

## AGENDA

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1. ROLL CALL: Greenberg, Hansen, Hanelitz, Hart, Heid, Lyng, Pendaz-Foster, Presler, Myers, Sande, Larson
2. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES
  - A. June 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes
3. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Sub-Committee Updates
  - B. Chamber of Commerce Meet & Greet Tabling
  - C. CERTs Seed Grants
  - D. City Commission/Committee Code of Respect
4. OLD BUSINESS
5. INFORMATION ONLY
6. ADJOURNMENT

## MINUTES

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### ROLL CALL

Present: Hanelitz, Hansen, Hart, Heid, Larson, Myers, Myrfield, Pendaz-Foster, Sande

Absent: Greenberg, Lyng, Presler

Staff: Kayla Kirtz, Sustainability Coordinator

### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

#### A. May 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Sande motioned to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2025 Sustainability Committee Meeting and Hart seconded. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### A. SMSC Organics Recycling Facility Thank-You DRAFT

Heid drafted a thank-you note thanking the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Organics Recycling Facility for their compost donation to the inaugural compost giveaway on May 17th. The Committee unanimously approved the draft letter and voiced a preference for delivering it in the mail rather than e-mail. Kirtz said she would place the letter in the mail on Monday, June 23rd, when she returns to the office.

#### B. City Council Meeting Planning

Kirtz stated this was designated time to begin planning for the Committee's presentation to the City Council planned for October. Heid shared a draft document of recommendations that he had put together. The Committee decided to divide the group into three subcommittees: community engagement, green spaces and land use, and climate action planning. The subcommittees were divided as follows:

##### Community Engagement

- Carol M.
- Brenda
- Mardell
- Erin

##### Green Spaces and Land Use:

- Megan
- Carol L.
- Alyce
- Spencer

##### Climate Action Planning

- Sadie
- Nick

- Jonathan
- Chris

Subcommittees planned to meet individually between June and August to continue working on recommendations.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. July Meeting

Kirtz confirmed that the Committee would like to cancel the July Sustainability Committee Meeting.

**INFORMATION ONLY**

Heid encouraged members of the Committee to review the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement for the METRO Blue Line Extension project and submit public comments by June 23rd.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Kirtz adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kayla Kirtz, Staff Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Sustainable Usage of Green Spaces in Robbinsdale

# Goals

Increase biodiversity in Robbinsdale by incorporating pollinator-friendly species into existing green areas, decreasing amount of required upkeep, water, and environmental pollutants necessary for maintenance of these spaces.

# Kentucky Bluegrass and why it's here

- KBG is not native to North America.
- Most aesthetically flawless and foot-traffic resistant turfgrass we have access to
- Over 200 cultivars of KBG have been released since the 1930s, but in spite of this, we still don't have any cultivars that can be fairly called low input turfgrasses.
- KBG has the potential to thrive under precise conditions, but maintenance is resource and labor intensive, and chemicals necessary for upkeep can be harmful to pollinators and bodies of water

# Turf Alternatives

Fine fescues are the most comparable alternative to KBG, however, they require less mowing, watering and fertilizer, and are much more shade tolerant.



Hard fescue



Chewings fescue



Creeping red fescue

**\*These varieties are drought tolerant, weed-resistant, and tolerant of moderate foot traffic\***

# Short Flowering Alternatives

Commonly found in bee lawn seed mixes, these flowering groundcovers reach a maximum height of around 8" and are resistant to moderate foot traffic.



White clover



Blue violet



Creeping Thyme

**\*All of these could be slowly incorporated into existing green areas by overseeding in either late autumn or early spring\***

# Taller Flowering Groundcovers

Great for areas where foot traffic is not a concern, or prairie landscape is desired. These varieties reach a maximum of around 24”.



