



Sustainability Commission

Regular Meeting

335 South Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115
<https://www.deperewi.gov/>

Final Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

5:30 PM

Council Chambers and Virtual

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM by Commissioner Jayne Black

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jayne Black	Commissioner	Present	
Emily Henrigillis	Commissioner	Present	
Randall Lawton	Commissioner	Remote	
Nicole Slavin	Commissioner	Excused	
Rachel Weber	Commissioner	Present	
John Quigley	Alderperson	Excused	
Hope Dragseth	Teen Advisor	Present	

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer
Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary
Scott Thoresen, Director of Public Works (Remote)

II. Public comment upon matters not on the agenda. Comments made during the public comment period shall pertain only to matters under the jurisdiction of the Sustainability Commission. Section 6-3(f) DPMC

None

III. Items

1. Approval of the February 13, 2024 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Henrigillis moved to approve the February 13, 2024 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Weber. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Emily Henrigillis, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Rachel Weber, Commissioner
AYES:	Jayne Black, Emily Henrigillis, Randall Lawton, Rachel Weber
EXCUSED:	Nicole Slavin, John Quigley

2. Discussion on City of De Pere Urban Orchard Management

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated that Commissioner Black had requested that Selena Darrow, Executive Director of Rooted In, Inc, discuss the City's Urban Orchards.

Selena Darrow, Executive Director of Rooted In, Inc, discussed the City Urban Orchards including location, lack of public knowledge about the orchards, lack of harvest care, along with them not being used as a teaching tool as intended. Ms. Darrow requested support of Rooted In, Inc through being provided information about tree care being done, whether funds were available from initial donations that can be used to spray trees, installation of signage (specifically at Voyageur Park), intentions to pick this fall, and support in marketing for volunteers to help during picking efforts.

Commissioner Henrigillis asked if Rooted In noticed during picking that pollinator species were planted near orchard to help fruit. Ms. Darrow stated they did not notice any native plantings that would attract pollinators to the trees. Ms. Darrow stated that Rooted In has two individuals on their advisory team that could suggest appropriate plantings. Ms. Darrow stated during harvesting in 2023, they were contacted by a local resident who told them the ground was sprayed for weeds but the fruit was not sprayed for bugs and disease. Commissioner Black stated that Westwood Elementary has a pollinator garden near their urban orchard, but that other locations did not seem to have a similar feature. Commissioner Black stated the fruit at Westwood appeared to be the best based on size and health. Ms. Darrow stated that Rooted In had canvassed the orchards in August and took photos and then did bulk picking in September. Commissioner Weber asked if "green" maintenance plans could be provided along with the pollinator list. Ms. Darrow stated that she could get that information and share with the Commission members. Commissioner Henrigillis asked what volunteer groups Rooted In has reached out to for picking assistance. Ms. Darrow stated they have volunteer partnerships set up. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that Brown County Master Gardeners may have availability for flash/short-term projects. Commissioner Henrigillis stated she knows other groups that could be contacted for volunteer opportunities. Ms. Darrow stated she had digital information she could share with the Commission. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, stated that information should be forwarded to herself or Chase Kuffel for distribution to Commission members. Commissioner Weber further requested information regarding optimal picking times for the orchards. Advisor Dragseth supported the installation of signs at the urban orchards. Commissioner Black suggested having a QR code on the sign that directed to the website and explained the mission of the urban orchards. Ms. Darrow suggested the website be updated as it does not appear to have been updated or touched for multiple years. Mr. Kuffel stated he took notes from the discussion and would forward to the Urban Orchard Committee for review. Ms. Darrow stated that she had reached out last year to the City Administrator and felt she was met with passivity. Ms. Darrow stated that part of Rooted In mission is sustainability and that she understands the urban orchards were a volunteer effort and now there are volunteers wanting to help it thrive. Mr. Kuffel stated the Sustainability Commission could still take the Urban Orchards on as an initiative and explained that funding would be discussed in the next agenda item.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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3. Discussion on Status of Sustainability Commission funded projects

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, outlined the funds available and planned projects to utilize the funds.

Commissioner Black questioned the process for requesting purchases. Mr. Kuffel stated that City general practice is to obtain three different quotes or products that the Commission could consider. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, asked if a draft pilot program would need to be discussed and approved prior to purchasing the monitors. Mr. Kuffel stated that it would be a good next step. Commissioner Black offered to write a draft pilot program for the clean air monitors. Commissioner Weber asked if unused funds rollover to the next year. Mr. Kuffel explained that the funds would be intended to be used in the year they are granted and any unused funds would have to be requested to

rollover. Scott Thoresen, Public Works Director, explained that operating supplies (such as postage, conferences and seminars, office supplies) would not carryover, but that staff would follow up with the Finance Department to know the exact limits of what could be carried over.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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4. Update on the Status of Greener Bay Compost's proposal for composting services
- Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, explained that Greener Bay Compost has been in contact with the Legal Department to finalize an agreement. Mr. Kuffel added that staff and Greener Bay Compost are working through insurance requirements and staff hopes to be able to bring this item to the April meeting for final consideration and approval.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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5. Discussion on Composting Bins
- Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, shared an article on home composting from Popular Mechanics and stated the Sustainability Commission could promote residents to take on home composting along with the public/private partnership with Greener Bay Compost. This initiative could go as far as allocating funding to assist homeowners in purchasing composting bins for their personal use.

