Number of Submittals
Energy	3
Landscape	2
Water	1
Waste	1
Young Adult	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

**ENERGY**

*Nominee: Joerg Reifart, Minnetonka Resident  
Location: 15612 Wing Lake Drive*

Description: Our project at 15612 Wing Lake Dr. Minnetonka involved several energy-efficient upgrades to our home, including the installation of a solar power system with 29 panels and a system power output of 11.6 kW. The addition of the solar power system works in conjunction with our plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV 2018) with a 12kWh battery, which has bi-directional charging capability. This type of vehicle allows us to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and lower our carbon footprint. The bidirectional capability could, with the addition of a bidirectional charger (currently restricted accessibility), allow for vehicle-to-home as well as vehicle-to-grid energy transfer. It could therefore serve as a battery backup in case of power

outages. This, instead of a separate battery, avoids the negative environmental impact of battery production. To maintain our lawn in an eco-friendly way, we use an electric robotic lawn mower (Gardena Sileno life) that runs on electricity rather than gas. This helps to reduce emissions and noise pollution in our neighborhood. Our home was also granted Energy Fit Home status and certification due to several energy-saving lighting and improvements in insulation. The certificate indicates that our home meets a high standard of energy efficiency, which can help us to reduce our energy bills and environmental impact.

Overall, our *15612 Wing Lake Dr Minnetonka* project demonstrates a commitment to sustainability and reducing our environmental impact. By incorporating energy-efficient upgrades like solar power, electric vehicles, and robotic lawnmowers, we hope to get closer to a more sustainable future. Our other efforts to be sustainable include recycling, composting, food cycling, cloth diapering, plans to transition to a pollinator-friendly residential yard with native plants, and commitment to mostly unpackaged produce.

**Attachment:**



*Nominee: Minnetonka Heights Apartments*  
*Location: 5809 County Road 101*

Description: Heartland Realty Investors has a strong passion for the environment and for bringing clean renewable energy to the properties they own. The owners and our team at Minnetonka Heights felt the installation of solar panels at Minnetonka Heights was a great business opportunity along with a way to provide positive impacts for our residents, the community, and the environment. Bill Walter, the president of Heartland Realty Investors, holds nature and national parks close to his heart. He looks for ways to help the environment and believes in his mission to safeguard sustainability. Solar panel installation at Minnetonka Heights was the perfect opportunity to help implement these environmentally conscious practices. Heartland Realty Investors believes in doing things the right way, not the easy way by committing to their integrity and by serving their core principles. Overall, the installation of solar panels at Minnetonka Heights has been a win-win solution for the community we serve while also taking pride in helping the environment as a whole!

**Attachment:**



*Nominee: Jayson Palm, St. David's Center for Child and Family Development*  
*Location: 3395 Plymouth Road*

Description: St. David's Center has been working the past decade to incorporate better energy efficiency into our buildings and grounds. As we looked for opportunities, we knew adding solar panels to our spacious flat roof would be ideal, but were not sure how to make it happen. In 2021 we worked with TruNorth Solar on a plan to add solar possible without incurring significant costs from the project. In 2022 the plan went forward, and a significant solar array was installed. We are grateful to now have 105 solar panels on the St. David's Center flat roof, which to date in 2023 has produced 45.91 MWh of electricity.



## **LANDSCAPE**

*Nominee: Kimberly Oleson, Minnetonka Resident (submitted by Elizabeth Boor, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District)*  
*Location: 5432 Maple Ridge Court*

Description: Kimberly Oleson received a cost share grant from the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District in 2021 to install a native shoreline buffer along bank of Nine Mile Creek. The buffer restored 1,320 square feet of residential property from turf grass and invasive species like buckthorn. The buffer serves to make the creek's stream bank more resilient and can absorb nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) before they reach the creek. From Kimberly—"I am most proud of taking sustainable action to protect our precious watershed and accentuating the use of native plants in the shoreline buffer project design".