Prairie Groundsel



Calico Asters



Lanceleaf Coreopsis

# Examples in Minnesota



Wildflowers at Lake Elmo

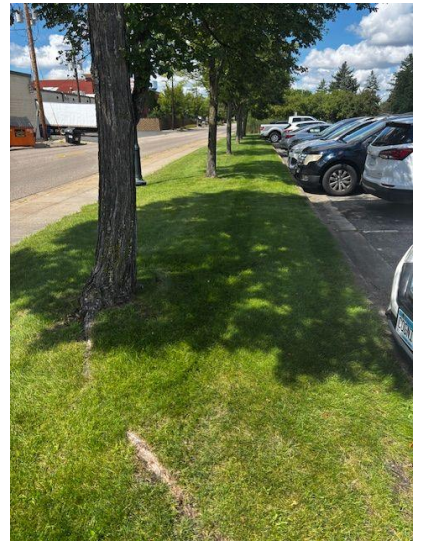


Restored pollinator habitat in Elk River

# Where to start incorporating alternative groundcovers in Robbinsdale

- Outside city buildings, eg. City Hall, police station, lawn outside water treatment plant in Lee Park,
- Near water tower
- Grassy areas along 81 outside local businesses
- City-owned boulevards
- Low foot-traffic areas within our parks





# Challenges

- Expensive startup costs; \$90 to seed 1000sq ft with bee lawn mix, as opposed to around \$20/1000sq ft for a standard grass mixture (retail, not wholesale)
- Weed control is more of a hands-on effort requiring hand pulling or spot-treating, especially as fescues are establishing
- Feedback from residents who don't want to attract pollinators for fear of children and animals being stung

# Other Ideas for Land Use

## Introduction of an urban orchard

- provides long-term fresh food access to those in need
- creates opportunities to learn & practice tree care & harvesting techniques
- possible trees may include cherry, apple and pear varieties



## Community Garden Expansion

- could include accessible plots with raised beds

## Community Patio and Picnic Spaces

- a central, easily accessible gathering space beneficial for meeting our neighbors and strengthening sense of community



# Sources

Oregon State University

<https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/beaverturf/kentucky-bluegrass-poa-pratensis-l>

MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-08/Turf%20Alternatives-Metro%20Blooms.pdf>

KG Landscape

<https://www.kglandscape.com/low-mow-bee-friendly-lawns#:~:text=Low%20Mow%20Turf%20Species.to%20keep%20the%20soil%20moist.>

UMN Extension

<https://extension.umn.edu/lawns-and-landscapes/planting-and-maintaining-fine-fescue-lawn>

City of Roseville

<https://www.cityofroseville.com/2948/Urban-Orchard>

## Skeleton for council visit

- Robbinsdale needs a climate action plan
- We're proposing ideas to add to the plan. We've broken them down into projects of priority, based on established climate science for our region.
- Our approach will be:  
Robbinsdale will adopt a state-of-the-art, optimization-based framework for implementing our Climate Action Plan. This moves beyond traditional planning to treat our CAP as a dynamic portfolio of investments, strategically scheduled to maximize emissions reduction, minimize financial risk, and ensure accountability.
- We hope to increase dialogue and strategy functions across city networks as a part of this plan.

## Popular and successful strategies include:

- Decarbonization efforts
  - EV charging
  - EV city cars
  - Lawn equipment gas bans (small engine)
  - Robust Home Electrification and renewables Incentives
  - Utilize gas franchise fee increase to directly fund green projects
- 2035 every home in Robbinsdale has a plan to be weatherized
  - Insulated, renewables, electrified
  - City coordinated pilot residential energy systems
  - Insulation standards updated (renters and owners)
  -
- Municipal solar program
  - City operates a publicly-owned distributed renewable power system drawing on clean energy with storage and geothermal.
  - Workforce development program to support this program
- Carbon capture efforts
  - Green spaces, land use, road pollution capture
  - Native planting and non-invasive grasses
- Energy laws
  - Carbon free citywide power by 2040
  - Parking lot solar mandate
  - Commercial solar mandate
- Municipalization study
- Review city code to address challenges to sustainability goals
- 
  
- Recurring meetings with sustainability on progress on climate action plan
- We will not do this alone. We propose partnering with the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School or Technological Leadership Institute to access cutting-edge optimization modeling.





