

**Red Wing Sustainability Commission
Workshop
Community Development Building
August 26, 2025**

Members Present: Chair Hugh Brown; Dan Evanson, Mark Berman

Members Absent:

Excused: Kristen Bandurski, Maddie Brown, Kim Beise (Council Liaison)

Unexcused: Joshua Meyer, Shawn Carney

Others Present: Brandy Howe, Staff Liaison; Jeff Schneider, Deputy Director of Solid Waste

The workshop was convened at 5:36 p.m.

1. Roll Call

2. Communication Items

A. City Council Liaison Report

None

B. City Liaison Report

None

3. Workshop Items

A. Organics Feasibility Study (Presentation by Jeff Schneider)

Jeff Schneider gave a lengthy and informative presentation on the Organics Collection and Composting Feasibility Study and pilot program. Two collection methods were evaluated for a food scraps collection program: (1) curbside collection with a dedicated organics route and (2) curbside co-collection with durable compostable bags (DCB). The first method involves providing households with a separate organics cart with a dedicated organics route and truck. The second method uses DCBs to collect organics, which are placed in the household garbage cart and separated from the waste stream at the Waste Campus. A drop-off site was also made available for use by the general public at the Waste Campus.

A total of 32 households in one neighborhood participated in the pilot program with the DCBs. The rollout of the pilot program was smooth, and residents generally felt comfortable with its execution. The drop off site quite surprisingly collected more food scraps than the curbside collection pilot. Ultimately, the study found that the DCB program was as easy for participants as household recycling, but the overall cost to implement on a city-wide scale is cost prohibitive at this time. As an alternative, the Solid Waste Division may explore the installation of smart bins at strategic locations around the City where residents can drop off

organic waste. The smart bins would use sensors, data analytics, and mobile apps to boost collection and sorting efficiency. This method may be an interim step before a future curbside collection program could be implemented.

The Commission members thanked Jeff Schnedier for his informative presentation and all expressed interest in supporting the Solid Waste Division on its organics diversion goals. A subcommittee was formed (Mark Berman, Hugh Brown, and Dan Evans). They will meet in the coming weeks to evaluate the support that the Commission may be able to provide. One possible option is to prepare a resolution of support of the use of Green Funds to purchase one or more smart bins to continue the organics collection in Red Wing.

B. Pollinators / Native Plants

Mark Berman reported that Public Works is planning to amend the city code to make sure that it is aligned with state law. Public Works will provide a redlined version to the subcommittee for review when it is ready.

C. Subcommittee Reports.

- a. Tree replacement in Featherstone Park – Mark Berman reported that Public Works agreed to use its budget to pay for the trees, but the initial purchase would be by the Sustainability Commission.

- b. Planting of native plants along bike trail – Public Works directed the Sustainability Commission to talk to Zach Regnier, City Engineer, about this suggestion.

4. Announcements

A. Topics for Future Agendas

Organics composting.

B. Next Meeting Date

The regular meeting on September 23 has been rescheduled to September 25, 2025, as a workshop. The October workshop will be set as a Special Meeting in Council Chambers on October 28.

5. Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 7:01 p.m.