**Attachment:** See next page.



*Nominee: Charlie Swanson, Minnetonka Resident  
Address: 2840 Mayflower Ave*

Description: The 1-acre residential property in which we moved to in early 2019 included one-third of an acre of thick, invasive buckthorn which was damaging the tree-filled lot & prohibiting airflow & sunlight to the rest of the land. As a nature enthusiast & science educator in our local community, eliminating the buckthorn & restoring the land to its natural state in an environmentally friendly manner was a priority for property owner Charlie Swanson. Charlie wasted no time starting this multi-year journey. Charlie hired goat mitigation services to help remove the buckthorn in 2019. After one week of 30 goats on the property, the dense buckthorn forest was gone. There was new light shining onto the property, presenting trees & growth with the opportunity to prosper. Over the next few years, Charlie singlehandedly spent hundreds of hours manually pulling & disposing buckthorn roots; not a single chemical was used to remove any of the buckthorn! As sections of the once-infected buckthorn area were cleared, Charlie planted several rounds of native plants to retake the land. To ensure success of the plants, Charlie extended our irrigation system to the cover the area. In the meantime, Charlie participated in "Cover It Up", a 3-year study with the Department of Forest Resources & the University of Minnesota. The study's goal was to evaluate new ways of preventing buckthorn from returning in the years following buckthorn management, including which native species to plant after buckthorn removal, how to plant them, and which conditions favor their success. The study required that Charlie maintain sample plots on our property, each of which contained buckthorn & native plants. Over the course of 3 years, Charlie collected data from the plots that was submitted to the U. The study concluded in late 2022, & Charlie has continued buckthorn removal & seeding. By September 2023, Charlie removed buckthorn from and planted native seed on over 90% of the once-infected area.

Attachment: I am Kelsey Swanson, and I am nominating my husband, Charlie Swanson, for the Sustainable Minnetonka Landscape Award. A few noteworthy items I wanted to add to this application.

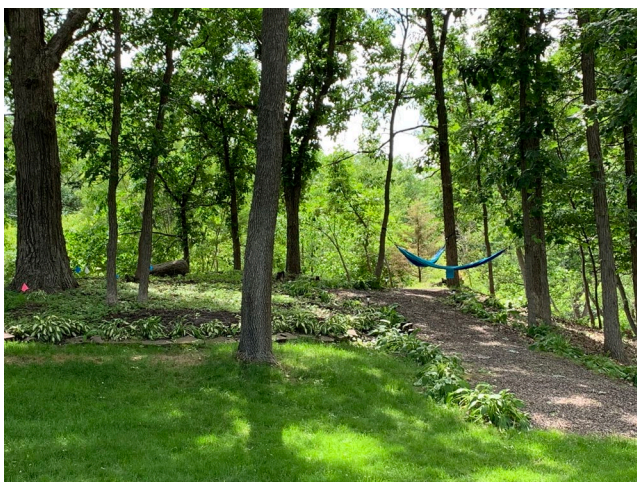
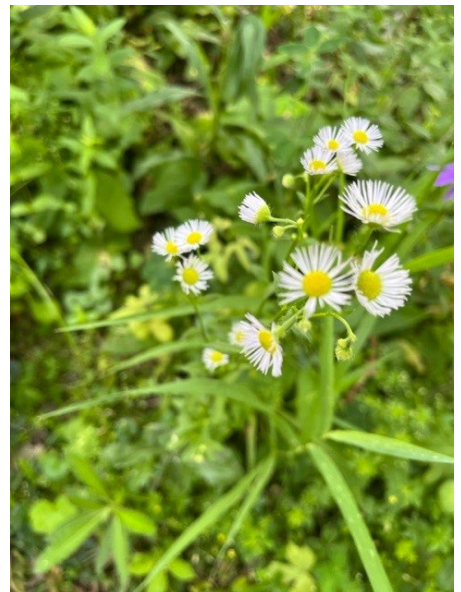
Charlie's work and care for the land has extended beyond buckthorn mitigation and restoration planting. On several occasions, he personally removed fallen dead trees from our marsh, later using the wood for landscaping projects or firewood. Each autumn, he removes hundreds of gallons of acorns from the lawn to keep the grass healthy. He has treated distressed trees, and unfortunately even removed some to prevent the spread of tree-borne illness in our area. In a single weekend, he planted over 200 hosta plants on the property. He has planted other trees and shrubs to fill areas once overtaken by buckthorn.

Charlie's goal has always been to leave the land in a better condition than when we acquired it. While there will always be continued maintenance, his commitment to creating a sustainable and thriving area was unwavering; I am proud to say that I believe he not only achieved his goal but surpassed it in only a few





short years. His dedication and hard work helped create a beautiful and thriving ecosystem that we call home. Thank you for your consideration of Charlie for this noble award.

