

**Red Wing Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
January 27, 2026**

Members Present: Chair Hugh Brown; Commissioners Mark Berman, Maddie Brown, Dan Evanson, and Kristen Wert

Members Absent: All members were in attendance

Others Present: Brandy Howe, Staff Liaison; Kim Beise, Council Liaison

1. Call to Order

Chair Hugh Brown called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Red Wing Sustainability Vision & Mission Statement

Chair Hugh Brown read the Sustainability Commission Vision & Mission Statement.

3. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted. Chair Hugh Brown and Commissioners Mark Berman, Maddie Brown, Dan Evanson, and Kirsten Wert, and Council Liaison Kim Beise were present.

4. Swearing in the Oath of Office

A. Kristen Wert.

Mayor Gary Iocco conducted the Oath of Office for Kirsten Wert.

B. Hugh Brown.

Mayor Gary Iocco conducted the Oath of Office for Hugh Brown.

Mayor Gary Iocco thanked both members for their volunteer efforts on behalf of the City of Red Wing.

5. Presentation of the Jay McCleary Sustainability Award

The Red Wing High School Sustainability Club was presented with a plaque for their efforts in the area of supporting recycling. Chair Hugh Brown commented that they were selected due to the efforts being put forth at the high school, including a recycling drive, raising awareness for recycling, and the start of a pollinator garden.

A representative from the High School Sustainability Club accepted the award and thanked the Commission for the recognition.

6. Approval of Agenda

Maddie Brown noted the agenda was amended and materials provided prior to this meeting, but the item was not added to the agenda. The item added should be noted as 11B, regarding the Urban Landscape Regulations.

Commissioner Kirsten Wert asked if a conversation about the organics recycling program should be added to the agenda or if that should be something to add to a future meeting. Lisian Brandy Howe noted it would be more appropriate to discuss at the February meeting. Commissioner Kirsten Wert also noted that there used to be an item for Commissioners to add future topics, and that needed to be included on the agenda. This will become item 11C on this meeting's agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mark Berman, seconded by Commissioner Maddie Brown, to approve the agenda as amended. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5:0.

7. Election of Officers

A conversation ensued regarding the election of officers and the process due to the loss of the Chair of the Commission. Staff Liaison Brandy Howe then reviewed the process for the election of officers for both Chair and Vice Chair.

Council Member Kim Beise reminded the Commission that the election is completed every year in January.

Commissioners Hugh Brown and Kirsten Wert were nominated for Chair. Commissioner Kirsten Wert declined the nomination, as she is a brand-new member of the Commission. Commissioner Maddie Brown was also nominated for Chair.

Duties of each role were then defined in a discussion that ensued after nominations were completed. Staff Liaison Brandy Howe explained both roles, including the duties for each of these roles.

Upon roll call, both votes were unanimous, and both Commissioners accepted their positions.

Commissioner Dan Evanson thanked them for their service.

8. Approval of Minutes

A. Motion to Approve Minutes.

1. November 25, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the last meeting, and there were no additions or deletions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Maddie Brown, seconded by Commissioner Mark Berman, to approve the minutes as amended. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5:0.

9. Public Comment

No one wished to address the Commission.

10. Communication Items

A. Finance Report.

Staff Liaison Brandy Howe reviewed the finance document, located in their packet on page 9. Staff Liaison Brandy Howe reported that there will no longer be a carryover from the previous year. Therefore, they have \$25.00 to work with at this time.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mark Berman, seconded by Commissioner Kirsten Wert, to approve the finance report. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5:0.

B. City Council Liaison Report.

Council Liaison Kim Beise reported on the presentation by Jeff Schneider, which happened at the City Council Meeting around the organics study. The use of an organic container was approved at that meeting. The Council is in support of the container, and the Sustainability Commission would be asked to assist with the location of the container. A suggestion was made to place it at the waste campus. The City will start with one container, and if that goes well, they will look into obtaining a second one in the future. A discussion ensued around the size of the unit as well as how residents would be able to access the container. At the meeting, it was explained that the residents would receive a code in order to access the container. Council Liaison Kim Beise also provided his support for the project. It was understood that the Sustainability Commission approved \$1500 for this project, and the rest of the funding would be coming from other resources.

