

**City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**6:00 pm – 7:00 pm HYBRID MEETING:**

**Meeting Link: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965> | Access Code:  
740-241-965 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room (601 Main Street W)**

Energy Action Plan, 25x25 Plan, Sourcewater Protection Plan linked here:  
<https://sites.google.com/view/ashland-sustainability/themes>

**Agenda**

- 1) Approval of Agenda
- 2) Approval of minutes from the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 meeting
- 3) Citizen Participation
- 4) Projects/Discussions
  - a) Communications - Discussion
  - b) Ashland County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Chapter Discussion/Action if necessary
  - c) Potential Grant/Funding Opportunities – Beth Gehred
  - d) Downtown EV Chargers – Discussion/Action if necessary
  - e) City Solar Opportunities – Discussion
  - f) Committee Opinion on Data Centers - Discussion
- 5) Staff Updates
- 6) Future agenda items
- 7) Adjournment

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*It is possible that members of and a possible quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information or speak about a subject, over which they have decision-making responsibility. Any governmental body at the above stated meeting will take no action other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.*

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Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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**Present:** Charlie Ortman, Beth Gehred, Amy Amman, Meghan Salmon-Tumas, Rachel Myslivy, Steven Wiley (Planning and Development Director)

**Absent:** None

### Agenda

- 1) Approval of Agenda  
Chair Ortman called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and a quorum was declared present. Ortman asked for approval of the agenda. Tumas moved to approve the agenda, Amman seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
- 2) Introduction of new Committee Member Rachel Myslivy  
New Committee Member Myslivy introduced herself and provided some background information to the committee. Ortman and the rest of the committee introduced themselves and welcomed her.
- 3) Approval of minutes from the November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 meeting  
Ortman asked for approval of the previous meeting minutes. Tumas moved approval and Gehred seconded. Motion carried 5-0
- 4) Citizen Participation  
None
- 5) Projects/Discussions
  - a) Municipal Code Section/Eco-Municipality Resolution – Discussion and Action  
Ortman asked Wiley if he took the guidelines from the Eco-municipality resolution and put those into the draft ordinance revisions. Wiley explained the changes and that he had done so. Tumas and Gehred were supportive of the revisions. Ortman asked for any additional input. Ortman stated that if anyone has any recommendations for changes to let us know. Ortman asked for a motion and second to send this to COW and Council. Gehred moved, Tumas seconded. Amman supports it. Motion carried 5-0.
  - b) Communications – Discussion  
Ortman asked if this was to advertise ourselves better. Tumas remembered that it was to be a standing item on the agenda. It was suggested that she work with Jen Fanucci who is the City event planner and Ms. Fanucci could help get the word out too. Wiley stated that Ms. Fanucci was putting together a City newsletter and would be soliciting updates from department heads among others for publishing every month, quarterly, etc. Tumas believed that we could have a “Sustainability Corner” section which could fall under the Planning Department updates. Ortman asked if we could come up with snippets in a meeting and get them to Wiley. Wiley said this could work or if we

came up with snippets and a committee member could work on a write up. Ortman stated we could have a standing agenda item at the end of the next month's agenda to generate ideas. Amman is supportive of having updates that tie into things that our committee is working on. Maybe we have a recycling awareness month item. Wiley confirmed with the committee that we would have a standing item on future agendas.

- c) Ashland County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Chapter Discussion/Action if necessary

Tumas submitted a draft and asked if we could talk about it. Ashland County is working to update their Comp Plan as required every 10 years. There are 9 required distinct sections. Chair Ortman is involved. He asked how we could bring sustainability into this process. There was an article in the *Ashland Daily Press* about how the County is looking for community input. It is a good time for us to weigh in. Tumas is thinking about the Eco-Municipality guidelines, planetary boundaries, etc. Energy, PFAS, biodiversity, air quality, (she was involved in working groups last year to start thinking about the comprehensive plan). She threw down ideas and also combed through Bayfield County's plan they recently adopted that had some really inspiring ideas. She did not pull out social justice ideas which are not her area of expertise but she did pull out transportation stuff, etc. She is looking for ideas from the Committee on what is important for the county to provide messaging on and how to do it. Ortman suggested maybe inserting sustainability in the plan everywhere that it is as a hodgepodge or maybe you have an individual sustainability element. The County Board wants to vet things rather than produce them because they do not have the time or expertise. Sustainability is not the only thing plans are short on. There are a lot of departments that don't have a representative involved. Ortman suggests Tumas write what she sees fit and we can review it. He does not think Ashland is against being carbon-neutral. He suggests putting it in and letting them take it out. Write it up with everything as a wish list and we will look at it. We have a year before it needs to be published. The County has established a standing committee so we can look closely at things. Ortman and Gehred are supportive. Myslivy would be happy to look at Bayfield County and the justice and social justice elements. Ortman is supportive of examining justice elements. Myslivy asked someone to send the report. Ortman explained that Tumas referenced the elements of the Comp Plan in her statement. Amman mentioned the 2006 Comp Plan goals. She asked if those are from the current document. Tumas answered that the goals are from the 2006 plan but did not change in 2016. Amman is impressed with the way the goals are written. Ortman stated that the Comp Plan Committee would be happy to hear input from anyone. Ortman believes these plans should drive legislation, rather than a group. Gehred will leave Tumas notes. She agrees with other members. She sees some areas that would be good jumping off points for group. She prefers trying to integrate goals into sections rather than a separate chapter. Gehred provided some definitions of micromobility. Myslivy asked if we could share the materials. Wiley stated that he could. The committee discussed the potential of two members meeting to work on this. Wiley advised to be careful due to open records laws but that he could look into this. Tumas would be interested because this could help us for other things we might do. Tumas likes the idea of integrating sustainability in different areas. Ortman recommends getting it to something that is measurable and that identifies what we