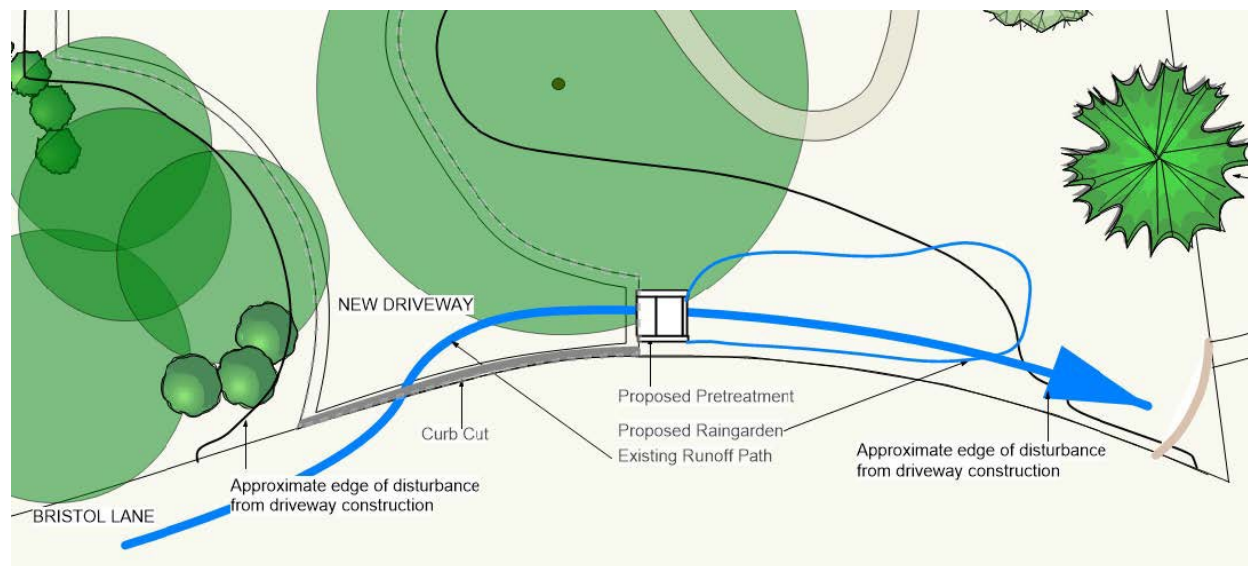


## WATER

*Nominee: Michelle Traeger and Kevin Gordon, Minnetonka Residents (submitted by Elizabeth Boor, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District)*  
*Address: 5560 Bristol Ln*

Description: Michelle Traeger and Kevin Gordon received a cost share grant from the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District in 2022 to install a raingarden to collect road runoff which previously ran through their property. Using rock bays as pretreatment, they are now able to collect and infiltrate stormwater during rain events. This prevents potentially pollutant-laden water from reaching a nearby wetland. The plants in the raingarden help infiltrate the water with their deep root systems and are also native to Minnesota providing crucial habitat for pollinators.

### **Attachment:**



July 2022 rain garden



### **WASTE**

*Nominee: Mary Jo Bailey, Bailey Properties*  
*Address: 5800-5870 Baker Road*

Description: SkyRidge Business Center + Nature Preserve is home to the first Existing Building Operation and Management to achieve the USGB's LEED Platinum award in Minnesota in 2011. As a part of our ongoing commitment to employee environmentally friendly practices, we have consistently participated in as many available recycling programs as possible since their inception. We appreciate the Organics Recycling program for helping minimize the solid waste being sent to landfills. Our waste haulers have audited our participation in their programs finding more than 80% of the solid waste generated being recycled.

**Attachment:** N/A

### **YOUNG ADULT**

*Nominee: Minnetonka High School's Natural Resources Club (submitted by Sarah Johnson, Community Service Specialist, Minnetonka Public Schools)*  
*Address: N/A*

Description: I would like to nominate Minnetonka High School's Natural Resources Club for their innovative leadership in the 2022-2023 school year. Established by then-seniors Sarah Johnsen and Emma Karbowski, the Natural Resources Club's stated purpose is service that connects students to the city's natural resource program. In collaboration with the City of Minnetonka (under the mentorship of Christine Petersen), the club pursued meaningful activities related to each of the natural resource division's priority areas of work. During the fall of 2022, they worked with adult volunteers and staff to remove invasive buckthorn shrubs in parks, hosted expert speakers at club meetings, and cleaned roadside storm drains to reduce water pollution. During the winter of 2023, club members created social media infographics about reducing road salt, presented at Farmers Market, and coordinated a tree sale that sent several hundred native tree seedlings into the community. During the spring, they worked with forestry staff to control buckthorn along a much-used trail adjacent to the high school and planted several native tamarack trees in the area. As they were preparing for final exams, students came out to plant trees for Arbor Day and put in many hours leading a service-learning project to help elementary school students (in Spanish and English) educate the community about reducing pet waste. On Earth Day 2023 they hosted an event and distributed the 100's of saplings they had sold during their "Replenish" tree sale to community members to plant in their own yards to promote land/environmental stewardship. Their impact is emphasized in this statement from Minnetonka forestry technician Diana Preisen: "They were always eager to lend a helping hand and brought a contagious enthusiasm and good work ethic with them. From cutting buckthorn to planting trees, their energy never wavered. They showed a passion for the natural world and through their volunteerism, contributed to a greener Minnetonka. A special thank you for their help recruiting students to participate in the city's annual Arbor Day tree planting event. The event was a great success and we couldn't have done it without them." Kudos to the NR Club!

