



Sustainability Commission

Regular Meeting

Minutes

335 South Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115
www.deperewi.gov

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

5:30 PM

Council Chambers/Virtual

I. Call to Order

1. Roll Call

Commissioner Henrigillis called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

Present: Emily Henrigillis, Randall Lawton, Casey Nelson, Jonie Panick, Carmen Van Schyndel, Rachel Leonard

Absent:

Excused: Nicole Slavin, Anna Metzler

Others present:

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer

Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant

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

None

III. Items

1. Approval of the August 12, 2025 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Van Schyndel moved to approve the August 12, 2025 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Lawton. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Carmen Van Schyndel
SECONDER:	Randall Lawton
AYES:	Emily Henrigillis, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson, Jonie Panick, Carmen Van Schyndel
EXCUSED:	Nicole Slavin, Anna Metzler

2. Commission Member Introductions

Commission members introduced themselves and provided their interest in sustainability.

3. Consideration and possible action on Initiative Advertising Opportunities

Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant, outlined the advertising options as previously discussed in July.

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, played the videos currently available on the Sustainability Commission website.

Following the video illustrating the storm drain that enters the Fox River, Alderperson Nelson asked how far storm drains can be clogged. Mr. Kuffel explained that they often get clogged by ice during the winter and can freeze solid at times. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked if the goal was participation or education. Mr. Kuffel stated it would be both. Commissioner Leonard spoke in favor of promoting the Clean Air Initiative. Commissioner Van Schyndel stated that an active initiative should be promoted with a clear call to action and an option for measuring impact. Commissioner Van Schyndel spoke in favor of the Reid Street banner utilizing stormwater awareness and/or Adopt-a-Drain theme. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked the timeline for getting a banner installed. Ms. Marovich stated she was unsure how long it would take to get the banner back once designed and would have to work with Parks Department to know what dates are available to have the banner installed. Ms. Marovich offered to add a question on the Adopt-a-Drain sign-up asking how the participant heard about the program in order to track impact and visibility. Commissioner Leonard spoke in favor of the movie theater ad and asked if it was possible to add a call to action. Ms. Marovich stated that staff would work to add a second half of that video to capitalize on the 30-second ad spot that would be available. Mr. Kuffel outlined a few other options for promoting stormwater awareness through the banner or movie theater ad. Alderperson Nelson asked about the available budget for these options. Mr. Kuffel explained the available budget for initiatives. Alderperson Nelson supported the movie theater ad and Reid Street banner ideas. Mr. Kuffel suggested using a simple URL rather than a QR code on the banner. Commissioner Van Schyndel suggested including families and children in movie theater ads to promote participation. Commissioner Panick asked how the videos are recorded. Ms. Marovich explained they were recorded and edited by the City Video Production Team. Commissioner Lawton suggested adding the videos to the City Newsletter. Commissioner Leonard suggested having one banner with a strong fact/shock value. Alderperson Nelson asked if there was a cost for installing the banner. Ms. Marovich stated there is but would be waived for a City organization.

Commissioner Leonard approved moving forward with the movie theater ad, banners over Reid Street, and the City newsletter, seconded by Alderperson Nelson. Upon vote, the motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Rachel Leonard
SECONDER:	Casey Nelson
AYES:	Emily Henrigillis, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson, Jonie Panick, Carmen Van Schyndel
EXCUSED:	Nicole Slavin, Anna Metzler

4. Consideration and possible action on September Farmers Market Booth

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, explained that the September Farmers Market Booth lacks volunteer staff and staff recommends canceling. Mr. Kuffel added that during previous meetings, Commissioners have expressed their concerns with the lack of participation the booths see at the Farmers Market and the lack of outreach to De Pere residents. Mr. Kuffel stated that staff will bring forward an agenda item next spring to determine if the Sustainability Commission wishes to have booth space at a community event like the Beer Garden or continue with Farmers Market.