want. Gehred asked if the ordinance gives us the authority to carry out items from the plan. Ortman stated that we only advise the decision makers.

d) Potential Grant/Funding Opportunities – Beth Gehred

Gehred has identified four opportunities and provided a handout. Wiley will scan and email it out. It is a richer time for grants. This could give us a budget. Opportunities include the Boreal Waters (used to be Duluth Superior Community Foundation), Kettering Foundation, Head of the Lakes United Way, and Waste Management. Her thinking is the communication around sustainability. We would need to do a working group to get a grant written for Boreal Waters. Ortman mentioned that the County has a grant writer. He asked Wiley if the City has a grant writer. Wiley stated that various staff write grants here. This would be soft money to help vestiges of Northland stay afloat. Ortman suggested that we make a strong connection to sustainability. Gehred suggested we partner with a nonprofit to manage a grant if we do not want the hassle. Ortman supports trying to get a grant for Sustainability education from Waste Management. Tumas asked if a \$500-\$1,000 grant could be to get a student on the committee. A technical college partnership could be welcomed. Tumas proposed that maybe AADC could be a location that would let things sit there and provide services to organizations trying to grow out of Northland. Wiley brought up the approval process through Council.

e) Downtown EV Chargers – Discussion

Gehred explained this item. She thinks it makes sense to get some use out of perfectly good infrastructure. She has talked with Bill Bailey and there are some ways we can use the chargers. We can own the equipment and lease the use to another agency. Jolma Electric would be a good idea. They could fix the chargers if anything went wrong. Ortman had brought up the Coop which was more mission aligned. We would need to work out in a contract the details of insurance, maintenance, etc. It is a very modest money maker. The City could lease them to the Coop for a dollar and put the maintenance on the Co-op or could make it more lucrative. The City would have to put up the amount of the grant which was about \$38,000. Ortman asked if this would be ready to take to COW. Wiley explained that BART might be interested. Ortman thinks that this should be an action item on the next agenda. Tumas stated that the abandonment of EV charging infrastructure happens often. She had a Level II charger installed at her house and paid a monthly fee. Xcel is discontinuing the program so transferring ownership of the charger to her.

6) Staff Updates

Wiley mentioned the Beaser Avenue Apartment complex and strategic plan update.

7) Future agenda items

Ortman suggested finding a way to identify City lots that would be solar. He asked if Wiley could pull together a map of all City lots. What is the total electricity use for the City of Ashland? We should determine the total Ashland needs and total City needs. Then we can meet the City needs. Ortman stated that his mother's lot is the biggest City lot and the pines could be cut down because they are dying of root rust anyway. Energy Positive Ashland starting with Energy Positive City of Ashland is the major goal. The Committee should write an opinion on data centers. Ortman asked if anyone was comfortable coming up with a statement explaining what we would insist on if one came here. Myslivy has researched on how to advise congregations on AI so can look through

things she has. Ortman can also bring information in. Ortman suggests preparing a sample ordinance. Gehred suggests highlighting the work being done and the fact that we have updated our ordinance. We should add the newsletter update and advertise the Extension link. We took on the mission statement of the Eco-Municipality.

8) Adjournment

Ortman asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Tumas moved and Amman seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

## **Background on Comprehensive Planning:**

[from Extension website](#): “A comprehensive plan is a document that describes a long-term vision that a community wants to achieve. It is a broad brush look at the entire community in terms of where it is now, and where it would like to be in the coming years. It looks at the many parts of the community, how the community functions, and its role in the region. A comprehensive plan is intended to provide a rational basis for making local land use decisions and to serve as a blueprint for community-wide efforts to achieve its vision.