From my own professional point of view, I was very impressed with their sincere dedication to this collaboration with the City of Minnetonka. They were committed to make positive change in the community and establish a Minnetonka High School club that would be able to provide ongoing support of the city's efforts to build sustainable systems and practices.

**Attachment:**



## Removing invasive species



**BUCKTHORN  
REMOVAL ON  
TAMARACK TRAIL**

2/5

## Working with 5<sup>th</sup> graders...

**GROVELAND  
ELEMENTARY  
VISITS**



# ...teaching the importance of picking up pet waste to protect water quality





**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 5B  
Meeting of January 16, 2024**

**Title:** Earth Day Programming  
**Report From:** Kessa Andrews, GreenCorps Member  
**Submitted through:** Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director  
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

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**Action Requested:**  Motion  Informational  Public Comment  Vote  
**Form of Action:**  Resolution  Ordinance  Other: Comments  N/A  
**Votes needed**  5 votes  Other  N/A

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**Summary Statement**

The city's [Energy Action Plan's](#) short-term focus goals include:

- Increasing energy efficiency in both residential properties and multi-family buildings; and
- Supporting conversion to renewable energy sources.

A display in the community center during April for Earth Month will inform visitors about energy efficiency programs, electrification opportunities, and renewable energy. It will inform residents how to help work towards these goals.

**Recommended Action**

Approve the project.

**Strategic Profile Relatability**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Strength & Operational Excellence   | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe & Healthy Community           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability & Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Livable & Well-Planned Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure & Asset Management             | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Inclusiveness            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A   |   |

Statement: See [Strategic Profile](#).

## **Background**

Over the past few years, the commission has expressed interest in celebrating Earth Day. In, January 2023, the sustainability commission considered doing an Earth Day program / initiative ([report](#) and [minutes](#)). Staff described that a new program / initiative on Earth Day could compete with existing activities. The commission recommended that the city adopt a resolution proclaiming April 22, 2023, Earth Day, and encouraged the city promote sustainability activities via social media and the Minnetonka Memo.

The proposed project would be a way to engage the community during Earth Month around a critical sustainability topic. The display will be up for the whole month of April for visitors to interact, and it will not detract from other Earth Day events happening in the city.

## **About the Project**

The display will consist of four posters on energy efficiency with relevant flyers, “leaves” to place as commitments to sustainability actions on a tree, and resident stories hung on a clothesline, in the community center.

### **Poster 1: Energy Efficiency Pyramid**

- A graphic of a pyramid with three sections:
  - Weatherization (as the base) - about properly insulating and sealing your home or building
  - Electrification - converting to electric appliances and installing the most efficient electric appliances
  - Renewable Energy - converting to renewable energy including on-site solar, and subscribing to renewable energy through community solar or your utility.



Poster 2: Weatherization

This poster will share the available energy assessment programs for residential homes, multi-family buildings, nonprofits and religious institutions, and businesses. The programs are:

- Single Family Homes/Apartments: [Home Energy Squad](#)
- Multi-Family Buildings: [Multi-Family Building Efficiency Program](#)
- Non-Profits: [Non-Profit Energy Savings Program](#); [EnerChange](#)
- Businesses: [Commercial Energy Savings Programs](#)



**RECEIVE A FREE, FULL-SERVICE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AUDIT**

After auditing your entire building, including resident units and common areas, we'll make suggestions on how to make it more energy efficient. Then, we'll offer you rebates and bonus incentives to make those improvements.

**WHAT WE OFFER:**

- An on-site, no-cost energy efficiency audit, conducted by an experienced professional.
- A thorough report of findings and recommendations on ways to improve your building's energy efficiency.
- No-cost installation of energy-saving products, such as LEDs and showerheads, throughout common areas and resident units.
- Brochures for your residents that contain important energy-saving tips.
- Implementation support and guidance.
- Rebates and bonus incentives for making energy efficiency upgrades throughout your building.
- Reduction of energy usage leading to long-term savings and improved comfort of building residents.

**30% BONUS**

Incentive, to rebates earned, on market-rate multi-family housing.

**200% BONUS**

Incentive, to rebates earned, which is triple the standard bonus, on affordable multi-family housing. (Up to the equipment cost)

**BUILDING QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Located in Minnesota
- Has five or more units
- Electric service through Xcel Energy
- Natural gas service through CenterPoint Energy or Xcel Energy
- Has common entrance, common areas and in-unit kitchens
- Affordable housing has 65% or more units that are income qualified or meet other income qualified requirements per state guidelines.

