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## Debris Pick-Up Continues, as Question about Burying Lines Is Raised <sup>[1]</sup>

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**By:**

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East Lansing's Department of Public Works will continue for at least another week to pick-up trees and tree limbs downed by Friday's storm according to City Manager George Lahanas. Speaking at City Council's meeting last night [2], Lahanas praised City employees and residents for coming together to deal with the aftermath of the storm. He asked residents to continue to get downed vegetation to the curb.

Speaking in the Public Comments section of the meeting, Glencairn resident Jim Anderson also praised City workers and residents and raised the question of why East Lansing is not actively pursuing opportunities to bury electrical lines as a way to help prevent power outages. He said he and his wife paid to have their lines put underground and they "never regretted that for an instant."

Councilmember Erik Altmann echoed Anderson's remarks, saying the response had been "rapid with all hands on deck." He said it was impressive to watch City workers and residents come together to deal with so many downed trees and branches. But, he asked, why in 2016 "we still have trouble keeping power on when the wind blows?"

Altmann said he was unconvinced that tree-trimming was going to be the answer to preventing outages. He said there were plenty of instances where trees that might have been trimmed would still have taken out poles and wires when they fell during the storm. Altmann opined there are "two choices," one being "cut down all the trees," and the second, "put lines underground." He said it was time to start taking this seriously, particularly because climate change means "the weather is getting stranger and stranger."

Altmann also said that the Lansing Board of Water and Light (BWL) has "come a long way in the two-and-a-half years since the ice storm" and that the outage reporting system "mostly worked." He said the main achievement was that, unlike during the ice storm, his household's report of being without power was not accidentally deleted from the records, but stayed in the system until their power was restored.

Communication between BWL and its customers was better during this storm than the ice storm, according to Altmann, and "the mutual aid agreements seemed to work really well this time." He said within hours of the storm, he saw trucks "coming in from all over the state" to help with restoration of power.

Mayor Pro Tem Ruth Beier also briefly praised the "amazing work" by City staff in response to the storm and said she was also extremely impressed by how residents came together. "I like to live in that kind of city," she told those at the meeting. Councilmember Shanna Draheim expressed agreement.

Mayor Mark Meadows and Councilmember Susan Woods are on vacation and so were not in attendance at this week's Council meeting.

*Reminder: You can speak to East Lansing's City Council during public comments or write to Council [3] on any issue, whether or not it is on a published agenda.*

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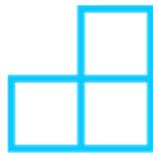
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