Resolution #2-R-26
Resolution Supporting Vegetation Analysis and Advancing a Data-Informed Mowing Reduction Strategy

Date: April 1, 2026
Submitted By: Alderperson Schultz – District 9; Alderperson Meltzer – District 2; Alderperson Wolff – District 12; Alderperson Stancil-Martin – District 11
Referred To: Parks & Recreation Committee

Summary: *This resolution supports the Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel's ongoing vegetation and invasive species analysis as a critical foundation for future land management decisions. It requests that ASAP develop data-informed recommendations for mowing reduction, native planting, and invasive species control upon completion of the analysis. It also encourages incorporation of this work into the City's forthcoming Sustainability Master Plan.*

WHEREAS, the City of Appleton is committed to responsible land stewardship, sustainability, and efficient use of public resources; and

WHEREAS, the Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel (ASAP) is currently conducting a citywide vegetation analysis to better understand existing ground-cover conditions, including turf grass, natural areas & invasive species cover across all public managed lands; and

WHEREAS, this analysis provides a necessary foundation for evaluating opportunities related to mowing practices; improving ecological function, enhancing biodiversity, supporting and expanding pollinator habitat as well as conducting targeted invasive species remediation and long-term land management in general; must be addressed to ensure the success of pollinator habitat, native plantings, and naturalized areas; and

WHEREAS, invasive species are present within portions of the City's landscape and must be addressed to ensure the long-term success of pollinator habitat, native plantings, and naturalized areas; and

WHEREAS, the Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel and the Park and Recreation Department have already begun incorporating low-mow pollinator habitat and naturalized area pilot projects within its parks and public spaces, demonstrating both capacity and interest in evolving traditional mowing practices; and

WHEREAS, the Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel has expressed further interest in advancing mowing reduction and alternative ground-cover strategies and seeks direction to develop recommendations upon completion of this analysis while recognizing that such strategies must be grounded in accurate, citywide vegetation data; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council supports completion of the citywide vegetation analysis to help inform future land management decisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel, in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department and other relevant departments, is encouraged to develop data-informed recommendations related to reduced mowing practices, native plantings, invasive species management, and other land management strategies following completion of the analysis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any recommendations developed through this process should be phased, practical, and operationally implementable; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the results of this work be considered for incorporation into the City's Sustainability Master Plan currently being developed with Pale Blue Dot.

Addendum A — Conceptual 5-Year Implementation Strategy
For reference and planning alignment

Year 1 — Baseline & Pilot Identification

- Complete citywide vegetation analysis
- Integrate existing datasets (GIS, land cover, invasive occurrence)
- Identify **pilot areas**:
    - parks
    - riparian corridors (e.g., Fox River)
    - low-value mowing zones
- Establish data standards and tracking metrics

Year 2 — Pilot Implementation

- Convert select pilot areas to:
    - reduced mowing
    - native/pollinator plantings
- Initiate **targeted invasive species removal** in pilot zones
- Begin community education and signage

Year 3 — Evaluation & Model Development

- Evaluate pilot outcomes:
    - cost vs savings
    - maintenance requirements
    - ecological performance
- Develop **prioritization model** for expansion:
    - invasive density
    - habitat value
    - maintenance efficiency

Year 4 — Targeted Expansion

- Expand program into:
    - additional parks
    - stormwater corridors
    - underutilized turf areas
- Continue invasive species control aligned with expansion zones
- Refine operational practices

Year 5 — Program Integration

- Establish mowing reduction and naturalized areas as a **standard land management practice**

- Integrate into:
    - Parks planning
    - Sustainability initiatives
    - Capital and maintenance planning
- Report measurable outcomes:
    - acres converted
    - invasive reduction
    - maintenance impacts