# Robbinsdale Sustainability Committee

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

# Year in Review: Community Engagement

- ▶ Tabling at Whiz Bang
- ▶ Tabling at Compost/Plant Sale Event
- ▶ Adopted a park for quarterly clean up
- ▶ Participated in raingarden planting at water treatment plant
- ▶ Launched an organics recycling awareness social media campaign



 **City of Robbinsdale, MN - Government**  
April 28 · 🌐

Thinking about signing up for Robbinsdale's Organics Recycling Program? ♻️

Here's why Megan Hanelitz, a member of the Robbinsdale Sustainability Committee, made the choice:

"I appreciate that I can divert waste from the landfill right from my home in Robbinsdale. At no extra cost, participating in the organics recycling program is a simple way to reduce waste and positively impact the environment. It's as easy as putting out the trash for weekly pickup, just like we already do."

Join your neighbors today by requesting an organics recycling cart at [www.robbinsdalemn.gov/organics](http://www.robbinsdalemn.gov/organics).



# Year Ahead: Community Engagement Events



Tabling at September Meet & Greet; intro to Sustainability committee, how to keep informed, and activity on recycling 101 with Henn Co recycling ambassador



'Fall into Winter' awareness campaign about fall yard best-practices and "smart salting"



"Electric Energy 101" in-person workshop to educate on moving to electric energy-sourced items in the home (appliances, yard tools, lighting, etc.)



"New Year, New Habits" awareness campaign around easy intro ways to incorporate sustainable practices in the new year,



Garden tool and seed swap led at the community garden with a local master gardener



"Electrify Your Ride" in-person workshop to educate on electric and hybrid vehicles with cars to tour, information on how to decide which option meets your needs, and charging how-to



Tabling at Compost/Plant Sale Event



Continue the organics recycling awareness with measured KPIs for adoption.

# Tactics to drive engagement:

**Localized Storytelling:** Sharing resident success stories (e.g., a family who cut energy costs with solar panels, a business that switched to composting) makes sustainability feel personal and achievable.

**Multi-Channel Outreach:** Use a mix of town newsletters, Facebook community groups, text alerts, and school, business, church bulletins to reach residents where they already are. Make sure to include businesses and rentals!

**School Partnerships:** Programs where students lead recycling, tree planting, or water conservation projects often bring families on board.

**Public Demonstrations:** Hosting EV ride-and-drive events, compost workshops, or rain garden installations gives people tangible exposure.

**Prove the Success:** Publicly post progress (e.g., “We’ve reduced landfill waste by 15% this year”) to show how the efforts are driving a meaningful impact

# Framing & Messaging that Works in Smaller Cities

**Economic Benefits:** Emphasize cost savings, energy independence, and local business growth.

**Plain Language Campaigns:** Avoid terms like “carbon neutrality” in favor of concrete, relatable terms with tangible benefits (“saving on energy bills,” “cleaner parks for kids,” “more walkable neighborhoods”) to help overcome hurdles

**Quality of Life:** Cleaner air, quieter neighborhoods, safer walking paths, and more shade trees resonate deeply.

**Community Pride:** Position sustainability as a way to “keep our town beautiful” and “preserve it for the next generation.”

**Local Identity:** Frame initiatives around what makes the town unique (e.g., “Protecting our lakes,” “Keeping our downtown walkable”).

# Needs to drive engagement:

- Robbinsdale Sustainability Committee branded pop up tent for community events
- Robbinsdale Sustainability Committee nametags or t-shirts for members
- Signage, magnets or take-homes pertinent to the tabling events.
- Option to offer incentives for signing up for organics recycling.  
*Ex: 3 free small liners, "how-to" sheet, coupon for organics bin @ Ace Hardware*
- Revival of new resident resources; introduction to organics recycling, home energy squad visits, how to keep informed of Sustainability events & initiatives.
- Resources for creating case studies

# CERTs Seed Grants

[Print this page](#)

## Accepting CERTs Seed Grant applications through October 1, 2025

**CERTs awards seed grants to communities for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects across Minnesota. Since 2006, we've awarded over \$1.98M to 509 projects.**

We call these **seed grants** because they are small amounts of money meant to get a project started and inspire others to support the project. Projects have previously received \$5,000-10,000 to spend on labor expenses.