“Ashland County and all the municipalities within the county developed and approved comprehensive plans in 2005-2006. State law (Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001) dictated the process and components of a comprehensive plan and that once adopted, plans should be reviewed at least every 10 years. That most recently revised Comprehensive Plan and Farmland Preservation Plan was reviewed and approved at the December 15, 2016 Ashland County Board of Supervisors meeting.”

[State law](#) requires comprehensive plans to include the following chapters, though additional chapters may also be included: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Land-use; and Implementation. These plans guide county projects and activities. Additionally, municipalities within the county try to align their comprehensive plans with those of the county, such that municipalities’ projects and activities are also somewhat guided by this plan. For reference, the City of Ashland’s most recent Comprehensive Plan is available [here](#).

### **[Ashland County 2006 Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goals:](#)**

**Vision:** We envision a County that recognizes the diversity of rural, forested, community and village life. By joining together, we become stronger and more efficient in meeting our citizen’s needs. We are challenged to maintain and improve land, air and water quality in an increasingly complex world.

**Goals:** To meet these challenges, the County will...

- Have robust economic development throughout the county to remain competitive in attracting new businesses and supporting existing businesses
- Have a thriving local economy that attracts and retains young people, state-of-the-art infrastructure, the most up-to-date telecommunications, well-qualified workforce with a high-quality of life, and ample job opportunities providing a living wage
- Maintain a high-quality natural resource base and preserve our air, land and water at the highest level for future generations
- Continue its position as a steward to county, state, and federal forest lands, fish, and wildlife through collaboration with different agencies and organizations
- Have quality and affordable housing opportunities for all residents

- Continue to provide both natural resource opportunities and cultural resource opportunities that attracts people to the county, and continues to recognize the importance of tourism in the County
- Continue to support the main economic drivers of the county including manufacturing, forestry, tourism, agriculture, education and health services
- Support childhood and life-long learning through strong k-12, two-year and four-year higher educational institutions

### **City of Ashland's Sustainability Committee's Role:**

We have a potential role in providing input to the current update of the County's Comprehensive Plan. Already, Ashland County Extension (Lissa Radke) has convened experts in five working groups to provide input on sustainability themes for the updated comprehensive plan: Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural Resource; Natural Resources; and Land-use. I was involved in one of these groups and based on my experiences I feel confident that robust input was gathered around these topics. Community input is now being gathered through community surveys and planned town halls. We can provide input as community members at these town halls and by providing specific recommendations from this committee to the Ashland County Planning Committee.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- What might be missing from the 2006 Vision and Goals?
- What is no longer relevant or needed from the 2006 Vision and Goals?
- How can the 2006 Vision and Goals be edited to better represent the ethos of sustainability?

### **Some Ideas to Consider:**

- Add a sustainability goal, such as "Ensure the County's economies, communities, and environments thrive for current and future generations of people and nature."
- Recommend sustainability-oriented objectives for appropriate chapters:
  - Energy in the county is produced through renewable resources, sourced locally, and utilizing local contractors and service providers.
  - Novel synthetic chemicals (i.e. PFAS, microplastics) are monitored in the environment. Their release into the environment is controlled and high concentrations in the environment are remediated.
  - Biodiversity is maintained through conservation lands, ecosystem restoration, and control of non-native species
  - Future climatic conditions and associated weather risks are considered in all planning, investments, and projects.
  - Biogeochemical flows in the environment (i.e. phosphorous and nitrogen) are monitored and controlled to maintain ecosystem health and safe water for drinking and recreating

- Freshwater changes (soil moisture, river and lake levels, water temperature) are limited by maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems and planning for future hydroclimatic conditions
- Indoor and outdoor air quality is monitored and communicated to the public. Residents are educated on the impacts and dangers of poor air quality. Programs help individuals limit their exposure to poor air quality and its effects.
- Economic development incorporates maintenance of healthy ecosystems and other natural resources for future generations and balances the needs of residents and tourists.
- Cultural resources are preserved through vibrant programs (i.e. language, arts, and crafts) that adapt to residents' needs
- High-quality services (i.e. medical care, education, emergency services) are available to all
- Interconnected communities, transportation access, and other services ensure that all residents have access to social relationships and social isolation is reduced
- County population remains stable or changes slowly. County services are flexible to scale with changes in population.