Commissioner Henrigillis asked how many volunteers would be needed in order to host the booth. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, explained that staff usually tries to have two people per shift but this event was a bit different with having NEWSC there it could be one volunteer but they would need to be there early to get the booth set up. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that the Commission was also

represented at the Master Gardener's Open House and got good engagement.

Commissioner Van Schyndel approved canceling the September Farmers Market Booth, seconded by Commissioner Panick. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Carmen Van Schyndel
SECONDER:	Jonie Panick
AYES:	Emily Henrigillis, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson, Jonie Panick, Carmen Van Schyndel
EXCUSED:	Nicole Slavin, Anna Metzler

5. Consideration and possible action on draft letter to residents with Planned Natural Landscapes/Pollinator Gardens

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, explained that staff drafted a letter that could be sent to property owners with planned natural landscapes/pollinator gardens to gauge interest in participating in a digital or virtual tour. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, shared her idea to have a digital or virtual garden tour that would be recorded during the 2026 growing season and compiled into a film that could be shown over winter at Mulva as a special showing.

Commissioner Leonard shared her desire to create a map that would allow residents to click on the location and see the species to assist with creating corridors for pollinators. Commissioner Leonard added that the City could have a paper map on display that residents could stick pins in to designate species they have in their yard. Commissioner Henrigillis suggested creating a GIS Story Map. Mr. Kuffel shared the City's mapping engine (DIME-<https://www.deperewi.gov/department/photos/index.php?structureid=125>) and the ability to create a layer on this map for planned natural landscapes. Alderperson Nelson asked if there was an application or submission process for planned natural landscapes. Commissioner Henrigillis briefly outlined the planned natural landscape ordinance. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked how to know who has planned natural landscapes. Commissioner Henrigillis stated they're not known and that would be part of the next step of creating the digital tour. Mr. Kuffel shared the planned natural landscape ordinance on-screen and agreed that there is no knowledge of how many exist in the City. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked if there was a guide residents could use to assist with planting appropriate species. Ms. Marovich stated that a digital resource guide was discussed but not acted upon at the July meeting. Commissioner Van Schyndel suggested adding the creation of the planned natural landscaping resource guide as an action item on the initiative. Commissioner Weber offered to assist Commissioner Henrigillis with the creation of the digital resource guide. Alderperson Nelson spoke in favor of having a resource guide for residents to reference along with the digital tour. Commissioner Van Schyndel suggested addressing concerns residents may have about getting started as part of the digital tour/interviews. Commissioner Van Schyndel stated she did not have any concerns with the letter as there will be time to complete the resource guide before any follow-up will be done for recording next season. Commissioner Van Schyndel stated concerns over knowing who to send letters to. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that she has sent addresses to staff that the letter could be sent to. Staff also previously discussed windshield surveys and had a sign-up at past events for residents to provide their address if they had a garden to showcase. Commissioner Leonard shared a few points on the website that should be updated for planned natural landscapes.

Commissioner Van Schyndel moved to approve the draft letter, seconded by Alderperson Nelson. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Carmen Van Schyndel
SECONDER:	Casey Nelson
AYES:	Emily Henrigillis, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson, Jonie Panick, Carmen Van Schyndel
EXCUSED:	Nicole Slavin, Anna Metzler

6. Discussion on Sustainability Commission Work Plan

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated the Commissioner Van Schyndel had compiled the included work plan for review.

Commissioner Van Schyndel stated that this work plan is still a draft but much closer to a working document. Commissioner Van Schyndel stated that clean air and clean energy could use more focus if they are going to remain active initiatives. Commissioner Van Schyndel suggested each initiative being briefly discussed at meetings for any updates or progress on action items and measuring impact. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked if each item should have a lead commissioner listed as a main point of contact, not necessarily as an expert. Mr. Kuffel stated that having one point of contact for an initiative is easiest for staff. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked how the document will remain updated and where it will reside for reference. Mr. Kuffel offered to create an agenda item each month for work plan review and after discussion staff will summarize the changes and the Commission can make a recommendation to approve the changes. Mr. Kuffel reminded Commissioners if they had new initiatives to bring forward, they could be emailed to staff and then would be evaluated as a group on the next agenda.

