



MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2022, 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting. Public may join via Zoom.

A. ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION.

I. This item contains Zoom information, instructions, and a link to the Virtual Comment Form.

B. ROLL CALL.

I. Chair- Seth Hoffmeister; Vice Chair-Ned Dorff; Alder Mark Steuer; John Arendt; Amy Kox; Kaurie Mihm-PRF; Julia Noordyk; Mark Walter.

Present: Mark Walter, Mark Steuer, John Arendt, Seth Hoffmeister, Ned Dorff, Kaurie Mihm

Excused: Julia Noordyk, Amy Kox

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

I. Approval of the Sustainability Commission meeting agenda for October 19, 2022.

Moved by Ned Dorff, seconded by John Arendt to approve the agenda.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Mark Steuer, No- None,
Abstain- None.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

I. Approval of minutes from September 21, 2022.

Moved by Mark Walter, seconded by John Arendt to approve the minutes from September 21, 2022.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Mark Steuer, No- None,
Abstain- None.

E. PRESENTATION

I. Cory Groshek of Greener Bay Compost presents an overview of his company and services.

Moved by Ald. Mark Steuer, seconded by Mark Walter to receive and place on file.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Mark Steuer, No- None, Abstain- None.

F. INFORMATIONAL.

I. Work Group Updates

- Ned Dorff gave an update from the Healthy Habitat workgroup.

2. Announcements

- Reminder to commission members to forward sustainability- related conferences, meetings, etc. to Alder Steuer and other alders
- Discussion of budget and funding for Sustainability Commission promotional / outreach materials.
- Technology is now available to hold hybrid committee meetings.

G. ADJOURNMENT.

Moved by Mark Walter, seconded by Ald. Mark Steuer to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 PM.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Mark Steuer, No- None, Abstain- None.

VERBATIM MINUTES

Okay, we're ready to go.

- All right. Cool, thank you. We'll call this meeting to order here at 5:03 PM, item A, zoom meeting information, check. Item B, roll call, Chair Seth, I am here, Vice Chair Ned Dorff. Alder Mark Steuer.

- I am here.

- John Arendt.

- Present.

- Amy Cox is excused.

- Kaurie Mihm.
- Present.
- Julia Noordyk is excused. And Mark Walter.
- Here.
- And we do have one vacancy as well, in case folks are asking people to join. We'll move on to approval of the agenda, approval of the meeting agenda for today's date, October 19th, 2022. Do we have a motion?
- So moved.
- Motion by Ned. Do we have a second?
- Second.
- By John. All those in favor say, "Aye."
- [Group] Aye.
- Aye.
- All right, all those opposed say, "Nay." Agenda approved. Moving on then to approval of minutes from September 21st. Do we have a motion?
- So moved.
- By Mark. Do we have a second?
- Second.
- Mark Walter, I should say, and seconded by John Arendt. All those in favor say, "Aye."
- [Group] Aye.
- All those opposed say, "Nay." All right, and on to presentation, we have a guest joining us. Cory, thank you so much for joining us via Zoom this evening. We're excited to hear more about Greener Bay Compost, and to hear more from you. So I will turn it over. Welcome.
- Thank you Seth. And can everybody hear me?
- Yeah.
- Okay, good. By the way, sorry if it's confusing. I know there's another Cory on the commission here, so.

- Point of order. Point of order, Seth, should we just, the name and address of the guest, where they're from?

- Yeah, sure. Cory, can you give us your name and address for the record?

- Sure. Cory Groshek, I'm the founder of Greener Bay Compost and I actually live at 1597 Forest Glen Drive, right here in Green Bay on the west side. So I've been here since 2014. So first of all, thank you Seth and Ned. I know I've been corresponding with Ned a lot recently with email for having me here to do a presentation. Basically what I'm here to do for everyone is follow up on some meetings I had with Mark, I believe last time Mark Walter and I met it was, I think it was August 14th, right before a commission meeting. And then previous to that I think we met about a year before that. So my company's grown a lot since then. I have a lot of really cool things to tell you guys about. And if you don't mind, I don't know if it's possible, Seth, I might be able to share my screen while we're doing this. I've used Zoom before, that might be easier, or I can just walk you through kind of what I'm looking at in the presentation that I put together that's in the agenda?

- Melissa, yeah.

- [Melissa] This is Melissa, yep. You'll have to just walk us through your presentation.

- Okay sure.

- You're not able to share your screen.

- [Cory Groshek] Okay, that's okay. By the way, the bucket over my shoulder here, that's actually one of the buckets that I'll be telling you about that we use to perform our service. I'll tell you more about that in a minute. So basically what I'm gonna do today is just tell you what we do at Greener Bay Compost, why we do it, how we do it. And also why we think it ties in really nicely with the work plan that your commission put together. And that was, I believe, approved by the Common Council this past April, which actually had a section that, I believe, Mark Walter spearheaded, having to do with waste reduction. There were some bits in there specifically about keeping food waste out of the landfill, and really getting all of it out of the landfill by 2050. And that's really what we're all about here at Greener Bay Compost. So for starters, I started this company in July of 2021, so right in the middle of the worst part of the pandemic, pretty much. Some people thought I was crazy for doing that, but I was inspired by a company in New York that does the same thing. I come to find out after starting the company, there's actually about 200 to 300 different companies that also do the same type of thing that my company does. Basically what we are is a compost pickup and drop-off company that also makes compost. What we started doing was picking up food waste, essentially, most of what we do is focused on picking up food waste from residential households. We currently have 128 residential subscribers. So this could be single-family households, it could be apartments, condos, townhouses. So we serve 128 residences, and they're not just in Green Bay, they're actually all over the metropolitan area. We serve nine different municipalities in Brown County, including Green Bay and De Pere, which collectively make up about 80% of our residential subscribers. And by the way, Green Bay actually makes up the vast majority of that, actually, grand total, Green Bay accounts for about 66%, or about 2/3 of all the subscribers we have. And as of about a month and a half ago, that also includes our very first small-business compost pickup service subscriber, which is Glass Nickel Pizza in downtown Green Bay, if any of you've eaten there. So they just signed up with us. When we started, we started with the idea that we would help keep food waste out of the landfill