We're currently accepting applications for 2026 CERTs Seed Grants!

**Applications are due at noon, Wednesday, October 1, 2025.** Review the timeline and previously funded projects below. Visit our [\*\*application guidelines \(/certs-seed-grant-application-guidelines\)\*\*](#) for details on eligibility and criteria, as well as access to the application.

# Project Objectives

The main goals of this funding are to:

- **Support community-based clean energy projects in each Minnesota CERT region.** Clean energy projects can include energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy, electric vehicle-related projects, and energy storage.
- **Encourage projects that are highly visible in the community** and can be an example for other communities.
- We are especially looking for projects that:
  - **Help people learn about clean energy.**
  - **Build community** by engaging a variety of community partners.
  - **Remove barriers**, making clean energy more accessible for everyone.



Each region has its own pool of funding and its own steering committee that selects projects for funding. **[Find your county in this map of the seven CERT regions of Minnesota \(/certs-map-regions-minnesota\)](/certs-map-regions-minnesota)**.

Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, local governments, tribal nations, schools, libraries, civic associations, religious institutions, service clubs, student groups, business associations, cooperatives, food shelves, shelters, and for-profit entities if the project has a public purpose. The project must be located in Minnesota or the 11 Tribal nations that share geography with Minnesota.

If you have a project idea that might be a fit for future seed grant rounds, contact us! Email us: [\*\*grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org) ([\*\*\(mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\)\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org)).

## Steps to Apply

- 1** Read the [\*\*Application Guidelines \(/certs-seed-grant-application-guidelines\)\*\*](#).
- 2** Email us your questions: [\*\*grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org) ([\*\*\(mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\)\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org)).
- 3** [\*\*Download the application questions \[PDF\]\*\*](#) ([\*\*\(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h2Fb3QDMHzH2kuUfubJ7-BEk1Ezgx40E/view?usp=sharing\)\*\*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h2Fb3QDMHzH2kuUfubJ7-BEk1Ezgx40E/view?usp=sharing)) and start jotting down your ideas.
- 4** In order to avoid technical issues with the application, write your answers in another document and then copy them into the application form when you're ready to apply.
- 5** Email us your questions: [\*\*grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org) ([\*\*\(mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\)\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org)).
- 6** Double check to make sure your application is completed in full before you submit.
- 7** Fill out the application and submit by **noon on October 1**.
- 8** Check your inbox for emails from CERTs, and as always, email us your questions: [\*\*grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org) ([\*\*\(mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org\)\*\*](mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org)).

# Seed Grant Timeline

- **Aug. 2025:** CERTs issues the application guidelines and begins accepting applications.
- **Aug. - Oct. 1, 2025:** CERTs staff available to assist applicants with seed grant ideas, questions and applications.
- **Oct. 1, 2025 at noon:** Application deadline.
- **Oct. - Nov. 2025:** Regional CERT Steering Committees review applications and meet to determine project funding.
- **Dec. 2025:** CERTs notifies applicants of funding decisions and paperwork needed to complete the contract.
  - Once the contract is complete, organizations will receive an email notifying them that they can begin work.
- **Jan. 2026:** CERTs' public announcement of awards.
- **June 1, 2026:** Interim report due. Projects may submit an interim invoice for up to 50% of the full project award, if 50% of project is complete. Any project that has not begun work may have funding revoked. Funds will be redirected to other project(s) in the region.
- **Jan. 12, 2027:** Project work must be completed. Final Invoice and Final Report are due (Final Report form will be provided by CERTs).
- **Upon project completion:** CERTs will work with seed grant recipients to produce the project story.