11. Motions & General Business

A. Greenstep Pollinator Workshop.

Commissioner Maddie Brown asked for this item to be added to the agenda as the workshop asked for the Commission to be a speaker regarding the fact that the City had been selected to receive the Bee City USA certification. Tilton Davis and Mike Johnson were instrumental in this work, and Commissioner Kirsten Wert offered to contact them and involve them in this request. However, Commissioner Kirsten Wert wasn't sure they would be willing to conduct a presentation, but she would be willing to speak for 10 minutes at the workshop. It appears the date for the workshop will be at some point in the month of March. The dates do need to be clarified.

B. Review and possible action on Urban Landscapes Regulations.

Commissioner Mark Berman stated there were issues in the City taken advantage of the regulations, which made it challenging for the police department to address the situations. Under certain guidelines, residents are able to have landscapes that are considered to be urban.

A discussion ensued around the regulations and the document that needs to be shared with the Department Director of Public Works, Building and Grounds,

Patrick Ramaker, and Public Works Director Shawn Blaney, which will then be presented to the City Council.

Staff Liaison Brandy Howe directed the Commission to discuss the document this evening in order to have some comments for the City Council. Commissioner Dan Evanson had no comments or additions to make to the document at this time. Commissioner Hugh Brown asked about the annual registration requirement, and Commissioner Mark Berman commented that they struggled with this question as well. In the past, the Commission had talked about a voluntary commitment versus a permitting process to include native plantings in their personal property, as long as they are adhering to the other parts of the ordinance, and Commissioner Maddie Brown also indicated that she does not support an annual permit. Commissioner Kirsten Wert was confused about the ordinance as well and is not sure if her pollinated garden needs to be registered with the City.

Commissioner Maddie Brown stated there is a definite difference between voluntary registration and a permitting process. There was also surprise due to the fact that public works didn't want the additional work of dealing with the permits and the permitting process. The Commission needs some clarity on the permitting process. Commissioner Mark Berman indicated that residents would be fined if they did not adhere to the ordinances, and they would also be charged for the service to trim their lawn to be in compliance with the regulations. The Commission, as a whole, did not agree to this process. A suggestion was made for possibly a 5-year permit or a biannual permit instead of an annual permit, as they found this to be burdensome to the resident as well as the City.

The preference of the Commission is to levy a fine instead of having a contractor trim the plants of a resident's home. As far as the notification to the resident, that has not been clearly defined, but it does mention they have 14 days to comply.

The question was raised as to what the definition of a "buffer" is. Commissioner Kirsten Wert reminded the Commission that they would like to encourage more pollinator lots instead of becoming a barrier to residents from having native landscapes.

Staff Liaison Brandy Howe and Commissioner Mark Berman will work together to gather feedback on this document from the Commission. Staff Liaison Brandy Howe reminded the Commission of the open meeting law rules and directed how they would be able to send their proposed policy direction to Commissioner Mark Berman to address the document and their edits.

In addition, Staff Liaison Brandy Howe will work with Patrick on the document to make it more user-friendly for residents. Commissioner Mark Berman suggested a Zoom call with himself, DD of Public Works, Buildings and Grounds, Patrick Ramaker, PW Director Shawn Blaney, and Staff Liaison Brandy Howe. After this

work has been completed, it will become an item for the February meeting. Finally, the City ordinance also needs to be in compliance with the state law.

C. Future agenda topics and discussion

- a. Updates to the Urban Landscapes Ordinance
- b. Organics update including location of the container(s), punch codes. The Commission would like to invite Department Director of Public Works Jeff Schneider, to the next meeting to discuss this item.
- c. Commissioner Kirsten Wert inquired as to the planting along the bike path. The initial creation of the trail has been decided, and there is no longer any interest for additional input or conversation. Chair Hugh Brown reiterated that they were hoping to have some input, but that did not come to fruition. Perhaps they need to be aware of opportunities early so they can have some input as a Commission.

12. Announcements

A. Next Meeting Date: February 24, 2026.

The meeting and workshop schedule was reviewed, and scheduling challenges were discussed.

B. Discuss rescheduling of the May meeting date.

This meeting is the day after Memorial Day, and it needs to be moved as the City Council is meeting at that time. After an ensuing discussion, the date for the May meeting was set for Thursday, May 21, 2026.

13. Adjournment

Chair Hugh Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.