for a couple reasons. First of all, we just think it's really just bad practice to take things that have a lot of value, whether it's edible food or inedible food, and when I say value, I mean nutrients, vitamins, minerals, taking all that stuff, sending it to a landfill where it's basically lost forever, when we could be, in our case, recycling, or better yet, upcycling it into a product which is called compost, which is great for a lot of things. Primarily, the way that we market compost is as a soil amendment, something you can add to your backyard garden, to a house plant. Farmers can use it to get better yields in their fields. But it's also great for doing things like preventing soil erosion, taking really hard, clay-based soil and making it soft, more pliable, more workable. And so what we're doing here basically is collecting food waste in five gallon buckets, like you see over my shoulder. We've got a compostable BPI-certified compostable bucket liner in these buckets. In the bottom of that, we put some wood shavings to help absorb moisture and control odor. And what we do is we pick up these food scraps from the people we give these buckets to every other week. So for example, I'll use Seth as an example. Seth, if you were to sign up, what we'd do is get you your first bucket, like the one you see behind me, and then we'd come back two weeks later to pick up the full or semi full bucket, and then we take care of everything from there. I'm doing what you would call a full-service compost service here. Whereas some compost pickup companies nationwide just do the pickups and then they take the food scraps to some compost facility, which are in some cases, you know, 40, 50, 60 or even more miles away. We actually do all the composting ourselves. As Mr. Walter knows, I used to do this in my backyard, but we outgrew that in about four months, last year or so. We actually, this past May, acquired a nearly seven-acre property in the town of Lessor, which is only about 24 miles west of Green Bay. It's actually in Shawano County. But it's kind of what I like to call a compost sanctuary, because it's about 35 square miles, I believe, of nothing but cows and cornfields out there. It's a perfect place to do composting because it doesn't bother anybody. No need to worry about rodent infestations, no need to worry about offensive odors. And that's one thing I wanted to emphasize for anybody who might think they'd want to do this citywide in Green Bay. We're solving a major problem for the city if they were to work with us, in that you don't have to worry about those problems, and neighbors, citizens not wanting all these issues with rats and smells. We basically take all of that and take it out to the town of Lessor where our neighbors have cows and there's a smell of cow manure in there constantly. So we basically take a big public works issue, an inspection issue, and just do away with it right out the gate. And when we do this composting, what we're doing is taking these food scraps and we're mixing it basically with equal parts, high-carbon material. So that could be things like leaves, wood chips made from clean, untreated, unchemically-treated wood, shredded plain cardboard and clean paper, things like that. And what you end up with is this really beautiful material that looks, feels, and smells like soil, but isn't soil, but it's actually a plant super food, like I was mentioning earlier. It can be used for all kinds of wonderful things. And we actually did start selling the compost this past June. We developed enough inventory. After we gave some out to our subscribers to reward them, we actually started selling it. And we haven't sold a whole lot yet, just because inventory needed to be built up. But we sold 23 one cubic foot bags to date. We've got another 81 that we've now got stored up in inventory. We're expecting to sell out of those probably in spring. But the main reason we started the company wasn't so much to make the compost. That's just a wonderful byproduct, and we're happy to sell it and make some extra income doing that. But the main reason we started the company was to get all this food waste out of the landfill. For those of you who don't know, the Wisconsin DNR actually commissioned a study called a 2020-2021 Waste Characterization Study, which I know Mark is very familiar with in his line of work. And what they found was somewhere around 20 to 21% of what was going into our landfills in Wisconsin, and the DNR actually looked at, I believe, 14 different landfills and maybe a waste transfer station, and so about one fifth of what everybody here, including everybody that's probably in this meeting, is sending to landfill, is food. Either edible food, which surprisingly made up about 14 1/2

