

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Town of West Seneca Environmental Commission was called to order by Chairperson Amadon at 6:33 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present:

1. Robert Amadon, Chairperson
2. Barbara Lipiew
3. Brittany Hernon
4. Charles Tuberdyke
5. Gina Geller
6. Haris Ismail
7. Ryan Taylor
- Councilmember Scott Robertson, Town Board Liaison
- Councilmember Mary Sherman, Town Board Liaison

Absent:

8. Ben Szablewski (Excused)
9. Kathleen Duffy
- Danielle Bagley, Associate Member
- Leane Schultz, Associate Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Lipiew, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to approve the Environmental Commission meeting minutes from January 15, 2026.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Carried

ISSUES OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

CORRESPONDENCE

No new correspondence.

ONGOING COMMISSION PROJECTS

- Update on Tree Inventory Grant

Chairperson Amadon reported that the Town is awaiting communication from Davey Resource Group regarding the Community Forest Management Plan. Chairperson Amadon stated that the decision has been made to begin the Community Forest Management Plan using remaining grant funds.

Councilmember Robertson reported that the plan is to proceed with this management plan.

Chairperson Amadon reported that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Regional Forester will review inventory data and perform sampling verification on selected streets.

- Planning an Earth Day or Arbor Day Event

Chairperson Amadon reported that the tree inventory grant requires public outreach and education on trees, tree care, and the purpose and benefits of the inventory and management plan, with a total of at least three public meetings by December 31, 2026. Chairperson Amadon noted that the November tree planting event counts as one such event.

Ms. Lipiew reported that the Burchfield Nature and Art Center typically hosts activities for these occasions, but the indoor facility is closed on Saturdays and the Town generally does not program Arbor Day events at Burchfield. Ms. Lipiew suggested the Community Center as a higher-traffic venue.

Councilmember Robertson proposed collaborating with Buildings and Grounds/Highway to build several bird/nesting boxes for parks and offered to consult with Highway Superintendent Brian Adams regarding materials and installation on suitable posts or structures.

Ms. Geller suggested kid-focused, sensory activities to simulate planting trees and to highlight animals interacting with urban forests; Ms. Geller agreed to contact Earth Spirit Educational Services regarding participation in an event.

Ms. Hernon reported that she contacted Wild Ones Western New York Chapter; the group may be busy but encouraged proposing a specific date and time. Ms. Hernon suggested an indoor event to avoid weather contingencies and noted possible summer programming such as a guided tree walk at a local park.

Mr. Ismail proposed pairing this educational program with a trash pickup near the Community Center, Cazenovia Creek trails, or other town parks, with interpretive discussion of native trees and local wildlife.

Chairperson Amadon supported exploring bird boxes, a cleanup, collaboration with Wild Ones and Earth Spirit, and an indoor program at the Community Center gymnasium or the large conference room. Chairperson Amadon proposed tentative dates of April 18, 2026, or April 25, 2026 (Saturdays), with a possible rain date and the option to schedule on a Sunday depending on partner availability and room reservations. This item was tabled to the next meeting for date confirmation and partner commitments.

- Recycling Information Provided by Kathleen Duffy

Chairperson Amadon reported that Ms. Duffy emailed links to recycling resources and that the Commission will review and post these materials to shared Google Documents. Chairperson Amadon stated that access issues persist for several members and that he will coordinate with Mr. Szablewski to expand editor rights. Mr. Tuberdyke agreed to assist with editing and updates once granted editor access. This item was tabled to the next meeting.

GOVERNANCE

- Voting In of Evelyn Hicks as Associate Member

Motion by Chairperson Amadon, seconded by Ms. Lipiew, to vote Evelyn Hicks in as an associate member of the Environmental Commission.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Carried

NEW BUSINESS

- Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper Post

Chairperson Amadon reported sharing a Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper Facebook post concerning rescission of the 2009 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) endangerment finding and noted pending legal challenges. Chairperson Amadon requested member review and comments and suggested sharing the item via the Commission's Facebook page.

Ms. Geller reported that the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) analysis of New York's Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) program projects continued progress from 2026 to 2034. Ms. Geller agreed to circulate the EDF link to the Commission for review.

- Heat Mapping Survey

Ms. Lipiew summarized Erie County's heat mapping presentation; that areas in Buffalo with lower tree canopy exhibit higher heat exposure and reduced nocturnal cooling, with conditions improving as tree cover increases.

Mr. Taylor agreed to contact Erie County staff to obtain official heat maps and related materials for posting to the Commission's shared drive and potential use in Earth Day presentations.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Lipiew, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Carried

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Fincel, Secretary to the Environmental Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matthew Fincel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "F".