Poster 3: Appliances

This poster will show the most efficient types of electric appliances and the easiest appliances to convert to electric. It will highlight air-source heat pumps as the most efficient heating and cooling system. It will also focus on electric dryers, induction ranges, electric yard equipment, and electric vehicles. The poster will convey that these options are not only environmentally friendly but, in many cases, healthier to operate and sometimes cheaper.



HEAT AND COOL WITH AN

# Air Source Heat Pump

A **modern, variable speed heat pump** is the clear choice for **energy efficient heating and cooling** in Minnesota.



[mnashp.org](http://mnashp.org)

### Poster 4: Renewable Energy

This poster will explain the available options for renewable energy, including on-site solar, community solar, and mixed renewable energy subscriptions. This will include [a list of solar companies that offer on-site solar](#) as well as a list of all the organizations offering community solar. It will also include the [Xcel renewable energy subscription options](#).

### Flyers

Flyers will be available on the energy assessment programs, insulation rebates, air-source heat pumps, the Inflation Reduction Act, community solar, Xcel's mixed renewable energy subscription etc.

**New state and federal rebates, incentives and programs** empower Minnesotans to reduce their energy costs and improve the air quality in homes and neighborhoods. A sample of the new rebates, credits and incentives is below. This is not legal nor tax advice. Learn more using the QR codes on the back.

### What is a tax credit?

A tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of income tax you would otherwise owe. You claim a tax credit as part of your annual tax return.

### Electric Vehicles (EVs):

up to \$10,000 in state and federal incentives

#### Federal tax credits:

- EVs, plug-in hybrid and fuel-cell EVs
- Up to \$7,500 for new (purchased 2023 or after)
- Up to \$4,000 for used (purchased 2023 or after)
- See [fueleconomy.gov/feg/tax2023.shtml](https://fueleconomy.gov/feg/tax2023.shtml) for list of eligible vehicles

#### State rebates:

- EVs and plug-in hybrids
- Up to \$2,500 for new or 24+ month lease (MSRP less than \$55,000)
- Up to \$600 for used (less than \$25,000 in price)
- Eligibility: Minnesota resident/business/nonprofit, vehicle registered in MN, purchased on or after 5/25/2023

*\*Program still being developed, check Commerce website for details and updates (QR code on back)\**

### What is a rebate?

A rebate is a discount that gives you cash back after you make a purchase or at the point-of-sale.

Tree

Residents will be able to put a leaf on the tree with their commitment to an action they will take to increase energy efficiency.



Clothesline

Stories from residents who have taken action on energy efficiency will be hung on a clothesline.

**Commission's Role**

The commission's role in this project will be to recommend changes and ideas during the Jan. 16, 2024, meeting and spread the word about the display.

**Proposed Display Time**

- **April 1-30:** Display presented in the Community Center.



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 5C  
Meeting of January 16, 2024**

**Title:** 2024 Public Outreach and Volunteer Campaigns  
**Report From:** Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner  
**Submitted through:** Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director

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**Action Requested:**  Motion  Informational  Public Comment  Vote  
**Form of Action:**  Resolution  Ordinance  Other: Comments  N/A  
**Votes needed**  5 votes  Other  N/A

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**Summary Statement**

One of the sustainability commission's roles is to serve as a sustainability ambassador to the Minnetonka community. This responsibility is described within the city code. In addition, the city's [Energy Action Plan Addendum](#) (Strategy 6) states that the city shall "launch a targeted outreach campaign to advise action to local businesses."

**Recommended Action**

Provide staff with guidance on the 2024 Sustainability Commission's public outreach and volunteer campaigns.

**Strategic Profile Relatability**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Strength & Operational Excellence   | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe & Healthy Community           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability & Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Livable & Well-Planned Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure & Asset Management             | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Inclusiveness            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A   |   |

Statement: See [Strategic Profile](#).

## **Background**

In 2023, the sustainability commission participated in two business outreach campaigns.