percent of what was going in the landfill. Which is kind of shocking, not maybe so shocking to me, but maybe to other people, because I see a lot of edible food in the buckets we pick up every week. And then there was another, you know, 6% or so that was the inedible parts, like think banana peels, eggshells, an avocado skin, things like that. So that's one fifth. And then another, maybe, 10% or so was things like what they call compostable paper. So that could be plain paper plates. I would think they'd mean things like pieces of paper, like, that Mark knows about, are too small, they're really good for recycling, like think shredded office paper, things like that. So all in all about half of what ends up in our landfill is or could have been at some point composted and wasn't. And I just think that that's a really big waste of what isn't really waste, in our mind. In fact, one of our slogans here at Greener Bay Compost is when you ask us why we exist, we say, "Because food waste is not garbage." And that's really the message we're trying to get across. We want people to stop looking at their food waste, whether it's edible or inedible, not so much as a waste product that should go in a trash can, but as something that we can basically harvest the nutrients, the vitamins, the minerals from, and make something that's infinitely higher quality and infinitely more valuable. And again, that's the compost that we make out in the town of Lessor. Now I don't know how many of you on the commission got a chance to look at the three documents that were combined into one big PDF. I think Ned might have put that together, I'm not sure who, but I gave a brief introduction to our company there in writing. It's about three pages. And then I have a really beautiful PDF document I called "A Photographic Introduction to Us." So if you wanted to see for yourselves what we do, how we do it, you know, what we're doing out at our compost site, or facility, as you might call it, out in Lessor, there's some really great pictures in there. But the last thing we ended with was actually a proposal for how I envision us possibly working with the city of Green Bay to achieve some of the goals that were set out in the work plan the sustainability commission put together. Namely, reducing the amount of waste in the landfill by 30%, I believe by 2030, and getting all the food waste out by 2050. In a nutshell, what I was proposing was a really great thing that I saw happened about five years ago. It started happening five years ago in the city of Falls Church, Virginia. It's a small city in the DC metro area of about 14,000 people. So much, much smaller than Green Bay and even smaller than De Pere. But, nonetheless, they're a leader in community composting. This little city decided to partner with a company called Compost Crew, which compost pickup service-wise is very similar to Greener Bay Compost. And what they decided to do was something that a lot of cities haven't done, but I thought was creative. They decided to take a service which they felt was maybe too expensive for maybe some of the lower income individuals in the city, because apparently there's quite a few of those in Falls Church. And I know we have a lot of lower-income folks in Green Bay too. They wanted to get everybody into composting, not just, say, middle, upper class or wealthier individuals. And that's how we feel too. We want everybody to be able to do this even if they have no backyard at all. And so what they decided to do at Falls Church, was subsidize the cost of what it was, a weekly pickup service, whereas we do every other week, they do weekly. They took it from \$32 a month, and with subsidization, and I don't know where they got the funds to do this, but they subsidized it down, and I believe they're still doing this today, five years later, down to \$6 a month. And then if a lot of people sign up when they do a big rollout, like let's say they say, "We're gonna take on another 50 people," they might offer them free kitchen top caddies that they can put their food scraps in. They offer them other things like a free bag of compost as kind of like goodies or freebies or giveaways to entice people to sign up. What I'm thinking of for the city of Green Bay is something similar. Where the city of Green Bay, if it thinks it's a great idea and wants to get more composting going, is to help us help everyone in the city take advantage of what we think is this really wonderful service, in particular the lower-income people, the people most disproportionately affected by the whole COVID-19 situation that we just went through, and help them be able to afford it and give it a try. So my idea was the service, which as of January of next

year, which would be \$20 a month, I was thinking the city could pay for possibly half of that for a certain number of people, and we could debate how many people that would be, for what would essentially be a pilot program that could maybe run for a year or two, and basically subsidize it down so that it's more affordable for everyone. And I'd leave it up to this city to decide if they want to do half the cost, three quarters of the cost, whatever the city would think might be a good idea. And as part of the pilot program, I was also pitching that the city could possibly help us buy some of the equipment we need to service those individuals, like the buckets, the lids, like the ones you see behind me, some of the bags that go inside of them, and things of that nature. I also had the good fortune recently of sitting down with one of the alders for Green Bay, which I know Mark Steuer and everyone in this commission knows, Mr. Randy Scannell. And he thought that maybe we should ask to see if the city might want to help with some marketing, because honestly we haven't done really any marketing. All the growth that we've experienced since we started about 14 months ago is basically based on word of mouth, and also based on a lot of transplants moving to this area from other areas that actually have a much more well-developed compost culture, where maybe they already had curbside compost pickup, like we're doing, or a municipal composting program, so we didn't have to sell it to them. They already knew all the benefits of composting and were really gung ho, moved here, told me they Google-searched composting and they saw us pop up. We're actually the first thing that you see if you Google search the words Green Bay compost. So we're beating out the yard waste sites, we're beating out all the other sites that mention it, including UWGB, which I think is great. And so if we can get the city possibly to consider subsidizing the program, help us maybe get some of the equipment to set the pilot program up and also maybe help us to marketing, we could really create the culture of compost that I see exists in a lot of other larger cities, including places like Madison and Milwaukee where they have way more options for composting. I'd like to see that happen here too. And I'd really like to see the city, you know, back it in a big way to let everybody know that keeping food waste out of the landfill is something the city is really interested in. I should comment, one of the things you'll see in my presentation, if you read the PDF, is the amount of food waste we kept out of the landfill in just our first year of operation, despite us being really small and having started in my backyard, was actually 30,000 pounds of food waste. That's just from our subscribers, so that's 15 tons. And I just updated our numbers a couple days ago based on what we picked up this past Sunday, and we're now over 38,000 pounds, so that's 19 tons. And so we're closing in on 20 tons. I don't know, off the top of my head, how much greenhouse gas emissions that would've saved if it would've gone to the landfill or had that gone, how much it would've produced, off the top of my head. But it's not just about keeping this stuff out of the landfill, it's about stopping it from producing methane. A lot of people like to focus on the climate-change related arguments for why we should compost and that it helps prevent methane from being released, which is what happens when food waste ends up in a landfill. And for those of you who don't know, carbon dioxide is constantly talked about as one of the major contributors to climate change. Methane is 20, or in some cases some people claim, up to 30 times more potent, or better at trapping heat in our atmosphere, than the carbon dioxide is. So if we really want to, say, clamp down on what some people are so-calling global warming and climate change, combat it, one of the ways we can do that is get the food waste out of the landfill. Another thing I was thinking of, and actually put as one of the major benefits in my presentation that you can read, benefit-wise to the city, is if we get the food waste out of the landfill, again, you're actually saving something that is costing the city a lot of money. If you think about it, food waste is mostly water. Like, think of a cantaloupe or a watermelon, unlike something like plastic film, which in a lot of cases should be in the landfill, something like a watermelon is mostly water. And so what this city's basically paying to send to the landfill, if you think it's 20 to 25% food, it's mostly water. So we're paying to landfill water. I can't say that we'd honestly save the city a lot of money, though, in terms of how much it pays to send the

