

Washtenaw County Environmental Council

Tuesday, July 22, 2025, 5:00PM - 6:30PM

Virtual Meeting

Link to join:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87283540017?pwd=gVEEnSyqxp4FAxM4EzR4qTbEzgZ7mj.1>

Passcode: 565413

JULY 2025 FINAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order
- II. Attendance
 - a. Michelle Deatricks, Gay MacGregor, Mark Coryell, Alex Bryan, Benjamin VanGessel, Brian Geiringer, Annie Somerville, Yousef Rabhi, Andrea Pierce
- III. Land Acknowledgement
- IV. Approval of the Agenda
 - a. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - b. Second: Ben VanGessel
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous Acclamation
- V. Approval of the Minutes of the June 24, 2025 Meeting
 - a. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - b. Second: Ben VanGessel
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous Acclamation
- VI. Public Comment/Citizen Participation: (up to 4 minutes per speaker)
 - a. Council Responses to Citizen Participation
 - i. No public comment made
 - b. Acknowledgement of written Citizen Participation
 - i. No public comment made
- VII. Staff Reports
 - a. Acknowledgement of written Staff Reports and Communications
 - b. Beth Gibbons, Director, County Resilience Office: *Washtenaw County Resiliency Office*
 - i. Resiliency Office Report
 - ii. Resiliency Office Events in last month and any upcoming, including tabling or other events that the WCEC might want to also participate in
 - iii. Other Updates
 - iv. Council Discussion:
 - a. 5-year reporting cadence discussion
 - i. Concerns regarding 5-year cadence between emissions inventories as being too slow, especially given the County's goals.

- ii. Interest by Council in identifying metrics that can be tracked on an annual or more regular basis between emission inventories.
 - iii. Council members recognize the value of coordinating with regional partners to have aligned data and for cost-savings purposes.
 - b. Prioritization of decarbonization strategies
 - i. Recommendation for the Policy Committee to lead on development of the prioritized decarbonization strategy.
 - ii. The Resiliency Office will work with the Policy Committee to identify a date in late September/early October to convene and review the potential decarbonization pathways and provide recommendations for actions. Those recommendations will go to the Council Planning Committee and onto the full Environmental Council for review.
 - c. Utilization of county-owned and public lands in reaching emission reduction goals
 - i. Council members expressed the importance of assessing the value of natural lands for their ecosystem service value and intrinsic value
 - ii. Commissioner Rabhi recommends working with Parks Commission to integrate climate score or benefit into the selection process for purchasing lands and/or development rights.
 - d. Connecting Council members with RO resources and social media accounts
 - i. Resiliency Office will share the event list, social media accounts, and newsletters with the Councilors. Councilors should be added to the newsletter distribution list.
- 2. Council members expressed questions and interest in learning more about the sustainability curriculum and KPI and reporting

Other Staff Reports

VIII. Chair's Report

- a. Finance/Budget Report
 - i. Motion to approve expenditures to date
 - 1. Moved: Andrea Pierce
 - 2. Second: Alex Bryan
 - 3. Approved by: Unanimous Voice Vote
- b. Bylaws proposal
 - i. Council Discussion

1. BG: question about process
 2. YR: clarifying question about process
 - c. Reminder of committee assignments
- IX. Old Business
- a. Proposed Data Centers in Washtenaw County
 - i. Council Discussion
 1. Conversations and concerns regarding data centers are coming up throughout the County. Most notably at a recent HRWC meeting. There are serious concerns about land management and impact from the planned data centers in Ypsilanti Township and Augusta Township.
 2. Chair Deatrick reminded the Council members of the role of the council on public issues – the Council is advisory to the Board of Commissioners and cannot represent the County publicly.
 - ii. Motion to advise Board of Commissioners to take stance of opposition against AI data centers in the county
 1. Moved: Brian Geiringer
 2. Second: Andrea Pierce
 3. Council Discussion:
 - a. GM: comment on procedure and importance of including background information for resolutions to Commission
 - b. Commissioner Geiringer recognized that this motion may be unusual, but there is urgency to send a message to the Board of Commission as this topic has increasing importance.
 - c. Commissioner Rabhi offers a friendly amendment:
 - d. "The WCEC expresses strong concerns with the series of data centers that have been proposed in Washtenaw County. The Council will be compiling a more complete resolution with research and data focused in part, but not exclusively, on the impacts on land, water, rate payers and the County's Climate Resiliency plan, to inform future board decisions with recommendations for future action."
 - e. Motion passes by unanimous acclamation
 4. Motion to task policy and recommendations committee with drafting a resolution regarding data center development in Washtenaw County, which will be reviewed by the planning committee, and brought to the full council for approval
 - a. Moved: Brian Geiringer
 - b. Second: Andrea Pierce

- c. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation
- X. New Business
 - a. Discussion: Upcoming Meetings
 - i. August 26 Meeting: Proposal to cancel
 - 1. Motion to move meeting to September 2, 2025
 - a. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - b. Second: Andrea Pierce
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation
 - ii. September 23 Meeting: Discussion
 - 1. Proposal to hold in person and/or hold a Community Listening Session
 - 2. Motion to authorize the Chair to hold in person September meeting at community center with community listening session
 - a. Moved: Brian Geiringer
 - b. Second: Ben VanGessel
 - c. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation
- XI. Communications and Reports
 - a. Councilmembers
 - i. Andrea Pierce: Pipe Up Paddle Out and Line 5
 - ii. Other
- XII. Adjourn
 - a. 6:33 PM
 - b. Moved: Michelle Deatrick
 - c. Second: Yousef Rabhi
 - d. Approved by: Unanimous acclamation

Next Meeting

September 2, 2025

September 23, 2025