### **- Restaurant Outreach**

- Focus Areas:
  - Energy Conservation: [Energy Smart](#)
    - Provides free energy audits
    - Program run by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
  - Waste Reduction: [MNimize](#)
    - Provides free waste audits and a \$500 rebate for waste reduction materials
    - Program run through a partnership between Hennepin County and Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation
- Campaign Audience: Minnetonka restaurants
- Promotion Period: May – December 2023
  - Commissioners signed up for businesses that they wanted to share program information.
  - Conversations by commissioners were completed as commissioners were able via phone, email, or in-person.
  - Businesses were sent postcards promoting the two programs prior to commissioners contacting them
- Outcomes
  - Three Energy Smart audits completed
  - Zero MNimize waste audits completed

### **- Business Blitz**

- Focus Area: Energy Conservation, [One-Stop Efficiency Shop](#)
  - Provides free lighting, HVAC and refrigeration assessments
- Campaign Audience: middle-aged commercial buildings
- Promotion Period: Oct. 18, 2023
  - Commissioners volunteered to attend a one-day “blitz” campaign.
  - Commissioners and lighting assessors, visited businesses in person and offered on-the spot-lighting assessments
  - Businesses were sent two postcards prior to the campaign day to notify them that commissioners and auditors would be stopping by
- Outcomes
  - 23 lighting assessments completed
  - 13 smart thermostats installed

### **Future Outreach Campaigns**

As noted above, staff is requesting direction from the commission on the types of outreach campaigns they would like to promote in 2024. Below are a few example items to consider for future outreach campaigns; however, this is not an exhaustive list:

#### Potential Focus Area:

- Energy
  - o Energy Conservation
  - o Renewable Energy
  - o Electric Vehicles
  - o EV Charging
  
- Paved Surface Salting
  - o Single Unit Residential
  - o Commercial/Industrial
  
- Waste
  - o Waste Reduction
  - o Recycling
  - o Organics
  
- Other?

#### Audience:

- Single Unit Residential
- Multi-Unit Residential
- Commercial/Industrial (specific area)
- Non-Profit Organizations

#### Outreach Method:

- Postcard mailings
- Email
- Phone
- In-person visits

### **Sustainability Commission Task**

Provide staff with input on their desired campaigns for 2024. Please note, these do not need to be planned campaigns. Instead, the commission should aim to provide general comments on the type of campaigns they would like to participate in 2024.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will take note of the sustainability commission's input on their desired 2024 outreach / volunteer campaigns at the Jan. 16 meeting. Staff will then research options, connect with outside organizations for assistance (if applicable), and bring back outreach/volunteer opportunities that align with the commission's input.



**Sustainability Commission Agenda Item 5D  
Meeting of January 16, 2024**

**Title:** Everything Electric Review

**Report From:** Drew Ingvalson, Associate Planner/Sustainability Coordinator

**Submitted through:** Julie Wischnack, AICP, Community Development Director  
Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner

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**Action Requested:**  Motion  Informational  Public Comment  Vote  
**Form of Action:**  Resolution  Ordinance  Other: Comments  N/A  
**Votes needed**  5 votes  Other  N/A

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**Summary Statement**

On Sept. 5, 2023, the city and sustainability commission hosted its 2nd “Everything Electric” event. The city’s [Energy Action Plan Addendum](#) (Strategy 14) has hosted an electric vehicle ride-and-drive event as a strategy and the commission has put “host Everything Electric Event” in their [draft 2024 work plan](#).





### **Recommended Action**

Provide comments/suggestions for the 2024 “Everything Electric” event.

### **Strategic Profile Relatability**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Strength & Operational Excellence   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe & Healthy Community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability & Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Livable & Well-Planned Development  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure & Asset Management             | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Inclusiveness             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A   |  |

Statement: See [Strategic Profile](#).

### **Background**

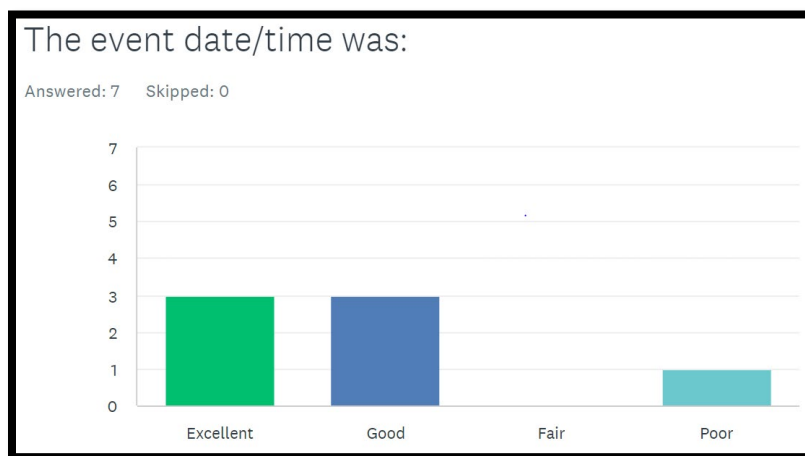
In 2023, the City of Minnetonka hosted its 2<sup>nd</sup> “Everything Electric” event. Below is information about the event.

- **Promotion:** The city promoted this event via:
  - o Social media
  - o City email subscribers
  - o The city website
  - o Minnetonka Memo
  - o Minnetonka Farmers Market
  - o Posters and flyers in city facilities and community gathering spaces (Hennepin County Libraries, UnMapped Brewing, Boom Island Brewing, etc.)
  