food waste to the landfill, just because of how cheap the tipping fees are to actually send things to landfill. In my opinion, that's actually part of the problem. It's so cheap, it's so easy to send it to the landfill. But I'm trying to do what I can do to change that culture and hopefully the city will get on board. And help not just for a little bit of financial savings, but really for the big picture of just doing something better with this material that we're just really wasting, in my opinion, for no good reason. This one, I think I've gone probably about 15 minutes. I guess that's about all the comments I have for now. I don't know if anybody has any questions. I'm willing to answer any and all questions you might have.

- I have a question, Cory.

- Sure.

- Really, really fascinating program and business you have here. I've been looking at the attachments and it is just really cool. Do you have it in apartment buildings, or do you need to have a unique driveway or curbside thing?

- I'm actually glad you asked. We got a lot of questions. Early on, we were just doing like single-family households. Basically the rule was you had to have a private door that led outside, because we don't go inside buildings. We don't have a lot of tall apartment buildings here, but there are other composters who service things like 20-story apartment buildings, and that's just an insane amount of time to spend going up and down elevators and stairs with a bucket. So we started with just households where they have a door outside, so it's like your typical single-family household, or maybe a townhouse or a duplex. But recently we started a drop-off service where what we do is, rather than us going to someone's house to get the bucket, we're basically on-call with 24 to 48 hours notice for them to meet us in a well-lit public location. So it's a safe exchange. And we basically just do like a bucket exchange in the middle of a well-lit place, like how you might go pick something up that you bought on Craigslist or on Facebook marketplace from someone. And when we did that, we opened the service up to a lot of apartment dwellers who were worried they'll actually get evicted over participating, and we also opened it up to out-of-town people. Right now the pickup service only services, like I said, nine different municipalities in and around Green Bay. So you've got Green Bay, De Pere, Allouez, Ashwaubenon, Howard, Hobart, Ledgeview, places like that, Bellevue. But when we started the drop-off service, we actually just pulled in our first out-of-town person who's not even in this county. They're actually from Little Suamico, which, as many of you probably know, is just north of actual Suamico. So they've decided to do the drop-off service because our pickup service doesn't go out that far.

- Cool, that is really helpful to know. Thanks. Any other questions for Cory? Alder Steuer, and then Kaurie.

- Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Cory, for coming in.

- Sure.

- I don't know if this was listed in your documents, but just, you know, some basic costs. Did you mention the cost of the bucket, the cost of the charge-

- Yes.

- for the service?

- Randy was very, your colleague Randy, Mark, was very good at telling me to put all the numbers in there. I put them.

- Okay, I just, I have to look that over. I just, I looked at most of it, but I might have missed that.

- Yep. And I put all the numbers for how much the buckets cost. We actually get our buckets from another company, some of you may be familiar with it, Uline, with their headquarters actually in Kenosha. In fact, we just got more buckets from them delivered yesterday because we needed more. We're actually getting inquiries from bigger and bigger entities since we moved into business. I actually received an email from the, I believe she's the child nutrition director at the Ashwaubenon School District. She's asking about if we can service five different sites in Ashwaubenon. So we thought maybe we should go get some more buckets just in case that happens. So what you'll see in there is the list of what happens when we buy buckets in bulk. We get them from Uline in bulk by the pallet so we can get the best bang for our buck. You'll see on my hat it says BioBag. This is a hat I got because we buy all of our compostable bags from BioBag, which is, I believe, their US division is in California. They make all these wonderful compostable bags that break down really great in a compost pile, and they actually get us preferential pricing because they love community composters, like what we are. And they'll actually give us the same kind of pricing if we buy 10 cases or more of their bags that they would normally give to somebody who buys a hundred cases or more. So we can save a lot of money. And that's built into the presentation that I wrote for you.

- Okay. Just a few other things. And I know that the goal is to have none of this in landfills by the year 2050. And I think maybe that Mark Walter can answer this too, but I just wanted to know, is that citywide directives, or a statewide, or national, I think it's a national directive, isn't it? No?

- No, there's no directive from any level in terms of having to do that. It's just that it's good policy in the long run.

- Good goal.

- And it was something that, based on research we've done, is potentially achievable, and we can talk more about that. I'll let the other questions go first and then I'll have a couple of my own.

- All right, that's all I have for now. I might have a few later, but thanks again Cory.

- Sure, you're welcome.

- All right, we've got Kaurie Mihm, then Ned, then Mark Walter.

- [Kaurie Mihm] Great presentation. I love what you're doing. I think it makes a lot of sense. I like the fact that you're looking at it as not garbage, because it is a useful resource. I wanted to say, too, I have firsthand seen how good compost can improve plant growth. I've worked at a botanic garden a while back and we literally amended the soil in a section of garden and planted plants side by side, same plant, same growing situation, and the plants were probably more than double the size, I would say. So I definitely see the benefit in using it, you know, the end product as well. One question I had

was where do you get your high-carbon materials from, and would you consider collecting some of those along with the food waste as part of your program? Or are you able to get enough of it other ways that that's not necessary I guess?