### **Further Inspiration:**

The 2023 update to the Bayfield County Comprehensive Plan includes numerous goals and objectives related to sustainability. Here are some that I selected out to highlight:

- **Transportation:**
  - Goal 3: The future transportation system should be flexible, multi-modal, incorporate technologies to support the transition to electric vehicles, and provide for the needs of citizens and businesses in Bayfield County.
    - encourage bike trails
    - develop a county-wide trail plan
    - additional right-of-ways
    - alternative fuel filling station
    - encourage ride sharing programs
  - Goal 4: Pursue alternative fuel sources for fleet vehicles as technology becomes available.
- **Utilities and Community Facilities**
  - Goal 1: A clean, resilient energy supply that makes use of cost-effective renewable resources while protecting Bayfield County's natural resources, which are consistent with and contribute to the County's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
    - county-wide EV infrastructure plan
    - track energy use by county-owned facilities
    - county-wide energy resilience plan
    - smart grid

- solar-friendly zoning codes
    - focus on energy
    - consider large-scale solar locations and plan and zone accordingly
    - encourage RE with local utilities, promote siting RE projects now
    - educate residents on energy savings
    - ID and map potential resilience centers
    - develop RE at essential service locations
  - Goal 3: Support and strengthen essential services to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.
    - Develop a countywide plan that provides guidance to municipalities re: climate-change induced impacts to waste treatment and water treatment plants.
  - Goal 4: Recognize the value and everyday importance of Bayfield County's parks and community centers, libraries, civic buildings, and cultural assets by investing in their maintenance and improvement.
    - ID, fund, and update all County-owned buildings with HVAC systems (and hot water heaters, windows, and building insulation) older than 20 years. Replace with high efficiency HVAC systems.
- Ag, natural, and cultural resources
  - Goal 1: Protect, maintain, and enhance lakes and streams, wetlands, forestlands, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and groundwater to maintain water quality, ecologic function, and recreational and aesthetic values.
    - tech assistance for landowners
    - slow the flow
    - zoning and tech assistance to slow erosion and slumping
    - habitat
    - invasive species
    - protect lakes and streams
  - Goal 2: Reduce and mitigate surface and groundwater impacts from agricultural land use activities...
    - nutrient management planning
    - farmland preservation plan
    - increase minimum parcel size?
    - fish creek and marengo watershed plans
  - Goal 3: Enhance or improve climate resiliency across all natural landscapes, with an emphasis on forests, and increase natural carbon sequestration to the extent needed to achieve the County's goal of net-zero carbon emissions from County operations by 2040 and from all County sources by 2050.
    - establish forest ecosystem trends
    - larger minimum parcels to reduce habitat fragmentation
    - sustainable forestry practices
    - carbon-balanced county forests
    - reduce carbon loss from disturbances
    - promote perennial crops and rotational grazing

- Goal 4: Increase the climate resilience for planning, design, engineering, and construction of future projects due to more intense weather events.
  - plan for 100-yr storms
  - stay up-to-date on trainings
- Goal 5: Protect, restore, and enhance sustainable fish and wildlife populations and habitat through an integrated ecosystem approach.
- Economic Development
  - Goal 4: Bayfield County will invest in infrastructure improvements needed to support modern economic development and community needs.
    - ID potential grant-funded RE projects
- Hazard Mitigation
- Land Use
  - Goal 1: Ensure that land use and development is compatible and harmonious with the natural environment.
    - minimum lot sizes to decrease fragmentation
    - promote high-density development at appropriate sites
    - minimize # driveways
    - more through-streets, less dead ends
    - parking standards
    - develop BMP for light pollution
    - encourage dark skies
  - Goal 3: Protect water resources in volume and quality.
    - study artesian water system
  - Goal 4: Protect and preserve agricultural and forestland uses and the overall economic viability of working lands within Bayfield County.

## **Boreal Waters Community Foundation – Spring Grant Cycle**

These grants support projects that emphasize collaboration and create lasting positive change. They each have a grant range of \$25,000 - \$50,000 and focus on three key areas:

**Opportunity** – Projects empower individuals to achieve economic stability and independence. **Examples:**

- Expands access to affordable housing
- Creates jobs that pay a living wage
- Supports wealth-building opportunities
- Provides access to high-quality education
- Strengthens economic well-being through essential support services

**Resilience** – Projects must enhance the ability of organizations, families, or communities to anticipate, adapt to, and recover from challenges, creating sustainable, long-term solutions that reduce risk and promote resilience. **Examples:**

- Leveraging partnerships and resources to implement scalable, lasting solutions that strengthen community resilience.
- Expanding access to knowledge, training, and tools that improve economic, social, or environmental stability for individuals and families.
- Developing community-driven solutions that address housing stability, food security, workforce resilience, or climate adaptation.
- Applying innovative or proven strategies that increase a community's ability to prepare for and respond to systemic challenges (e.g., disaster preparedness, economic shifts, public health crises).

