

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 pm on Monday, April 27, 2026

WE3C Members: Ellen Menounos (Co-chair), Wally Cole (Co-chair), Susan LaDue, Laurel Schaidler, Lauri Murphy, Jeanne Trubek, Brian Hebeisen (out-going member)

Staff Liaison: Silas Fyler (Energy Manager) - Now a seven-member committee (no longer of nine members), Silas is now a staff liaison with no voting privileges.

Non-members: Ernesta Krackiewicz, Joceyln Tager, Pat Rathbone, Steve Steadman, Councilor Nicole Gardner (joined at 8pm)

Meeting started: 7:03PM

7:34PM: March minutes approved. Jeanne motioned. Brian seconded.

7:26PM: January minutes approved as is. Jeanne motioned. Brian seconded.

Meeting summary

The meeting began with introductions and a tribute to Brian, who is leaving the committee after approximately 15 years of service. The committee discussed several key updates including their transition to a 7-person committee structure and the passage of the City Manager's administrative code. Councilor Nicole Gardner joined the meeting partway through to provide an update on the Rules and Ordinances Committee's work, including the upcoming vote on the "Skip the Stuff" ordinance and progress on the noise ordinance. The committee also reviewed upcoming EcoFest planning needs and discussed tracking environmental ordinances through the city.

Silas provided an energy manager report covering the new high school construction progress and updates on the Parker building electrical work. He announced that Kennan Rhyne has been hired as Assistant City Manager for Community Development and Planning replacing Steve Magoon. The conversation ended with discussions about the Climate and Energy Plan metrics that need revision, with the next WE3C meeting scheduled for May 18.

Committee Membership Changes Discussion

The meeting began with introductions and a discussion about membership changes, including the committee's reduction to seven members and Silas transitioning to a staff liaison role without voting privileges. The group celebrated Brian's 15+ years of service on the committee and acknowledged his contributions to various projects including the Climate and Energy Plan and net zero schools initiatives. The meeting also noted that both Susan LaDue and Laurel Schaidler had not yet been sworn in as committee members.

City Council Minutes and Ordinances

The meeting focused on approving minutes from March and January. The March minutes were approved without discussion. For the January minutes, while some members had initially planned to add details, no

updates were provided, leading to their approval as submitted. Susan announced that the Skip the Stuff ordinance would be voted on at the upcoming City Council meeting on Tuesday night, with Jocelyn confirming the meeting starts at 7 PM and includes a public comment section for the ordinance discussion. The group also learned about a new online resource for tracking pending ordinances managed by Councilor Nicole Gardner.

Noise and Gas Powered Equipment Ordinance Discussion

The committee discussed two separate ordinances: a noise ordinance and a proposed ordinance regarding gas-powered lawn equipment. Jeanne clarified that the current noise ordinance specifically addresses noise levels and does not cover gas-powered equipment emissions, while the gas-powered equipment proposal is still under consideration by City Council. Ellen noted that the gas-powered equipment request was submitted in February with staff tasked to draft an ordinance, and Wally mentioned receiving a response from Mark Sedaris indicating further discussion was planned. The committee agreed these are separate initiatives advancing on different tracks, with the noise ordinance being older and currently in the queue.

Environmental Ordinance Tracking Discussion

The committee discussed tracking environmental ordinances, with Brian expressing concern that the current list provided by Nicole appears incomplete compared to a longer list previously presented by Laurel Schwab. The group agreed that the committee should be tracking all environmental ordinances regardless of stage, whether being worked on by staff or subcommittees, to better understand the pipeline and prioritize actions. Ellen shared a spreadsheet containing the current list of ordinances under review by subcommittees, noting that it represents a subset of all environmental ordinances being considered by the city. [Watertown City Council Committee Referrals - 2024-2026 - Google Sheets](#)

The group discussed reviving an ordinance list that Laurel Schwab was previously working on, with Brian suggesting they could start with an existing spreadsheet from 6 months ago while waiting for Laurel's return from parental leave.

Climate and Energy Sub-Committee Updates

Jocelyn raised concerns about climate and energy plan metrics that needed revision, and the group agreed to address this as an action item for the next meeting. The group decided to include Jocelyn's letter about the metrics as an attachment to the meeting minutes rather than discussing it further during the meeting.

The committee discussed several updates and action items. Wally and Ellen are working on developing a simple one-page committee protocol, with a July 1st deadline for publication. Silas provided updates on the new high school construction, noting it should be completed by mid to late May, though solar installation will continue into the fall. The committee also reviewed a letter provided by Brian to the Committee from Watertown Faces Climate Change (WFCC) [WFCC letter to Climate and Energy Committee. pdf](#), with discussion about how to properly document it for the city website. Laurel's updates included progress on sustainable policies for city events, a heat pump coaching program launching soon with EMPOWER grant funding, and the near completion of a multi-family EV charging study. The conversation ended with a reminder that volunteers are needed to man an EcoFest table from 11-12 on May 9th at the Commander's Mansion.

Recent EcoFest Volunteer Planning Meeting

The recent meeting focused on planning for EcoFest, including volunteer coordination and logistics. The group discussed potentially placing the WE3C and Silent Spring tables next to each other, with Laurel offering to assist with setup and organization. Ellen committed to following up with Mia Kania (Sustainability Planner) about the table layout.

Rules and Ordinances Sub-Committee Updates

The meeting focused on the Rules and Ordinances Committee's current work and upcoming initiatives. Nicole, the committee chair, provided updates on several ongoing projects, including a new pet shop ordinance and efforts to revise the noise ordinance. The committee is also working on a "Skip The Stuff" ordinance, which will be voted on soon, aiming to reduce single-use items in restaurants. Jeanne suggested adding compostable options to the discussion, but Nicole advised focusing on the original proposal first before expanding it. The group also briefly discussed challenges with measuring climate and energy metrics, with Nicole emphasizing the importance of focusing on outcomes rather than just activities.

Next meeting

Scheduled for May 18, with plans to potentially hold future meetings in person or in a hybrid format.

Adjourned: 8:34pm

Respectfully submitted by Lauri A. Murphy