



Sustainability Commission

Regular Meeting

Minutes

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

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

5:30 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers
335 S. Broadway

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Commissioner Castellanos.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Emily Castellanos, Sam Dvorak, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson

Absent:

Excused: Jonie Panick, Nicole Slavin, Anna Metzler

Others present:

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer

Natalie Markelz, Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary

Chello Garlan, Member of the Public (remote)

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments made during the public comment period shall pertain only to matters under the jurisdiction of the Sustainability Commission. §6-3(f) DPMC

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration and possible action on election of Chairperson

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, advised annually we re-elect Vice Chairperson and Chairperson. Mr. Kuffel opened for nominations. Commissioner Castellanos advised she'd be happy to keep the title. Commissioner Leonard recommended Commissioner Castellanos to keep her role as Chairperson, Alderperson Nelson seconded. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rachel Leonard
SECONDER:	Casey Nelson
AYES:	Emily Castellanos, Sam Dvorak, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson
EXCUSED:	Jonie Panick, Nicole Slavin

B. Consideration and possible action on election of Vice Chairperson

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, advised same as the previous, opened for nominations. Alderperson Nelson nominated Commissioner Leonard for Vice Chairperson seconded by Commissioner Dvorak. No other nominations. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Casey Nelson
SECONDER:	Sam Dvorak
AYES:	Emily Castellanos, Sam Dvorak, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson
EXCUSED:	Jonie Panick, Nicole Slavin

C. Approval of the April 14, 2026 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Alderperson Nelson moved to approve the April 14, 2026 Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Leonard. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Casey Nelson
SECONDER:	Rachel Leonard
AYES:	Emily Castellanos, Sam Dvorak, Randall Lawton, Rachel Leonard, Casey Nelson
EXCUSED:	Jonie Panick, Nicole Slavin

D. Commission Member Introductions

Commission members gave their personal and/or professional backgrounds and history with the Sustainability Commission in light of introducing new Commissioner, Samuel “Sam” Dvorak.

E. Discussion on Sustainability Commission Outreach

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, opened the floor to Commissioner Leonard. She explained how she participated with the Girl Scout Troop who utilized the Community Center for a patch that focused on outdoor activities and pollinator habitats. They identified bee habitats vs. hives and looked at examples where bees can thrive if you let nature “sleep in”. They talked about “bee hotels”, creating their own and discussed ones you can purchase.

Mr. Kuffel asked what the negative impacts are at the Community Center. Commissioner Leonard answered that the vegetation is cut down very low when there could be pollinators could be using it, however the types of plants there are not suitable for bees either.

Mr. Kuffel explained he and Natalie Markelz, Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary, demonstrated the Stormwater Model for another Girl Scout Troop at the Lady of Lourdes where the girls were very interactive and hands-on with the model. They created a “Drain Defender” video that we would like shared on our social media.

Alderperson Nelson asked if there are future plans for the stormwater model. Mr. Kuffel answered possibly Farmers Markets and with our new Teen Advisors, we can look to see if we can present at their schools. Commissioner Castellanos believes she can bring it to an event in July.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

F. Discussion on Spring Pool Drainage

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, opened the floor to Commissioner Castellanos. She explained that she notices there are a lot of pools in De Pere and residents drain their pools into the storm drain vs. the grass where the water should go. Even though they may be de-chlorinating the pool, there's still chemicals in the water. She thinks there is a disconnect between residents where the storm drains go and education to the public.

Alderperson Nelson asked how we know if people de-chlorinate their pools prior to discharge. Commissioner Castellanos advised we do not know and added our municipal code does say not to drain in the storm sewer, but this must be enforced. Alderperson Nelson believes this is a public education issue. Commissioner Castellanos advised her neighbor has been talked to by City three times about improper pool drainage but still does not follow code.

Commissioner Leonard asked if the City of De Pere requires a permit for a pool. Mr. Kuffel answered for installation one is needed. Commissioner Leonard suggested providing a fact sheet for residents when they get permit. Mr. Kuffel added that would be a good idea in addition to social media outreach. Commissioner Dvorak asked about an annual mailer. Mr. Kuffel informed that the City does not have a listing of pools within the City limits, staff would have to look at an aerial view of the City and note the addresses with a pool, manually however a mailer and fact sheet are feasible.