- **Date, Time and Location:** The event was held on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2023, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., in coordination with the Minnetonka Farmers Market. The event was located in the JCPenney parking lot (Ridgedale Mall), adjacent to the Ridgedale Commons Park.
  
- **Dealerships:** Three dealerships participated in the event (Walser Nissan, Minneapolis-Eden Prairie Tesla, and Polestar Minneapolis). All three dealerships had vehicles available for test drives.
  
- **Other Vendors:** Two local businesses attended the event and displayed electric equipment.
  - o Gophers Ace brought a variety of Ego lawn equipment for display.
  - o Tonka Cycle and Ski displayed electric bicycles.
  
- **Local Organizations:** Commuter Services of the I-494 Corridor Commission attended the event and provided information to visitors.
  
- **Volunteers:** Eight (8) electric vehicle owners attended the event and spoke with guests about their vehicles. In addition, a community volunteer attended and provided information about their robotic lawn mower.
  
- **City Displays:** City staff displayed a new electric city vehicle (Chevy EUV) and various electric yard equipment used on city properties (weed whip, chainsaw, and leaf blower).
  
- **Giveaways:** The city provided sustainability handouts and LED light bulbs.
  
- **Attendance:** Staff estimates that 150 people attended the event.

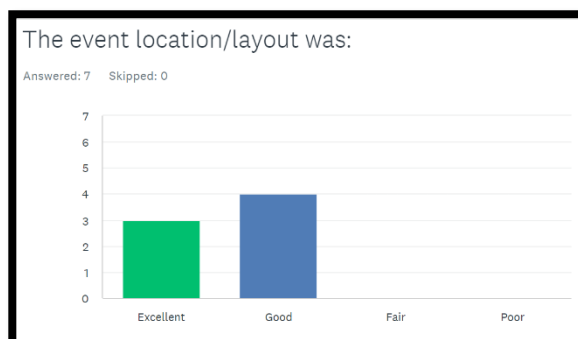
### Vendor and Volunteer Survey

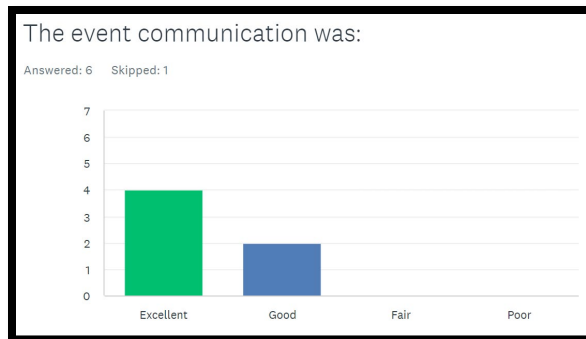
Staff sent out surveys to all vendors and volunteers who participated in the event and received seven completed surveys (five EV owners, one volunteer, and one dealership vendor). Respondents were asked to rate the event (excellent, good, fair, or poor) in various categories. Generally, the event received positive reviews with only a few comments/suggestions.

- **Date/Time:** Six respondents rated the date/time as excellent or good. One rated it as poor. A comment noted:
  - o "It was the first day of school, which was not good for families. But I am very grateful you did this event."

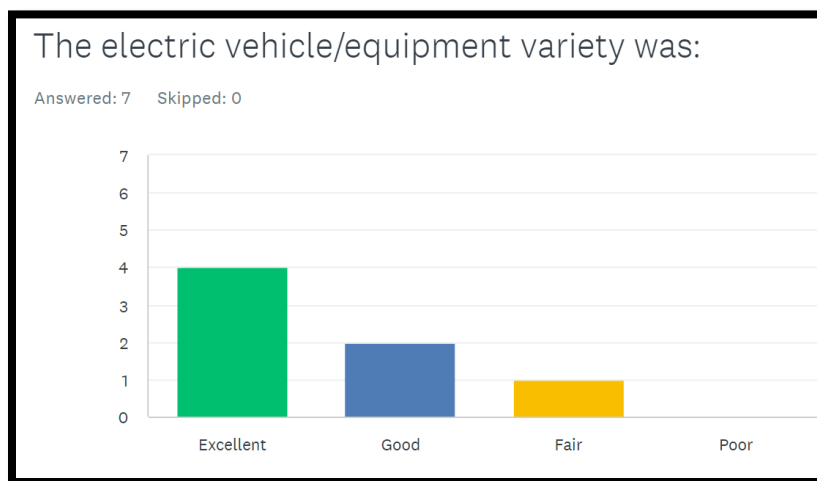


- **Event Length, Location/Layout, and Communication:** All respondents rated the event length, location/layout, and communication as excellent or good. Comments included:
  - o "Very well planned though. And I liked the general info signs."

