



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING AGENDA

January 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Mendota Heights City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights

1. Roll Call

2. Call to Order

3. Discussion

- a. 2025 Oak Awards
- b. Sustainable Mendota Heights Update
- c. Shoreland Management Ordinance Update
- d. Town Square Talk Recap

4. Committee Reports

5. Adjourn

**Next Meeting
February 11, 2026 at 6:00 PM**

Information is available in alternative formats or with the use of auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities upon request by calling city hall at 651-452-1850 or by emailing cityhall@mendotaheightsmn.gov.



Parks and Recreation Work Session Memo

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2026

TO: The Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator
SUBJECT: 2025 Oak Awards

ACTION REQUEST:

Discussion Only.

BACKGROUND:

The Oak Awards program was created in 2023 by the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission to celebrate leadership, education/outreach, and project efforts that advance natural resources within the City.

The Oak Awards program is now accepting applications for the following 2025 awards:

- **Acorn award** – recognizes exemplary youth leadership in the advancement of our city's natural resources. For example, a youth-led native planting project or education event. Eligible youth include individuals or groups 18 years of age and younger, or a current student in 12th grade or under.
- **Leaf award** – recognizes significant contributions of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated substantial leadership for the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For example, a community native planting effort or coordination of a neighborhood-wide Adopt-a-Drain effort.
- **Canopy award** – recognizes lifetime achievement of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership for the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For example, an individual who has initiated several or successive natural resource stewardship efforts or an organization that leads by example and has worked overtime to cultivate natural resource stewardship in the community.

Any individual, family, company, or organization that has contributed to the advancement of natural resources within Mendota Heights is eligible. Nominees need not reside within Mendota Heights. Self-nominations or nominations of others are both accepted. Nominees are evaluated based on the quality of the nomination, demonstration of impact and inclusion of collaboration or community-building efforts.

For-profit individuals and companies hired by the city are in most cases ineligible. City Staff and City officials are generally not eligible if the applicable work is related to the regular duties of their position.

Nominations are accepted until January 31st, 2026. Nominations can be submitted electronically, by mail, or by dropping the nomination off at City Hall.

The City began promoting and requesting applications for the recognition program in late November but has not yet received any applications for the 2025 Oak Awards. Commissioners are asked to discuss further ways to promote the program.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025 Nomination Form_MH Oak Award Program

Mendota Heights Oak Awards Nomination Form

Applications will be accepted through **January 31st, 2026**. Applications may be submitted in-person or via mail to City Hall:

City of Mendota Heights
Attn: Natural Resources Coordinator
1101 Victoria Curve
Mendota Heights, MN 55118

Applications may also be submitted electronically to: KSpreiter@Mendotaheightsmn.gov

Nominee	
Nominator	
Award Category (Acorn, Leaf, or Canopy)	

1. Please describe the nominee's leadership, education/outreach, or project effort that is contributing to the advancement of natural resources in Mendota Heights (e.g., what, why, when, where, how, who).
2. How has the nominee's leadership, education/outreach, or project efforts led to demonstrable or ongoing advancement of the City's natural resources?
3. How has the nominee collaborated with other community members or partners in their effort to advance natural resources in Mendota Heights?
4. Please attach any supportive materials, including but not limited to project photos or drawings, education/outreach materials, or other collateral.



Natural Resources Work Session Memo

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2026

TO: The Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator
SUBJECT: Sustainable Mendota Heights Update

ACTION REQUEST:

Discussion only.

BACKGROUND:

The City continues to work towards its sustainability goals as part of the City Council's [**Strategic Priorities**](#). "Environmental sustainability and stewardship" is one of the City Council's four strategic priorities. This Priority includes four goals:

1. Integrate sustainability practices into municipal operations and infrastructure investments.
2. Enhance public knowledge and use of natural resources and sustainability best practices.
3. Lead investment in and expansion of natural resources.
4. Protect historic and natural spaces.

As a way to focus its efforts, the City's sustainability work is categorized into three topics: energy, waste, and nature.

