



Environmental Commission Memorandum

TO: Environmental Commission

THROUGH: Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director

FROM: David Wanberg, City Planner

MEETING DATE: April 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Opportunities to Broaden Participation in Faribault's Environmental Efforts

The Environmental Commission has expressed an interest in broadening participation in Faribault's environmental efforts. The following outlines key opportunities to raise awareness and understanding (and ultimately participation) in Faribault's environmental efforts.

1. **Environmental Commission.** The Environmental Commission wishes to have youth involvement in Commission meetings and activities. The ordinance that created the City's Environmental Commission does not prohibit, nor does it require youth participation. The Commission can request an ordinance change to have a dedicated youth position on the Commission. Alternatively, the Commission can promote youth involvement in the public discussion parts of Commission meetings.

All Environmental Commission meetings are open to the public. The Commission should discuss opportunities to solicit input from youth on environmental issues during the meetings. The Commission should also discuss ways to encourage collaboration between the City and schools on environmental efforts. For example, the City and schools could collaborate on the state's Greenstep efforts.

The Faribault Youth on Boards program can help recruit and coordinate youth involvement in the Environmental Commission. Chair Steinkamp has also coordinated with youth representatives from area schools.

2. **Pilot Program.** The City is coordinating with four other southeast Minnesota communities to request assistance from the University of Minnesota to strengthen our outreach to all in the community –

especially those who are typically not involved in city government. Regardless of whether the City is awarded assistance from the University of Minnesota, the Environmental Commission can serve as a model for involving the community in environmental efforts.

3. **Service Projects.** Several organizations are doing amazing environmental work (pollinator gardens, creek restorations, etc.). The Commission may be able to promote and build on these efforts. For example, the Commission could help promote community involvement in shoreland restoration projects, prairie plantings at the fire station, etc. Paul Peanasky, Director of Parks and Recreation, will discuss with the Environmental Commission ongoing collaborative efforts in the city and possible future projects the Commission could help promote.
4. **Environmental Awareness Campaigns.** The Commission can promote environmental awareness through the City's website, forums, social media, special events, and celebrations.

The purpose of this agenda item is to continue the Commission's discussions about broadening awareness and understanding of the environmental issues and opportunities. The Commission is not expected to make decisions about specific opportunities at this meeting.