Commissioner Weber stated there was a very interesting linked article in the home composting one provided. Commissioner Black asked if home composting was going to be added to the initiative list. Mr. Kuffel stated it was just being provided for the Commission to assess and consider as an option. Commissioner Weber questioned offering a home compost initiative while working on an initiative with Greener Bay Compost and suggested promoting the public/private partnership. Mr. Kuffel stated it would be up to the Commission to decide. Commissioner Henrigillis suggested linking home composting information on the City Sustainability webpage. Mr. Kuffel stated it could be posted on social media as well.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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6. Discuss Sustainability Commission Subgroups
- Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated the list provided included the subgroups as staff was aware of them and asked that members notify staff if there are inconsistencies in the members of any of the subgroups.

Advisor Dragseth asked if the Clean Energy members had received contact from Alderperson Quigley. Commissioner Weber stated she had not but had some information that could be discussed. Commissioner Black stated she had also sent information to Alderperson Quigley and had not received a reply. She also stated she had some information from Green Bay Sustainability Commission Member, Seth Hoffmeister, to discuss with the group and stated she is interested in having a subgroup meeting set up.

Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, warned the group that the discussion was getting off topic of the agenda item. Commissioner Black asked how the subgroup was supposed to proceed for getting a meeting set up. Mrs. Marovich stated that one person on the subgroup would need to take the lead and then the subgroup could communicate amongst each other to schedule a meeting to discuss their topic. Mr. Kuffel asked that staff be included in the email communications.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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7. Clean Air Initiative Update

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated this item was to discussion next steps, observations, feedback that the Commissioners have received. Mr. Kuffel added that staff was contacted by both superintendents of the school districts and were informed that they had forwarded the newsletter to their individual schools for school newsletter inclusion. Mr. Kuffel stated he checked the high school newsletters and did not see it in the most recent one, but it might be slated for a future one. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that Dickinson had included it in their most recent newsletter. Mr. Kuffel stated that Commissioner Black would like to request permission from the principals to hold an onsite awareness event and put the no idling video on the school websites. Additionally, Commissioner Black would like to provide an overview of the Moms Clean Air Force and the services they can provide to the City.

Commissioner Black clarified the process that was used to provide the newsletter to the individual schools. Mr. Kuffel stated that once the Commission approved the newsletter, staff forwarded to the superintendents, who then forwarded the newsletter directly to their individual school principals. Commissioner Black suggested tracking when or if the newsletter appeared in each schools newsletter to parents and families. Commissioner Henrigillis provided a report of her observations of idling vehicles during school pick-up and drop-off. Commissioner Black provided a report of her observations of idling vehicles during school pick-up and drop-off. Commissioner Black added that she has received push-back from the schools regarding onsite awareness events that were from outside (non-school) organizations. Commissioner Black informed the group that she has a PTO meeting scheduled with Westwood at the Middle School on April 9.

Commissioner Weber asked if additional information was provided regarding how to get approved for onsite awareness. Commissioner Black stated that was not provided, but that during initial conversations with the superintendents they had seemed in favor of onsite awareness. Commissioner Black read one of the responses she received from the schools, which included wording of events needing to be district sponsored.

Commissioner Weber asked what made something district sponsored. Commissioner Black stated she did not know and that it would be a conversation that needed to be had with the superintendents. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that when she spoke with the principal at Notre Dame, she mentioned the air monitor and the principal asked what would happen or be done if the monitor indicated the air was bad. Commissioner Black stated an air purifier would rectify the situation. Mr. Kuffel stated that information would need to be provided in the pilot program. Commissioner Black agreed and added that obtaining the air monitors would be one thing but implementing the program would be another item entirely. Advisor Dragseth asked if the commission members knew if the new high school was still being proposed. Advisor Dragseth added that in her experience,

there are a lot of cars that try to exit the parking lots at the same time and some cars are running but barely moving for half hour and she would like to see more efficient parking lots being addressed if a new high school is constructed. Commissioner Lawton expressed his support of the initiative along with his concerns over the lack of support at the school and community level. Commissioner Black suggested creating a list of obstacles and end goals and ideas of how to get past the obstacles to complete the messaging. Commissioner Lawton stated it will likely take some level of confrontation. Commissioner Henrigillis asked if Commissioners should work on a list of how to move the initiative forward to discuss at the next meeting. Commissioner Black stated her support of that plan.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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8. Discussion Regarding the Storm Water Art Project and Adopt-A-Drain Program

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated the obstacles that were discussed at the previous meeting surrounding the storm water art project. Mr. Kuffel added that another aspect of initiative that had been discussed was an adopt-a-drain program. Mr. Kuffel discussed information found during staff research regarding adopt-a-drain programs and added that adopt-a-drain program may be able to be added to the City's new "Report It" app.