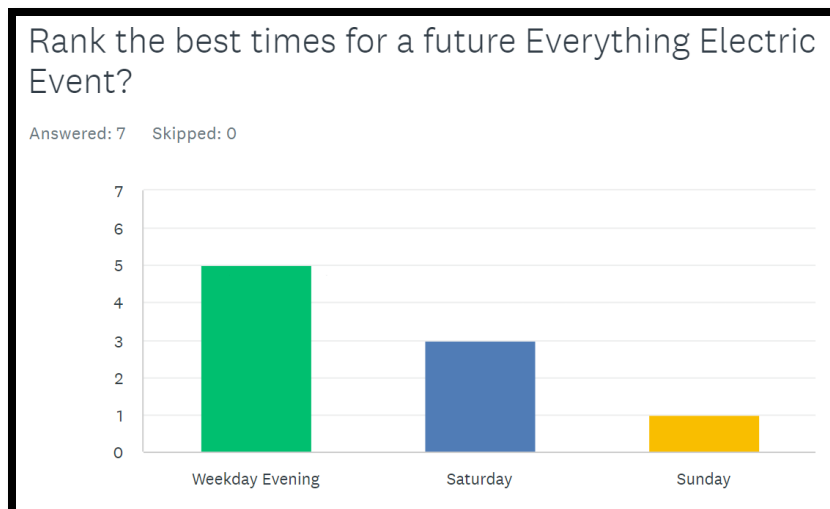




- Electric Vehicle/Equipment Variety: Six of seven respondents rated the event EV/equipment variety as excellent or good. One respondent rated it as fair. A comment stated:
  - o "I would think a rooftop solar company might be appropriate. Maybe a community solar company as well"
  - o "Might be nice to see some other electric tools and how batteries can be used between tools"
  - o "Additional EVs to be shown off and test drive. More involvement with EV dealerships to go along with the Tesla sales presence. There was only a Nissan dealer (to cover non Tesla) involved for this last event."
  - o "It would have been nice to have a sign for each of the EV owners (8x11 sheet) It would say 2017 BMW i3 with Range Extender, 33 kWh battery, 34 hp motor, 170 electric hp. Stuff like that. Also, I had some brochures from the Shift2electric site I could have placed in a prominent spot. I should have volunteered to do this."



- Best Day for Event: Weekday evenings received the most selections for best event times (five), followed by Saturday (three) and Sunday (one).



- Other Comments: Additional comments included:
  - o "It was fun. This was my first time showing our car. I will be better prepared for next time."
  - o "Thanks for inviting me to show off my EV and share my EV experiences! It was a lot of fun!"

### Proposed Changes

In general, vendors and volunteers had very positive feedback regarding the event. However, after reviewing the survey and comments from event participants, staff recognized a few changes that could improve the program in 2023.

- Date/Time: Staff received generally positive reviews for the day of the week. Anecdotally, staff also heard positive feedback about having the event being done cooperatively with the city's Farmers Market. Moving forward, staff plans to continue to do host the event in coordination with the market. However, there was concerns about having the event on the same day as the first day of school. Staff will continue reviewing calendars for 2024 to ensure there is no overlap with a major community event.
- Electric Vehicle/Equipment Variety: Survey responders noted that it would be beneficial to have:
  - o Additional EVs: Staff contacted 11 local dealerships to participate in the event. Unfortunately, several did not return phone calls or emails. Staff will continue to expand their reach to invite a variety of dealerships to the event in 2024.

- **Rooftop and Community Solar Vendors:** Inviting rooftop and community solar vendors in 2024 would provide guests another unique learning opportunity to electrify their fuels and expand renewable energy use. In addition to solar vendors, it would be valuable to have volunteers attend the event that own rooftop solar or subscribe to a community solar garden. Staff will research and attempt to include both of these groups of volunteers in the 2024 event.
- **Vehicle Signage and Handouts:** At the 2023 event, staff provided A-frame signs with general information about electric vehicles (see right). In 2024, staff will consider ways to provide more detailed information about vehicles for people attending the event and provide handouts that give more detailed information about electric vehicles and equipment.



### Proposed Timeline

- **March-May:** Staff will reach out to car dealers and other vendors about attending the event.
- **April/May:** Finalize the date for the "Everything Electric" event.
- **June-July:** The city will promote the event to community members via the Minnetonka Memo, social media, email subscriptions, billboards, etc. Commissioners will be provided posters to share with local businesses and community buildings.
- **July/August:** Host the 2024 "Everything Electric" event.