- Well, good question other Kaurie, I appreciate that. I like the spelling of your name by the way. Some people think my name's spelled that way. So we actually don't just collect food waste. The food waste probably makes up 90% of what we take. But if anyone goes to gbcompost.com, there's a link at the bottom to our list of materials we accept. It's actually quite extensive. We don't have it updated to say that we take things like cooked meat and dairy yet, just because when we started, obviously, that would've been a problem. Anybody's backyard taking smelly, things like that, that rot and then attract rats, we don't want rats, nobody does. But we actually already take high-carbon materials from subscribers. In fact, I tell people, "Top off your bucket with your fall leaves," all the time. If you've got, say, a half-full bucket and it's pickup day, you can go out in the driveway, scoop up a bunch of your leaves from your oak tree, and stuff the bucket full. I encourage people just fill it up if they can. But we also take other things that are high in carbon. Like if it's plain cardboard, plain paper, you know, it doesn't have that sheen or that gloss to it, which means it's basically coated in petroleum, we'll take it. So a lot of things that could might be recyclable, we'll take it. Like for example, I get a lot of toilet paper and paper towel tubes, a lot of plain, paper egg cartons. And that actually helps control the smell in buckets too. If you add a little bit of carbon, I encourage people to do those types of things. Like if you use paper towels, you can, if you have a soiled paper towel with some tomato sauce on it, you can put that in the bucket with your food waste and it actually helps make it smell less. But it also helps balance out all of the nitrogen that's in the food waste. A lot of people, who aren't familiar with compost, maybe don't know, to get a good compost I wouldn't say it's equal parts nitrogen and carbon, but you need a good balance of the two. And when you get really good at compost and you can basically just look at it, smell it, touch it, and you know whether you got it right. And so we're always looking for that balance. But the carbon that we get from our subscribers is not enough to achieve the balance. So being that we're still on the smaller side, what we've been doing up until now is we've actually been using, basically, plain corrugated cardboard with all the tape, stickers, staples and whatnot removed. And we've actually been doing it in a way that's really beneficial to another local company. I don't know if any of you have pets that ever shop at Family Pet Food Center on Military Avenue, but we go there, we actually take cardboard off their hands. So we get to handpick the cardboard we want. We take it back to Lessor, we remove all the tape and all the things that don't belong on there. And then we run them through 18-sheet paper shredders, which actually cut through cardboard like butter. And we basically make, I call it compost confetti. It's really wonderful, high-carbon, but also has those little air pockets that corrugated cardboard are known for. And it just makes the most wonderful compost when you mix it with all the food waste that we got. So basically what we do is we make compost lasagna. You get a layer of food waste, and then you put a layer of the shredded cardboard, layer of food waste, and rinse and repeat. And we are, as we get bigger though, we're gonna do what a lot of other companies do. We're probably gonna move more towards clean wood chips, where we're probably gonna use arborists, make relationships with arborists. I'm already starting to look into that. To see, how can we have arborists who might want to drop off their wood chips but don't want to pay to dump them somewhere, bring them to us. And then we'll actually be mixing things, like, right there, making a pile, put the food waste down, put the wood chips on top, and just keep building the piles up that way. And then mix them up. So that's the long term plan is move towards wood, because cardboard, you know, it's great, but it's a lot of work to take off all that tape and everything. So we'd rather move away from that, long term.

- Okay, thank you.

- Thank you.

- All right, Ned, Mark, and then Melissa.

- Thank you, Cory, thanks for being here. Really enjoyed the presentation. Certainly, I think green waste is something other cities have found a way to get a handle on, even here in a cold state. So I think it's exciting. I think it would be amazing if the city could put something together with you. That's gonna take a lot of layers of discussions, and, you know, legal conversations and things like that. But just off the top of my head, my biggest question to you is, you know, do you feel like you would have the ability to scale up to service? It sounds like you service, I know you said at the beginning like 300, or sorry, 128 residential, and, you know, jumping from that to many thousands would be quite a difference of scale. How long would it take to scale up a process like yours so that you could serve a larger community?

- I'm glad you actually asked that. I was hoping somebody would bring it up. Now, when people hear about community composting, which is actually what this is called, there's an Institute of Local Self-Reliance. It's a group that actually has a whole lot of us, over 300 of us that do the same type of thing nationwide in a group. I can tell you that there are some composting companies like mine that are out there that are over a decade old. So this isn't anything brand new. When those companies started, though, this was unheard of, what I'm doing. So now it's, I don't want to say I'm hopping on a bandwagon, but I'm not reinventing the wheel, I'm just doing what I think is, in a way, kind of a little bit better in some ways than what some other companies are doing. But some of these companies that are over 10 years old, you might be shocked to know, they're in areas that have a far bigger population than Green Bay could ever possibly hope to achieve, but they have only a couple thousand people signed up. I'll give you an example. Bennett Compost is in the Philadelphia, PA area. Philadelphia has 1 1/2 million residents, so obviously a lot bigger than us. To this day, they still have around 5,700 or so subscribers, which are like the 128 that I have. Now, if you look at that on a percentage basis, I did the math, that's about 1/3 of 1% of the population of Philly. Now if you were to extrapolate that into Green Bay's population, that's only 407 subscribers, and that's infinitely doable. We would, with the city's help, we could blow past that number and we could handle that right now. But if you're talking thousands, I think we could actually do thousands with the city's help and backing, helping educate people as to what this is, why we're doing it, why it's important, and create that culture. If we were to get 5,700 subscribers in Green Bay, I believe that would be something like 4 to 5% of the population. I mean, that would be an insane number of people to have. It would be considered wildly successful by every composter that's in this country. Not just the big ones, but everybody would think that we were some kind of, basically, compost gods for having achieved that. Now, I will point out, Bennett Compost is an interesting one in Philadelphia because they're just like us. They focus heavily on residential, not so much on commercial. They do have about 70 businesses they serve. But their bread-and-butter, as they call it, and that's what we call it, is the residential households, because those are the ones that are going to be ignored by the big waste haulers. I know a lot of you on the council are familiar with Cody Sandahl over at Festival Foods. He used to be on this commission. I just met him, by the way, this last weekend. He's actually the backyard neighbor of one of my subscribers. He popped outside and we shook hands and got to meet each other for the first time. They're actually serviced at his five locations. He oversees by a company called Organix, out of Mokena, Illinois. But they have a gigantic truck with hydraulics and they collect food waste from Festival, and other places that are that big, in three-cubic-yard