# Application Tips

- Read the **Application Guidelines (/certs-seed-grant-application-guidelines)** completely before you fill out the application.
- The application is an online form. The link to that form is in the **Application Guidelines (/certs-seed-grant-application-guidelines)**.
  - In order to avoid technical issues, write your answers in another document and then copy them into the application when you're ready to apply. **Download the application questions [PDF] (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h2Fb3QDMHzH2kuUfubJ7-BEk1Ezgx40E/view?usp=sharing)**.
  - To save your progress, click the "save as draft" button at the bottom of the form. Use the link provided to return to your application.
  - Once you click "submit" you will no longer be able to edit your application.
  - All links within the application will open in a new tab or window.

## Questions? Let's Talk!

**Do you need translation assistance?** We have staff who can translate your application answers from Spanish to English. We can recommend interpretation and translation services for other languages. **Email us (mailto:grants@cleanenergyresourceteams.org)**.

TO: Sustainability Committee  
PREPARED BY: Kayla Kirtz, Sustainability Coordinator  
DATE: August 20, 2025  
RE: City Commission/Committee Code of Respect

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**Background:**

Members of the City Council have been receiving complaints about Commissioner/Committee member conduct and are considering adopting a "code of respect" similar to the City of Brooklyn Center's (attached). City Manager Sandvik has requested that each member of a City Commission or Committee review the draft policy and provide feedback.

**Analysis:**

**Recommendation:**

Review the draft Code of Respect and provide any feedback to Kayla Kirtz, your staff liaison, no later than September 3rd. Feedback will be discussed among the City Council at the September 9th Work Session.

**Attachments:**

1. City\_Commission\_Code\_of\_Respect\_DRAFT 7.21.2025

# Brooklyn Center City Commission Code of Respect and Ethics

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# Brooklyn Center City Commission Code of Respect and Ethics

## A. Commissioner Conduct with One Another

City Commissions are composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Despite this diversity, all have chosen to serve the community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even as Commissioners may "agree to disagree" on contentious issues.

### 1. In Public Meetings

- (a) **Commissioner Interaction.** Commissioners agree to practice civility, professionalism and decorum in discussions and debate. Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. Commissioners can promote camaraderie and collaboration by refraining from making belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments. Shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening will not be tolerated. Commissioners should make every effort to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, including listening actively during Commission meetings.
- (b) **Deference to Order.** Commissioners agree to honor the roles of Commission leadership including the Chair and Co-Chair in maintaining order by deferring to their direction and guidance. It is the responsibility of the Chair and/or Co-Chair to keep the Commission meetings on track during meetings. Commissioners agree to honor efforts by the Chair or Co-Chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or Chair or Co-Chair's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.
- (c) **Setting a Positive Example.** One prominent goal of every commission meeting should be to demonstrate a positive example of decorum and respect for constituents. To accomplish that goal, Commissioners agree to avoid comments that personally attack other Commissioners. If a Commissioner is personally attacked by the comments of another Commissioner, the offended Commissioner will make notes of the actual words used and may call for a "point of order" to challenge the other Commissioner to justify or apologize for the language used. The Chair or Co-Chair will maintain control of this discussion.
- (d) **Collaborative Problem Solving.** Another goal of the commission meeting is to demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches. Commissioners have a responsibility to show how individuals with disparate points of view can find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole.
- (e) **Timeliness.** To ensure smooth and timely execution of each commission meeting, Commissioners agree to make best efforts to be punctual and keep comments relative to topics discussed. Every Commissioner has made a commitment to attend meetings and participate in discussions. Therefore, it is important

that Commissioners be punctual and that meetings start on time. It is equally important that discussions on issues be relative to the topic at hand to allow adequate time to fully discuss scheduled issues.