Discussion only. No action necessary.

7. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Adopt a Drain

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated that each current initiative is included in the agenda for discussion with the history of the initiative and prioritization criteria included. Mr. Kuffel provided an update on the current number of participants in the Adopt-a-Drain Program. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, elaborated on the staff update including the newest participants and having offered to do a presentation using the stormwater model with a Girl Scout Troop. Mr. Kuffel added that staff will do a presentation with the stormwater model for the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

Aldersperson Nelson asked how many people were signed up for the Adopt-a-Drain program. Ms. Marovich provided an update to the best of her recollection of approximately 12 participants and 15 drains. Aldersperson Nelson asked how many drains/inlets are in the City that could be adopted. Mr. Kuffel opened up the storm sewer layer on the City map (DIME-<https://www.deperewi.gov/department/photos/index.php?structureid=125>) and shared that each red 'X' on the map marked an inlet/drain. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that many of the inlets/drains flow to stormwater ponds which is more beneficial, but added that many do flow directly to the waterways. Mr. Kuffel shared about the City pond systems and watersheds the City is divided into for drainage. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked how residents know the importance of cleaning storm drains and how impact is measured. Mr. Kuffel explained that obtaining the cleaning data will help measure the impact of the program. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked if the water could be tested to know the impact. Mr. Kuffel explained the modeling and permits the City has for stormwater. Mr. Kuffel shared that the downtown areas are the hardest to modify to reduce the nutrient and sediment loading being discharged to the waterways and added that parking lots and roadways are large contributors. Aldersperson Nelson asked how residents could be recognized for their efforts. Mr. Kuffel shared the City's concerns over a few alternatives that have been suggested for recognition. Commissioner Panick asked if something could be placed in the adopter's yard or marking their sidewalk to indicate they have adopted a drain. Mr.

Kuffel stated he would support recognition of the adopter at the adopter's location. Commissioner Van Schyndel suggested revisiting the tiered recognition/incentive program. Ms. Marovich shared a raffle idea staff had discussed to increase participation. Commissioner Leonard suggested offering an incentive through beer tickets at the Beer Garden. Ms. Marovich stated that would need to be discussed with the Parks Department. Commissioners Henrigillis and Panick discussed sign ideas to be placed in the yard of the adopter. Commissioners spoke in favor of offering the raffle for participants. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked how much a rain barrel costs. Ms. Marovich stated about \$100 to \$150.

Discussion only. No action necessary.

8. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Clean Air Initiative

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated that the history of the clean air initiative and prioritization criteria was included in the packet. Mr. Kuffel stated that the clean air initiative lacks direction currently.

Commissioner Henrigillis commented that the clean air initiative no longer has a leader to take charge. Commissioner Henrigillis shared that after the Commission was unable to get traction in the schools, there was discussion on getting the word out about no-idling at other locations/venues but no action was taken. Commissioners discussed the difficulty of changing this habit and alternatives relating to clean air that were not about idling. Commissioner Leonard stated she believed she had found an application with the school district that would allow for the Clean Air Initiative to be approved for commissioners to talk with students and parents; she offered to look for that information if the Commission was interested in returning to the schools. Commissioners asked about passing a City Ordinance limiting idling. Mr. Kuffel explained the stance on enforcing an ordinance and targeting schools. Commissioner Van Schyndel shared that there are other avenues to explore outside of the school drop-off and pick-up line that could still create an impact and a habit that could ultimately work it's way to the school areas. Commissioner Lawton shared that he believed Oshkosh had done a lot of work with clean air. Commissioner Van Schyndel shared the goal as written in the work plan and stated that a lead commissioner would work to build out the plan to accomplish that goal. Commissioner Henrigillis stated her support for the goal as shared as it did not target the schools and was a community-wide educational initiative. Commissioner Panick suggested signage at the City entrances or other visible areas requesting vehicles not idle as an awareness campaign. Commissioner Panick suggested signage could be installed at park and rides and with local business engagement in their parking lots. Commissioner Panick offered to lead this initiative. Ms. Marovich stated that an ad could be created for this initiative to share at the movie theater.