dumpsters. Now, I don't know that we'd ever want to get so big that we're using dumpsters, because if you think about it, that company's not gonna go door to door, like we're doing, and picking up food waste from individuals. But individuals are who makes up a lot of the food waste that ends up in the actual landfill, and they're really the underserved people. So that's really who we want to focus on, like Bennett Compost in Philadelphia does. Other companies have something like 3000 subscribers. I'll give you Falls Church, Virginia as an example. I mentioned they did the subsidization of Compost Crew's service. They had an initial goal of getting 300 signed up, and I think that's really realistic for Green Bay. Within just a year or two, we could do that with the city's help, maybe in stages of growth. Like let's say you take on 120 right when the program starts, then maybe we register another 10 people with every subsequent month. So make it like there's a waiting list to get on, and we just keep going down the list and adding and adding and adding until it reaches whatever goal we set. Falls Church hit their goal of 300 within the first year in 2017, and their ultimate goal was 600. And they actually blew past that within three years. So, as of two years ago, they already had over 650 in a city with only 14,000 people. And according to their website, that represented 20% of the single-family households in their little city. So, you know, if they can do it, Green Bay can certainly do it. I could see a realistic number being, you know, 1000, 2000 people within a couple years. And if the city wants to back what we're doing, I know there's really nothing that we couldn't do. We certainly, we have almost seven acres out in the town of Lessor and there's a land around us we could annex. We could make offers to people who just grow corn. If it was more profitable for them to sell the land to us so we could grow the compost operation, I'm sure they'd be open to hearing some pitches. But I guess it really depends how big the city wants to go. If the city got anything like 2, 3, 4% of its population signed up, that would again just be an amazing accomplishment for any city.

- All right, Mark and then Melissa.

- Thanks Cory, nice to see you again.

- Sure, thanks Mark.

- I know we've been talking about this, and, actually, my question still kind of comes back to what Ned had asked about, scaling up. Because, you know, the goal we have for 2030, which is not that far away, would be 20% of the city's population. So, you know, really, how can we scale this up? I mean, how are you set up for scaling this up, or do you have any ideas in terms of that? It's great what you're doing. I mean, that's great from a pilot standpoint, but I think that even the county's drop-off collection program, we had about 250, 280 subscribers when we ended the program. So we knew the proof of concept was already there. The question is how do we take that next step to actually getting, you know, what you're talking about, in terms of 120 to 240 households, you're talking about maybe 1/2 percent of the population of the city of Green Bay area. Obviously we'd like to do more than that if possible. How do we move to that? And have you given that much thought in terms of a business model that will let us do something like that? Because that's really where we're looking for the impact. We know we can get pilot programs, we know we can get curbside collections similar to what you're doing at the drop-off programs, but in all honesty, their impact isn't where we want it to be in the future. I mean, we use as a model for most of our discussions, you know, Massachusetts, California or Washington state where they have legislative programs to keep food waste and other organics out of land filling. You know, and it's curbside collections, you know, which is great, but it takes a lot of infrastructure.

- And well, and that's part of our pitch. Is the city, if they're investing with us, the assumption is,