**Belonging** – Creating spaces and opportunities where all people are valued, heard, and are able to thrive. Projects amplify voices, foster creative expression, and create a vibrant, inclusive culture. **Examples:**

- Elevates diverse voices and perspectives, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.
- Embraces the common humanity of all individuals.
- Implements practices that increase connection, respect, and safety.
- Strengthens community bonds and promotes equity for all.

**The Boreal Waters CF also offers awards in the \$500 - \$8,000 range.**

**Applications for the Spring 2025 grant round will open on January 5 and must be submitted by February 2.**

## **Kettering Family Foundation (Most competitive as well as most loosely aligned)**

### **Grant Guidelines**

All prospective applicants to the Kettering Family Foundation must communicate their interest in applying and discuss their proposal with Foundation personnel prior to initiating the application process. Please send an email to [info@ketteringfamilyphilanthropies.org](mailto:info@ketteringfamilyphilanthropies.org) to initiate a conversation.

The Kettering Family Foundation (KFF) will consider activities in the following categories:

- Arts, Culture and Humanities
- Education
- Environment
- Health/Medical
- Human Services/Public & Society Benefit

Organizations that are not units of government or affiliated with a religious organization must have a current 501(c)(3) determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Fiscal sponsorships will be accepted, but only under special circumstances and prior arrangement must be made before applying. Request Summaries for any of the following purposes are rarely considered.

### **Application Guidelines**

The Foundation administers two grant cycles per year, January through May and July through November. Only one application may be submitted during a twelve-month period.

The application, which is fully website-based, consists of two parts: a Request Summary and an invitation-only Full Proposal. **To be considered for a grant, all applicants must submit a Request Summary by January 31 or July 31.**

- Request Summaries are reviewed by the appropriate grant committee and if they are interested in the application, will request a Full Proposal.
- Invited Full Proposals must be submitted on the website no later than March 15 or September 15.
- Funding decisions are made in May and November and funded grants will be paid in June and December.

- You will be advised by email of the outcome of the Committee’s review in approximately three weeks from the final deadline.
- Notice of approval or denial will be communicated to you within 10 days of the Committee’s meeting. If you are awarded a grant, the chief executive officer of your organization will be required to sign a [Grant Recipient Agreement](#) that outlines the duties and responsibilities of being a grant recipient. Generally, grants are paid within 45 days of the Committee’s meeting.

**Kettering Grant History**

During the last three calendar years, The Kettering Family Foundation paid a total of \$19,695,642 to charitable organizations throughout the United States, primarily where family members reside.

**2024 Grants Paid by Category**

<b>Arts/Culture/Humanities</b>	\$1,630,000
<b>Education</b>	\$1,549,000
<b>Environment</b>	\$899,000
<b>Health/Medical</b>	\$1,480,000
<b>Human Services</b>	\$1,362,000
<b>Public/Society Benefit</b>	\$19,000
	<b>\$6,939,500</b>

**HEAD OF THE LAKES UNITED WAY**

Up to \$12,000 for each of 2 years - Grant period is open now until Jan 2.

Priority Focus Areas – Health, Education and Fiscal Literacy

Three step process – 1:1 sit down pitch, grant application and then follow up conversation about the project. Reviewed by a committee.

We would need to create a team for the 1:1, grant-writing and follow up conversation.

**WM (Waste Management Foundation) – Rolling Deadlines**

The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance and/or in-kind services for projects by nonprofit and public organizations to make communities safer, stronger, and more sustainable. Award recipients must use donations exclusively for public purposes.

Projects must support meaningful community involvement. The funding agency utilizes the following funding principles:

- Environmental stewardship: with a commitment to sustainability, priority consideration will be given to organizations whose programs preserve and/or enhance renewable resources and empower environmental stewards
- Environmental justice: engaging with people in the communities where the funding agency operates to understand their needs and address operational impacts to help those communities thrive; refer to [wm.com/locations](http://wm.com/locations) for a map of service locations
- Sustainability education: equipping individuals with knowledge needed to enhance their communities through programs that support clean, resilient, and sustainable places to live
- Workforce and skills development: giving individuals the tools and training they need to excel while empowering employees to take care of customers, neighbors, and their environment via programs that prioritize economic mobility
- Community vitality: ensuring that neighborhoods and communities are safe and sustainable
- Supplier diversity: addressing inequity and economic development for underserved groups