Discussion only. No action necessary.

9. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Composting

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated that the history of the composting initiative and prioritization criteria was included in the packet.

Commissioner Van Schyndel asked where participation stood for the most recent quarter. Mr. Kuffel shared the approximate number of participants, but added that invoices trickle in over a period of time and staff anticipates still receiving invoices over the next couple weeks. Mr. Kuffel suggested evaluating other avenues for education and outreach regarding composting moving forward. Commissioner Van Schyndel stated that she believed there is value in education about composting and waste reduction and stated she would do more research as the lead commissioner on this topic. Alderperson Nelson asked if a composting video exists that was created by the City. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, stated one was made but it was more of a promotional video for the ease of using the service rather than a general composting video. Commissioner Leonard shared information regarding Clean Water Action Council workshop on home composting. Commissioner Leonard suggested offering a compost container as a

raffle item in the future. Commissioner Leonard asked how curbside compost collection through the City could move forward as presented by Carrie Gillman. Mr. Kuffel stated that staff has not researched moving that forward and would need to be requested or assisted by the Commission. Commissioner Van Schyndel stated she will take the lead on this initiative and do research to bring forward to the Commission for further discussion and consideration. Alderperson Nelson suggested offering a sustainability series to the community on different topics. Ms. Marovich stated that a discussion was slated for October for monthly and/or quarterly community programs/discussions.

Discussion only. No action necessary.

10. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Green Energy

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated that the history of the green energy initiative and prioritization criteria was included in the packet.

Commissioner Leonard shared the initiative being modeled after the Green Bay Clean Energy Work Plan to form a baseline for energy usage and the challenges presented for replicating for De Pere. Commissioner Leonard shared her current position for moving forward on obtaining energy data for the City of De Pere and asked if residential data would need to be separate from commercial/industrial data. Commissioner Leonard stated that the energy work plan could be more cumulative and not strictly based on electric and gas consumption by residents.

Discussion only. No action necessary.

11. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Pollinator Gardens/Planned Natural Landscapes

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated that the history of the planned natural landscape initiative and prioritization criteria was included in the packet.

Commissioner Henrigillis revisited the idea of the Commission installing and maintaining pollinator gardens at the urban orchards. Commissioner Leonard asked the commitment needed to install and maintain a pollinator garden at one urban orchard. Commissioner Henrigillis stated it would probably take about 3 people committed to the installation and maintenance. Commissioner Henrigillis elaborated that weeding with 3 people would take about 2 or 3 hours each time and would need to be done once or twice a month the first season and less in future years as the plants filled into the space. Mr. Kuffel stated watering would be a big challenge. Commissioner Van Schyndel asked if planned natural landscapes and urban orchard plantings could be paired under the work plan using a pollinator initiative topic with two separate action plans/projects. Commissioner Henrigillis stated that would be a good idea as they do both relate to pollinators as the main topic. Commissioner Leonard agreed and shared concerns about the initiative becoming overwhelming for a single lead commissioner. Mr. Kuffel stated that staff has an urban orchard meeting coming up and offered to discuss the idea of having the Commission plant the urban orchard gardens and bring back their comments. Betty Marovich, Recording Secretary, stated that previously there had been discussions about having sponsors for the gardens for maintenance.

Discussion only. No action necessary.

IV. Future Agenda Items

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, stated staff would bring back information from the City storm pond dredging project.

V. Adjournment

Alderperson Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 PM, seconded by Commissioner Lawton.

Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Marovich