unless the city intends to spend millions, I don't know how many millions of dollars, on its own compost facility, basically we are already a one-stop compost shop. There is a lot of room to grow. And I understand what you're saying about scaling up. But like I said, if you even get to something like 5,700 people doing curbside pickup at residences, you are already at Bennett Compost level. That's an insanely successful level for any compost company like ours to be at. If you were to, if a city like Green Bay thinks it's going to outdo them in just, like, a couple years, I just think it's entirely unrealistic. And the reason is, is you're not, as a compost company, as somebody who's trying to make the best compost possible, that's really what we're trying to do. We're not just trying to get it out of landfill, we're trying to make a good product that's saleable. Because, to us, I know we talked about this before, there's really no point in making something if you can't get rid of it. We don't just want to get rid of it. We want it to sell like hot cakes. We want it to, like has been suggested here, help people get the best growth, the best harvest out of their backyard gardens, their fields, even the community gardens around here are using the compost. We want there to be a use for it. So we're not just looking for quantity growth, we're looking for quality growth. The problem that a lot of cities like Madison ran into, when they focus more on quantity and not the quality, is they get contamination. And this is something that I know even those who are involved in yard waste composting are familiar with. Like at the city level, I'm sure that Public Works Director Steve Grenier could tell us all about it. And I just visited the West Side yard waste site to go grab some wood chips for my landscaping at home. There's all kinds of plastic bottles, and Snickers wrappers, and stuff inside the compost that the city makes. And that's actually the problem with a lot of compost. With yard waste, it's bad enough when it's not screened properly, and by the way, we run all of our compost through 1/4 inch screener. So we've got like three different points in our process where we're pulling stuff like plastic out. First of all, we don't want it to go in there at all. But if it does get in there, we run it through 1/4 inch screener at the end. So all you're getting is really fine, granular, beautiful material that's just compost, no plastic. Which is not like the stuff at the yard waste site, which I took about nine pictures in under a minute, and it's just plastic bottle, after plastic bottle, after Snickers wrapper. And to put this in perspective for everyone listening, compost contamination is something that we have to deal with every single day. And if anybody ever looks at my Instagram, you'll notice that maybe like every third or fourth post is about how to keep contamination out. My concern is if you get too big too fast and you're focused more on growing it really quick to say that you've got the biggest and best compost program, you're gonna end up with a wild amount of contamination. And then my question is, who's responsible for cleaning that up? Because, honestly, that's a big reason why our compost ends up having to cost so much and why it takes us so long to make it, because we have to painstakingly screen all of this junk out of this material. And food waste is notorious for being contaminated. Think, like, a Chiquita banana peel, stickers all over it. We get stickers on onions, avocados, melons. We actually get entire plastic bags in our buckets sometimes. Like just this past Sunday we got a bag of Brussel sprouts, where the person hadn't taken the Brussel sprouts out of the bag, they just threw the bag in there. We get all kinds of, mostly it's stickers, but there's a lot of other things, like twist ties and rubber bands that sneak in, and we have to pull that out. So as you get bigger, the concerns about contamination get bigger. And so what I want to do is avoid the problems Madison, Wisconsin had when they tried to do, like, a pickup. With how we do it here with trash and recycling, they were actually doing it with bins on the curb. They ended up, because they had so much contamination and so many complaints from the compost facility that was taking their material, that they had to pay another person to hop off of their garbage trucks to look in the bins to try to address contamination at the curb. And I can tell anybody here, that was never gonna work, because you can't lean into a giant 64 plus gallon bin and pull contaminants out at the curb. You have to take it back somewhere where you actually spread it out, and go through it, and pick the contaminants out by hand. There's machines that can

help, but it's not perfect. You really need a small army of people to handle that. So if the city wanted to do, say, thousands and thousands of people, my expectation would be that the city is gonna have to fund that small army of people to help us go through that stuff, because otherwise they'd basically just be looking at us to do it. And that's going to be, I mean, we're already dealing with, in my opinion, unacceptable levels of contamination. We do the best we can to educate people on getting it out of the buckets. But, you know, as you bring more new people on, who maybe aren't familiar with taking stickers off of things, the problem is just gonna become exponentially worse. And so I would also expect the city would have to do a lot to educate people on, you know, take the stickers off when you get the produce home, right away, so you don't put it in the bucket, or put it in whatever bin the city is having us collect the compost in. So it's not just about growing really big really fast. It's about educating people to do it the right way so the end product is actually something you'd be proud and which would actually be safe to put in your garden. Because otherwise I don't see the point in composting if it's just basically, you know, soil with garbage in it. I mean, at that point I might as well go to Home Depot and, you know, buy a \$5 bag of compost. And I don't want to do that because I don't like plastic in my compost. But, I mean, we can scale up. Mark, if you wanted to know a couple things right off the top of my head we could do to scale up, well, obviously, money's the big constraint. I know in my proposal I mentioned, and I don't know if anyone's here has considered it, but other communities have actually used ARPA funds to help not only fund pilot programs like what we're doing, but they've actually used it to create things like compost and food-waste educational programs and centers. I've actually seen some, some who don't even have an idea of how they want to run a compost program just use it to try to fund researching how to do it, like looking at what their neighbors in the neighboring states are doing. So if the city is trying to scale up, I mean, one of the things we could use help with is getting the equipment we actually need to do that. Assuming that we're gonna keep collecting in buckets, which I think is the best way to do this if you're actually doing residences, we could use some help affording those things. Obviously, we're gonna need to upgrade our vehicles. Right now, we're actually using a Toyota Sienna to do these pickups, which is really great for the scale we're doing it at. But eventually we're gonna need something bigger. Like not necessarily a box truck, but something that's more like a Ford Transit, like a cargo-van type situation, and maybe even eventually a fleet of those where we'd have multiple drivers. So WasteNot Compost, which is in Chicago, is a great example. I believe they got a big multi-million dollar investment, though I don't know from who, but they apparently have a fleet of about, I believe, 23 fully-electric cargo-van style trucks to do the same type of work that we're doing. And again, I don't know where they got the money for that from, but they basically exploded out of nowhere. I don't expect Green Bay to fund a 23-vehicle fleet, we don't even have anyone to drive that. I think the best thing they do, I mean we could try to grow fast, but I'd want to grow at a pace where we don't break ourselves. One of the big issues we're gonna run into is finding more land. Like I said, we're surrounded by cows and cornfields out in Lessor, but ideally if we were to get bigger, we'd want to get bigger in that same area. So we'd probably want to try to find more land that's out there to buy. But that would mean, you know, making offers to the neighbors, trying to get them to, you know, sell the land to us. Because, obviously, if we have to take a tractor, we use a compact tractor to turn our compost piles right now, we'd prefer to just use that on a lot that's right next door than say taking it to some other town on the other side of Green Bay. Obviously, that's not gonna work. Or even five miles down the road would be highly inconvenient. We'd want it to be right there. So one of the things we'd have to do is find the land to grow. We have plenty of land now to do it on a small scale, but, like, Mark, like what you were suggesting, we're gonna have to go bigger than that. We might even have to have a second site at some point.

