

Washtenaw County Environmental Council
FEBRUARY 24, 2026

Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

With Zoom Viewing. Link to watch:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87283540017?pwd=gVEEnSyqxp4FAxM4EzR4qTbEzgf7mj.1>

February Minutes

I. Call to Order

A. 5:02

II. Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Officer	Seat	Present (Y/N)	Location
Anne	Brown	Vice Chair	Racial Equity and Environmental Issues	Y	Ypsilanti
Mark	Coryell		Labor	Y	Ann Arbor
Michelle	Deatrick	Chair	Land Use and Preservation	Y	Superior Township
Andrea	Pierce		Water Protection	N	
Gay	MacGregor	Second Vice Chair	Vehicle Emission Reduction Issues	Y	Dexter
Kris	Olsson		Community Groups	Y	Bend, OR
Finnegan	McCarty		Youth	Y	Ypsilanti
Liz	Ratzloff		Public Health	Y	City of Ypsilanti
Alex	Bryan		Sustainable Agriculture	Y	Ypsilanti Township
Lauren	Sargent		Sustainable Energy Producers	Y	Ann Arbor
Benjamin	VanGessel		Infrastructure Energy Reduction Issues	Y	Ann Arbor
Brian	Geiringer		Community Groups (MI LCV)	N	
Annie	Somerville		BOC Liaison	Y	City of Ypsilanti
Yousef	Rabhi		BOC Liaison	arr: 5:30PM	

B. Not Present: Andrea Pierce, Brian Geiringer

- III. Land Acknowledgement
- IV. Approval of the Agenda
 - A. Moved: Alex Bryan
 - B. Second: Liz Ratzloff
- V. Motion to Amend the Agenda to include a presentation from Councilor Kris Olsson on Simplifying Solar
 - Move: Lauren Sargen
 - Second: Kris Olsson
- VI. Approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 2026, Meeting
 - A: Moved: Kris Olsson
 - B: Second: Gay MacGregor
- VII. Public Comment/Citizen Participation: (up to 4 minutes per speaker)
 - Vincent Joseph Pinti – University of Law Clinic representing Mr. Changming Fan protecting a community garden at a senior living facility
 - Council member expressed desire to support Mr. Changming. The Chair will distribute a briefing from the speaker and refer the topic to the Policy Action Committee.
- VIII. Staff Reports
 - Acknowledgement of written Staff Reports and Communications
 - Beth Gibbons, Director, County Resiliency Office: *Washtenaw County Resiliency Office Report*
 - 1. Resiliency Office Report
 - a) Council members request more differentiation between which actions are taken by the RO, County, City, and Community.
 - b) The metric report will not include new inventory. But will include actions taken across the strategies
 - c) Council members request more clarity on language of ‘clean energy, renewable energy etc.

d) Director Gibbons requested a meeting with council members to discuss what metrics to report.

2. Resiliency Office Events since last meeting and any upcoming, including tabling or other events that the WCEC might want to also participate in.

3. Other Updates

IX. Chair's Report

- Finance/Budget Report;
 - A. No expenditure
- March & April Meetings
 - 1. Elections
 - a) March- Will be voting for leadership positions
 - 2. Hydrogen Presentation
 - a) presentation at the next meeting by a UM researcher on Hydrogen energy, identified by the Vice Chair
- Update: Washtenaw County Environmental Council Resolution Advising the County Board of Commissioners Against Approval of the Proposed Expansion or Creation of a New Landfill Associated with the Arbor Hills Landfill in Salem Township, Washtenaw County
 - No further action from WCEC on landfill
 - This has gone to the County Commission.

X. Remarks/Presentation: Werner Road Widening and Tree Cutting: Updates.

Presentation by Justin Perkins

- A lot has been learned; This stretch of road is 1.5 miles, there are 250 trees, and the RC is planning to cut down 48 trees. This is a significant impact on the character of the neighborhood. The challenge is that there is no transparency to the Road Commission. Virtually everyone on the impacted section of the road has spoken to the Commission. There is now a lawsuit filed asking for a preliminary injunction. It has taken SO much for people to feel like they have a say. It's our own money being used for this project. And yet we can't get the project scope changed.

- As we understand, there was a plan to have 6' shoulders, but there is still this massive loss. 20% trees will be removed.
- This project was announced in February 2025 on the WCRC update on the website, but the neighbors weren't formally notified – ever. They found out through a hired consultant in December 2025.
- The project has become more complex since given to an outside consulting group.
- This is THE SAFEST stretch of road, compared to adjacent roads, on gross and normalized data per distance.
- The neighbors believe that this road will be less safe due to the widening. The WCRC won't conduct a safety assessment or environmental impact assessment.
- The residents brought a suit against the Road Commission. The RC responded with four attorneys. It has been very challenging to understand what is happening. And there could be a better process for the evolution of policy.
- MD: Our policy and recommendation committee did meet and will be considering a resolution. Considering a boarder look at the tree ordinance.

XI. Presentation: Third Act: Simplified Solar Campaign, Kris Olsson

Campaign Purpose: Make solar easily accessible to residents and businesses

- Lauren Sargent shared that her home energy bill was \$750! This was with extensive electrification and decarbonization upgrade done at home.
- Wyandotte had a huge issue when they did a community geothermal system. It is necessary to do all things.
- MD: This topic will be referred to the Policy Action Committee for further commitment or action by the Council.
- Director Gibbons will share resources with the Council including:
 - Database of renewable energy ordinances

- ☐ Washtenaw Solarize Event
 - ☐ Building Inspection services by jurisdiction
- ☐ Motion to move this topic to the Policy Advisory Committee for further discussions (standing committee)
 - Motion: Lauren Sargent
 - Seconded: Ben VanGessel
 - Accepted Unanimous

XII. Committee and Member Reports

- Recommendations and Advisory Committee
 1. Follow-up: Werkner Road and Tree Conservation/Cutting
 - a) County woodland right-of-way ordinance
 - Motion: Explore tree ordinance or right-of-way ordinance
 - ☐ Moved: Ben VanGessel
 - ☐ Seconded: Kris Olsson
 - ☐ Unanimous pass
 - b) Jurisdictional deference of the WC Road Commission.
 - c) Motion: Better integrate better local government deference or input into WCRC projects
 - Motion: Ben VG
 - Second: Lauren Sargent
 - Unanimous pass

XIII. Old Business

- None

XIV. New Business

- Line 5 – we don't know what the outcome is going to be at the Supreme Court. The oral arguments were today. It would be good to have some information shared with the Council at the March meeting.

- Request: Agenda Item at the next meeting. Council Member Andrea Pierce may be a good person for that information conveyance.

XV. Adjourn

- Motion: Kris Olsson
- Second: Alex Bryan

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM

Next Meetings

March 24, 2026

**Chair's Proposal:
2026 Washtenaw County Environmental Council Calendar**

The proposed Council meeting dates are the third or fourth Tuesdays, 5 pm to 6:30 pm.

January 27, 2026

February 24, 2026

March 24, 2026

April 28, 2026

May 19, 2026,
(Third Tuesday: Fourth Tuesday is the first evening of Eid and the day after Memorial Day)

June 23, 2026

July 28, 2026

August 25, 2026

September 22, 2026

October 27, 2026

November 17, 2026,
(Third Tuesday: Fourth Tuesday is Thanksgiving week)

December 15, 2026
(Third Tuesday: Fourth Tuesday is Dec. 22)