- (f) **Endorsement of Candidates.** It is inappropriate to mention endorsements during commission meetings or other official City meetings or functions.
- (g) **Professional Courtesy.** Commissioners endeavor to avoid putting colleagues in awkward or disadvantageous positions in an effort to capitalize on another colleagues' vulnerability or to embarrass them publicly. Commissioners agree to make every attempt to submit questions or concerns to the Staff Liaison prior to formal meetings to avoid surprising Commissioners, Council Liaisons, or Staff at said meetings.
- (h) **Personal Attacks.** Commissioners shall not personally attack, under any circumstance, another member of a Commission. Commissioners acknowledge that cultural differences, body language, tone of voice, as well as the words they use, could be experienced as intimidating, off-putting, or aggressive to the message recipient.

## 2. In Private Encounters

- (a) **Respectful Workplace Values.** Commissioners agree to continue to model respectful behavior in private. The same level of respect and consideration of differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for public discussions should be maintained in private conversations.
- (b) **Data Practices.** Commissioners recognize that written notes, voicemail messages, social media and email may be public information. Technology allows words written or said without much forethought to be distributed wide and far. Commissioners agree to consider the following: (1) how they, their family and/or friends would feel if this voicemail message was played on a speaker phone in a full office? Or broadcast on the nightly news; (2) What could the consequences be if this email message was forwarded to others? Commissioners agree that written notes, social media postings, voicemail messages and email should be treated as potentially "public" communication.
- (c) **Public-Private Considerations.** Even private conversations can have a public presence. City officials are always on display – their actions, mannerisms, and language are monitored by people around them that they may not know. Lunch table conversations could be overheard, parking lot debates may be watched, and casual comments between individuals before and after public meetings noted.
- (d) **Personal Comments.** Commissioners agree to refrain from making personal comments about other Commissioners. It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other Commissioners, their opinions and actions.

## B. Commissioner Conduct with City Staff

Governance of the City is a cooperative effort, including elected officials, appointed officials, and staff. Therefore, every effort should be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

1. Respectful Workplace Values. Commissioners agree to treat all staff as professionals. Commissioners agree to engage in clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, expertise, and dignity of each individual. Berating, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments toward staff are not acceptable and are automatic grounds for a Code of Resect violation.
2. Limited City Staff Contact. Questions for City staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed to the City Manager or City Attorney. Commissioners agree to copy the City Manager on or keep the City Manager informed of any request. Except in extraordinary circumstances, Commissioners agree to avoid disrupting City staff while they are in meetings, on the phone, or engrossed in performing their job functions.
3. Staff Criticism. Commissioners should not publicly criticize an individual employee. Commissioners agree to express concerns about the performance of a City employee directly to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation. Commissioners will refrain from expressing concerns in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee's manager.
4. Political Solicitation. Commissioners will not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from City staff.
5. Personal Comments about other Commissioners. Commissioners agree to refrain from speaking ill of other Commissioners to staff. This puts staff in an uncomfortable and compromising position because staff have the responsibility to treat all Commissioners equally and with respect.
6. Personal Attacks. Commissioners shall not personally attack, under any circumstance, a member if city staff. Commissioners acknowledge that cultural differences, body language, tone of voice, as well as the words they use, could be experienced as intimidating, off-putting, or aggressive to the message recipient.

## C. Commissioner Conduct with the Public

1. In Public Meetings (For Commissions with Public Hearings)
  - (a) **Create a Welcoming Environment.** Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect should be evident on the part of individual Commissioners toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.