Commissioner Henrigillis stated her support of both programs provided. Commissioner Henrigillis stated she did not feel the stickers (Green Bay program) draw enough attention to the program. Commissioner Henrigillis stated she had created a map of proposed locations for storm water art. Commissioner Weber asked if there were guidelines for what would create or prevent an attractive nuisance. Mr. Kuffel stated it would be important to avoid traffic lanes and look more towards parking lots or park lands. Commissioner Henrigillis stated she found that Storm water awareness week for Wisconsin is September 21-29, 2024 and suggested having a big promotion of the initiative that week. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that a waiver or promise form and sign-up would need to be created for the adopt-a-drain program. Commissioner Henrigillis also suggested having chalk at the Farmers Market booth and allow individuals to draw near the storm drain to draw attention to it. Commissioner Weber asked the feasibility of adding dye to a storm drain to time its flow to an outlet. Mr. Kuffel stated that dying the Fox River would require additional work to acquire permission from the DNR. Commissioner Henrigillis suggested a duck with a camera that would float from the storm drain to the outlet, but stated it might be too dark. Mr. Kuffel stated that it was much more light than you would expect in the storm pipes and that staff has push cameras that might be able to be used for this type of educational campaign. Commissioner Weber added that with permission, the dye would also create a good talking point for the public as well. Commissioner Black asked if the plan would be to host an event during storm water awareness week. Commissioner Henrigillis stated she would like to bring in staff from Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance to speak that week at the Library or Community Center. Commissioner Black suggested having a craft or something for kids to do that related to the discussion. Mr. Kuffel stated that the City has a large box culvert at the Community Center that could coordinate with the program, such as televising or using the push camera in it.

Discussion only. No action required.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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9. Consider and Possible Action for 2024 No Mow May*

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, explained that the intent of this item is to determine if the Commission would like to pursue offering No Mow May in 2024. Mr. Kuffel outlined information from the past couple years including participation and feedback from participants, community members, and elected officials. Mr. Kuffel explained that City of De Pere has collaborated with City of Green Bay the past two years and the intent would be to collaborate in 2024 if the Commission decided to move forward. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, stated that a significant decrease was noted in registered properties from 2022 to 2023.

Commissioner Henrigillis stated that in 2023 Commission discussed moving away from No Mow May and focusing more on the planned natural landscape ordinance, letting your yard/garden sleep in during the spring, and slow mow summer. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that it is important to help residents understand the connection between No Mow May and more long-term benefits such as the Planned Natural Landscape and slow mow summer. Mrs. Marovich stated that some elected officials would prefer a focus on the more permanent solution, such as the planned natural landscape, making them more hesitant to support No Mow May. Commissioner Black stated that during discussions with residents at Farmer's Market in 2023, they were not aware that the City had adopted a Planned Natural Landscape ordinance and suggested that instead of promoting No Mow May, the Commission promote the ordinance. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that residents still participate in No Mow May because they feel like they are doing something beneficial, but agreed with promoting slow mow summer and planned natural landscape harder this spring and summer. Mrs. Marovich asked if Commissioner Henrigillis would like to make a motion regarding No Mow May and explained the possible motion options. Commissioner Weber stated the No Mow May is gaining traction and individuals are just getting used to the idea of having a different landscape that isn't entirely grass, but that objective hasn't full caught on for connecting No Mow May to the Planned Natural Landscape. Commissioner Weber stated she would be hesitant to end No Mow May because it could be inadvertently providing a message that it was not working, rather than showing the Commission pivoting to a more permanent solution. Commissioner Black asked how much of a decrease was seen in registered participants. Mr. Kuffel provided the numbers for registered participants for 2021, 2022, and 2023. Commissioner Weber stated she had participated but not registered as she had not realize she needed to register. Mrs. Marovich explained that staff had preferred registration, though everyone could participate since the resolution relaxes the enforcement of the ordinance for long grass. Mrs. Marovich stated that if the Commission decides to move forward with No Mow May, there could be a stronger connection formed regarding No Mow May to Slow Mow Summer to Planned Natural Landscape in communications posted online including the website and social media, along with Farmer's Market, if approved. Advisor Dragseth suggested providing additional communications to the individuals that register to promote the connections to a more permanent landscape solution.

Commissioner Lawton left at 6:31 PM.

Due to lack of quorum, the meeting ended at 6:31 PM.

10. Consideration and possible action on 2024 Farmers Market Booth*
11. Discussion on 2024 Pollinator Week
12. Discuss Sustainability Commission Vacancies

IV. Future Agenda Items

V. Adjournment

6: 31 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Marovich