Energy

Efforts to source energy from renewables and reduce usage.

Waste

Practices like recycling, composting, and reducing waste when we can.

Nature

Preservation and enhancement of the City's natural resources.

As part of these sustainability efforts, the City has begun promotion of the Mendota Heights Business Sustainability Program. This program engages local businesses in sustainability efforts and provides an opportunity for the City to highlight and promote its efforts in the community. The program supports the City's strategic priorities of delivering Premier Public Services and advances the priorities of Sustainability and Stewardship & Economic Vitality and Community Vibrancy.

Program Overview: Businesses will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that align with the three areas of the Sustainable Mendota Heights program – Nature, Energy and Waste. These participation activities are designed to be accessible for a wide variety of businesses. Businesses that complete at least one participation activity from each of the three

areas will earn distinction as a Sustainable Mendota Heights business.

Program Goals:

1. Promote public knowledge of local actions that contribute to community sustainability
2. Further the city's goals as outlined in the Partners in Energy-Energy Action Plan
3. Further the city's progress in implementation of the city's Natural Resources Management Plan
4. Recognize and promote local businesses demonstrating sustainability leadership
5. Leverage the city's communication tools to promote businesses that are furthering the city's sustainability goals
6. Strengthen the local economy by reducing business operating costs, encouraging innovation and enhancing business visibility

A 'Business Blitz' has been planned for mid-January to promote the business program as well as Partners in Energy programs for businesses. Elected officials, Partners in Energy staff, and city staff will be going door-to-door, visiting 32 Mendota Heights businesses to promote these programs.

A Business Breakfast has also been planned for February 10th at 8am at City Hall. The focus of this event will be to inform local businesses on energy-saving programs offered through Partners in Energy. The Dakota County Chamber of Commerce will be co-hosting the event. Mendota Heights businesses will receive a written invitation. However, the public is invited, including interested residents.

ATTACHMENTS:

None



Natural Resources Work Session Memo

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2026

TO: The Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator
SUBJECT: Shoreland Management Ordinance Update

ACTION REQUEST:

Discussion Only.

BACKGROUND:

As an initiative of Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development of the Commission's 2026 Work Plan, the Goal 1 committee is working to develop a Shoreland Management Ordinance for recommendation of approval by City Council. The Shoreland Management Ordinance, if adopted, would be included in Title 15. Environmental Standards, of the Mendota Heights City Code. A shoreland management ordinance would help to protect natural water bodies within the city that are not already protected under current city code. The Goal 1 Committee is currently reviewing the recommended example ordinance created by the DNR as an example to follow in developing a city ordinance, as well as developing a draft that is specific to Mendota Heights. The committee is requesting input from the commission on the draft ordinance.

The draft has been discussed at previous work sessions and meetings. The Commission should continue the discussion and provide comments and feedback on the current draft.

ATTACHMENTS:

None



Natural Resources Work Session Memo

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2026

TO: The Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator
SUBJECT: Town Square Talk Recap

ACTION REQUEST:

Discussion Only.

BACKGROUND:

The Natural Resources Commission received an invitation for two commission members to be guests on the Town Square Talk show *Town Square Talk*.

The show is in interview format, with some prepared questions and some follow-up. Town Square Talk airs once a month, featuring leaders from nonprofits, the arts and community-based initiatives.

Chair Knosalla and Commissioner Thuening were guests on Town Square Talk in December, and spoke regarding several Natural Resources Commission topics including:

- Partners in Energy
- Oaks Awards Program
- Earth and Arbor Day Celebration
- The Mendota Heights Annual Tree Sale and Tree Canopy Program
- Urban Forestry Ordinance
- Valley Park Restoration and Collaboration
- Ways Residents can get Involved and Take Action (Adopt-a-Drain Program, Partners in Energy Programs, Curb-cut Raingarden Program, etc.)
- Upcoming Programs and Events

The Town Square Talk episode is now available on Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/1148682912?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>. It is also posted to Facebook, Instagram, and Podcast platforms, and playing on Ch. 799.

ATTACHMENTS:

None