- (b) **Speaking Time.** The Commission as a body agrees to be fair and equitable in allocating public hearing time to individual speakers. The Commission Chair or Co-Chair will determine and announce limits on speakers at the start of the public hearing process and ensuring those with Brooklyn Center addresses have an opportunity to speak. Generally, each speaker will be allocated two minutes to speak. Applicants or their designated representatives may be allowed more time. If many speakers are anticipated, the Chair or Co-Chair may shorten the time limit and/or ask speakers to limit themselves to new information and points of view not already covered by previous speakers.
- (c) **Public Hearing Speakers.** No speaker will be turned away unless the speaker exhibits inappropriate behavior. Each speaker may only speak once during the public hearing unless the Commission requests additional clarification later in the process. After the close of the public hearing, no more public testimony will be accepted unless agreed upon by the Commission.
- (d) **Avoid Public Debate.** Commissioners agree to avoid debate and argument with the public. Only the Chair or Co-Chair – not individual Commissioners – can interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, a Commissioner can ask the Chair or Co-Chair for a point of order if the speaker is off the topic or exhibiting behavior or language the Commissioner finds disturbing. Commissioners may request that the Chair or Co-Chair seek clarification from the speaker.
- (e) **Commission Chair to Focus Discussion.** If speakers become flustered or defensive by Commissioner questions, it is the responsibility of the Chair or Co-Chair to calm and focus the speaker and to maintain the order and decorum of the meeting. Questions by Commissioners to members of the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker. Commissioners agree to refrain from providing personal opinions or revealing inclinations about upcoming votes until after the public hearing is closed.
- (f) **Personal Attacks.** Commissioners shall not personally attack, under any circumstance, a member/members of the public. Commissioners acknowledge that cultural differences, body language, tone of voice, as well as the words they use, could be experienced as intimidating, off-putting, or aggressive to the message recipient.

## 2. In Unofficial Settings

- (a) **No Promises.** Commissioners may not make promises on behalf of the Commission. Commissioners may be asked to explain a Commission policy or recommendation or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of City policy and to refer to City staff for further information. It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Commission or Council action, or to promise City staff will do something specific (fix a pothole, plow a specific street, plant new flowers in the median, etc.).
- (b) **Personal Comments.** Commissioners agree to refrain from making personal comments about other Commissioners to constituents. It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other Commissioners, their opinions and actions.

- (c) **Public-Private Considerations.** Commissioners may be observed by the community as they serve the city in their capacity as commissioners. Commissioner behaviors and comments serve as models for proper conduct in the City of Brooklyn Center. Commissioners agree to reflect honesty and respect for the dignity of each individual in every word, communication, (whether in social media or otherwise), and action taken by Commissioners, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a serious and continuous responsibility.

## D. Commissioner Conduct with Other Public Agencies

Commissioners will be as clear as possible when representing City or personal interests. If a Commissioner appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the Commissioner must clearly state:

1. If his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the City;
2. Whether this is the majority or minority opinion of the Commission. Even if the Commissioner represents his/her/their own personal opinions, the Commissioner must remember that the comments may reflect upon the City as an organization.

If the Commissioner is representing the City, the Commissioner must support and advocate the official City position on an issue, not a personal viewpoint.

## E. Poor Conduct and Accountability Measures

### 1. Conduct

- (a) **Violations.** Commissioners who violate the Code of Respect will be subject to accountability measures. Any violations that potentially constitute criminal conduct shall be handled by the criminal justice system.
- (b) **Factors.** Factors that will be considered in determining the appropriate restorative measure or sanction include but are not limited to the following: seriousness of the violation and number of preceding violations.

### 2. Types of Accountability Measures

#### (a) **Restorative Measures**

Commissioners agree to engage in restorative measures prior to initiating sanctions for violations of the Code of Respect. Restorative measures include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Private meeting Commissioner and City Manager
- (ii) Informal Mediation between involved parties and Mediator
- (iii) Mediator issues recommendations (i.e. training, public apology, meeting suspension, etc.)
- (iv) Commissioner / Involved Parties to follow recommendations
- (v) If Commissioner refuses to follow recommendations, then the process moves to sanctions:

## **(b) Sanction**

Commissioners may face commission removal for failing to engage in restorative measures or for continued violations of the Code of Respect.

## **3. Process**

### **(a) Complaint / Reporting a Code of Respect Violation**

- (i) A Commissioner may report a potential Code of Respect violation by another Commissioner by bringing the matter to the attention of the official of their choice, Mayor, or the City Manager.
- (ii) A Brooklyn Center staff member may report a potential Code of Respect violation by a City Commissioner by bringing the matter to the attention of the City Manager or Human Resources Manager.
- (iii) If the potential violation involves the Mayor, it should be brought to the attention of the Mayor Pro Tem, City Manager, or City Attorney.
- (iv) A community member may report potential Code of Respect violations by a member of a City Commission to the Mayor, City Manager or any member of the City Council.