Mr. Kuffel also wanted to point out that the flood was caused by the East River, not necessarily a capacity issue, but agrees that dumping pool water at that time into the storm sewers did not help.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

G. Discussion on Sustainability Commission Work Plan

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, advised there are no real updates on our end, just an upkeep history of each item. Staff is currently working on the Green Tier Scoresheet with Allyson Brunette, and the Planned Natural Landscapes is getting close to having a Pollinator Event.

Commissioner Dvorak asked about clean energy and connecting with Green Bay who had software to do energy baseline. Commissioner Leonard explained that the City of De Pere Sustainability Commission has a Green/Clean Energy workplan modeled after the City of Green Bay's initiative however their baseline was based on assumptions and not clear. She further explained she looked into other communities in Wisconsin to use as examples, Eau Claire being one who has worked with the ICLEI tool to develop baseline and assess their plan. She added that one of the Commission's goals is for data to be trackable which may be achieved with the software and is working on getting a demonstration from the company to determine if this can be handled in-house. Commissioner Leonard said the City of Green Bay is part of a demo group with ICLEI, not part of Clear Path 2.0 yet and wondered if De Pere would be a good candidate for that instead. Commissioner Lawton thought the ClearPath tool was expensive. Mr. Kuffel advised the cost to the Commission would be \$2,000. Commissioner Leonard believes it's within budget if it's beneficial to the plan. Commissioner Dvorak added that once you get a baseline, it's good to track the data. Mr. Kuffel explained that in conjunction with the Green Tier Scoresheet, it also compiles data such as energy use, fleet of vehicles, transportation, infrastructure, etc. The data is updated annually, ours will be submitted by end of year.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

H. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Adopt-a-Drain

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, advised this is on staff for education and outreach. We are currently working on the social media post with Girl Scout Troop video.

Commissioner Castellanos believes the pool drainage falls under this category going forward and that we need more residents signing up by additional outreach. Mr. Kuffel advised cleaning logs have been coming in.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

I. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Composting

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, got through reimbursement. 25 households, 26th joined today. Slowly growing. Commissioner Castellanos there was just "Eliminate Food Waste Day" two weeks ago. Mr. Kuffel also advised Luna is starting compost program.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

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

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, advised the Mulva Cultural Center is open doing the plant handout at their location free of charge. If we are looking to do Sustainable Speakers, they have an auditorium and classrooms to rent out. If the Sustainability Speaker Series matches their mission, they would possibly waive fees for renting the facilities. Mr. Kuffel also said we are waiting to hear from the Conservation Corps on planting projects and Green Bay Botanical Gardens for the plant handouts. Commissioner Leonard questioned if the Speaker Series is separate than the handout and if they require multiple speakers/sessions or if they can be single. Mr. Kuffel informed that if we have someone in mind we can coordinate to set something up, doesn't believe we need multiple to start.

Commissioner Castellanos last fall talked about interviewing residents on their Native Plantings, taking pictures of them. Wants to know if this is something we are looking into doing that again this year with mapping, etc. Commissioner Leonard wondering if we can find enough speakers to get a series going and keep getting them back, like a club talking about their initiatives and contributing to mapping.

Commissioner Leonard asked if assistance is needed in June for plant handout. Commissioner Castellanos and Mr. Kuffel confirmed, there will be more information able to discuss it at the next meeting.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

K. Discussion on Initiative Prioritization - Green Energy

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, Staff met with Allyson Brunette about Green Tier Scoresheet that will be submitted to the Wisconsin DNR by the end of the year. She generated questions/metrics for departments to complete. On the Public Works side, staff needs to reach out to utilities to better understand energy use within the City and our own buildings.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

L. Thank You Student Advisor Metzler

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, wanted to thank Anna Metzler for her 21 months on the Sustainability Commission.

Alderson Nelson asked if the two new Teen Advisors came through the Youth Commission. Mr. Kuffel said that he believes one is, but the other is not.

No action necessary. Discussion only.

5. INFORMATIONAL

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer, advised the items upcoming are working with the ICLEI Group to coordinate a demonstration, there will be two new Student Advisors.

Commissioner Castellanos would like to discuss the phragmites at the preserve, specifically on the trail behind the United Health building. Commissioner Leonard explained along the Interstate 41 corridor, their mitigation is to bury on site however it's not effective, but she wasn't sure if there are other methods that isn't with herbicides.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lawton moved, seconded by Alderson Nelson to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 PM. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Markelz