### **(b) Investigation**

- (i) Triage. The Mayor and City Manager will gather initial information, consult with the City Attorney if necessary and decide how to move forward.
- (ii) Fact Finding. If necessary, the matter will be referred to the criminal justice system. The Mayor and City Manager will determine whether to pursue independent fact-finding or internal fact-finding.
- (iii) Possible Outcomes. After an investigation, the City Manager, in consultation with proper staff, will determine if the complaint is substantiated or unsubstantiated. A restorative solution will be sought prior to moving to a sanction.
  - (1) If Substantiated: The Commissioner will have a consultation with the City Manager, if that is unsuccessful, then the parties move to a graduated resolution process:
    - Informal mediation with harmed individuals and City designee (Mediator);
    - Mediator issues recommendations
    - Commissioner / Involved Parties to follow recommendations
    - If Commissioner refuses to follow recommendations, then the process moves to sanction.

(2) Sanction: (Last Resort)

- City Manager compiles redacted report for Council review (names, commission, other identifying information will be removed from the report)
- After review of the circumstances and recommendation, Council will use a standard form provided by the Administration to communicate their vote
- Administration will provide Council forms to Mayor
- Mayor will state Council vote on the record
- If Commissioner is removed from service, Commissioner will receive a letter of removal from the Council
- Commission Removal results in automatic bar from Commission Appointment for 2 years

(3) If Unsubstantiated: City Manager to work with City Attorney to determine resolution compliant with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act

4. Conduct During Meetings

- (a) **Inappropriate Statements.** For inappropriate statements or conduct by Commissioners occurring during a Commission meeting, a verbal correction by the Commission Chair will normally be the first step to address the matter, either during or after the meeting.
- (b) **Further Incidents.** Further incidents at the same meeting may be addressed by subsequent verbal corrections accompanied Repeated incidents can give rise to Chair not recognizing the offending Commissioner to speak. A Commissioner can request that the Chair take any of these actions against an offending Commissioner if the Chair has not done so on her/his/their own.

## F. Ethics

1. Open Meeting Law

- (a) With certain exceptions, meetings of Council Commissions must be open the public. A meeting is a gathering of a majority of Commissioners at which City business is discussed. It is not necessary that action be taken for a gathering to constitute a “meeting.”
- (b) A meeting does not include chance social gatherings as long as public business is not discussed.
- (c) A majority of Commissioners should not communicate with each other by phone, email, in-person, or otherwise, to discuss City business.
- (d) Use of social media does not violate the open meeting law as long as social media use is accessible to all Members of the public.

**See Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13D, for further information regarding the Open Meeting Law.**

## 2. Gift Law

A City Commissioner cannot accept a gift from someone who has an interest in any matter involving the City.

A “gift” includes money, property, a service, a loan, forgiveness of a loan, or a promise of future employment.

A “gift” does not include:

- Campaign contributions;
- Items costing less than \$5;
- Items given to members of a group; the majority of whose members are not local officials;
- Gifts given by family members; or
- Food or beverages given at a reception, meal or meeting at which a Council Member is making a speech or answering questions as part of a program

**See Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.895 City Charter, Section 14.04(A), and Section II, 2.95 of the Brooklyn Center Code of Policies for further information regarding the Gift Law and procedure.**

## 3. Conflict of interest

(a) Commissioners cannot have a personal financial interest in a sale, lease, or contract with the City.

(b) Commissioners cannot participate in matters in which the Commissioner’s own personal interest, financial or otherwise, is so distinct from the public interest that the Commissioners cannot be expected to fairly represent the public’s interest when voting on the matter.

**See Minnesota Statutes Section 471.87, and Section II, 2.95 of the Brooklyn Center Code of Policies of further information about Conflicts of Interest involving Public Officers.**