- Yeah, I mean if you're talking about a city, you know, public-private partnership, I mean, the city

does have two. You know, you were in the drop-off area of the city's West Side yard waste center. The actual composting where they do the windrows and everything else is not a publicly, you know, open area adjacent to what you're looking at. And there's quite a bit of composting there. And I, you know, in a couple conversations with some of my colleagues, they've said that actually that would be a great place to actually handle up to somewhere around 50 cubic yards, on each of the compost sites that the city runs, of food waste, which is a pretty significant amount, without having to go to any kind of licensing. And they've got the equipment, they've got the location, they even have some of the material that could be mixed in there. Without going, you know, I don't want, you've got a lot of detail in your proposal. I've read through the whole thing a couple of times, and, you know, it's, there's a lot there to digest still as well. But, yeah.

- I should put, I've never written a proposal like that in my entire life, before Randy told me, basically, "Get it done." I had two days so I did the best I could. I like your idea though about satellite sites, Mark, about having, I wasn't aware that. I know the city has land.

- Right, the city has an East Side and the West Side yard waste drop-off centers with the actual composting facility next to them. We've actually talked in the past about what they would do to eliminate some of the plastic in their compost as well, some of the equipment they could buy. But that's, you know, that's another, we'd be talking about this for quite a while. I'd rather, you know, let Melissa get her questions in as well. You and I have talked a lot. But yeah, so it's just things to think about in terms of how you would actually scale this up. Because at the end of the day, the point really is how do we make- And I know you, I understand what you're talking about when you say you don't want to get too big too fast, but at the same time we need a program that is impactful for the city as a whole and includes as many people as possible from across the spectrum. You know, I liked to hear that you're working, I was happy to hear that you're working with multi-family housing. That's great because they're always underserved. But, you know, education is key. If I could keep plastic out of my recycling, plastic film out of our recycling, you know, I'd have some hope for food waste as well. But we can't even do that. So yeah, there's a lot there. There's a lot there. So, you know, I'd be curious, look forward to what else you got to say, And at this point, I'm gonna turn it over to Melissa and see what she's got to ask. Thanks Cory.

- Sure.

- [Staff] Sure, my questions are shorter in nature hopefully, so try to keep your answers a little short because I have several questions. Have you approached a bank to apply for a small business loan with your business idea and your business plan yet? Have you done that?

- No, because, personally, I don't believe in taking on debt unless I need to. We don't have any personal or business debt. I'd like to keep it that way. I am not averse to taking on, say, investment, but I don't like paying interest. If we can, say, fund the growth ourselves, we would. But, of course, we're looking for anything like grants that might be available too. I know in my proposal I wrote for the commission, I highlighted that the USDA actually has made some grants available, but, you know, they're smaller amounts. Like they were something like \$40,000, although it actually goes up to 300,000. But that's not a grant available to companies like us. It's more for cities. So, but yeah, we don't, I wouldn't approach a bank unless I absolutely had to. If I needed to take something out where I have to pay interest, I would, but-

- [Staff] My next question is, what are you currently doing with your final compost product? Is it

going back to your customers? Are you selling it? Who's your end user?

- Well, three things. First, we have a rewards program. We actually give to any subscriber who hits 500 pounds of material that they've provided to us, doesn't matter what kind, as long as it's acceptable, we actually give them a one cubic foot bag of the compost. We used to just give it out by pounds, but we found out we can't just make little bags of these things. It wasn't very impactful. to give somebody just a pound of compost at a time. We wanted it to be bigger. So they can earn compost, so a lot of it actually goes to them. We actually, under our new program, we just launched this new rewards program in June, it replaced an old one that, like I said, wasn't working for us, we just gave out our first bag. We've got another subscriber who's gonna be getting a bag probably the next two or three weeks. We also did a donation last year, and we may do more of this, to the Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association. I know Evan over there, he works on the De Pere Beautification Committee. And so they're, like, if you ever go to Voyageur Park in De Pere, they're responsible for all the beautiful flowers there. We donated a hundred pounds of the compost, actually, April of this year to them. And they actually used it to pot up some plants that they sold at their plant sale they do at the STEM Center at UWC.

- [Staff] So, you don't have any specific customers outside that you're selling to? Are you selling to farmers, maybe, other people that aren't part of your subscription program, but they want to buy a compost? There's nothing like that?

- Oh no, we definitely sell it. In fact, if you go to the website, there's products and services links at the top. Under our products, we have two links that might be what you're looking at. There is, we call it, finely sifted premium compost. We do sell it by the cubic foot bag. Started doing that in June. Haven't sold that many yet because there really wasn't any compost to sell. Compost takes many months to make, and then we have to run it through a sifter, bag it. We sold 23 bags to date and we have another 81 in stock. This isn't the big time of year when you sell it, it's probably spring. I think Fall is a great time to add it to your garden, but most other people don't think that. They're probably not gonna come to us till spring. We also have free samples. We put together little one-cup sample bags, which we're building a distributor network for. We actually have them at Soul Purpose, which is a, it's kind of like a, I guess, like an in-person Etsy store in Suamico. But then we also just took some over to LoCo WisCo in downtown Green Bay. So if anybody here ever wants a free one-cup sample for their house plant, just stop in to one of those two places, let them know, and they'll give it to you for free so you can try it out. There's link to that.

- [Staff] Randy actually gave me his sample that you gave him, so I put it in my garden.

- Oh good, yeah, it probably won't go too far in a garden, but hopefully the plants like it.

- [Staff] No, I actually, I should have put it in a house plant. So here's my next question. I'm assuming from the way you're speaking, you own the land. Are you owning or leasing that land in Lessor?

- We own it, because I don't want to have the problem other people have who don't own the land they use. I won't get into it. But there's a lot of problems when you don't own that land.

- [Staff] Do you expect, as your company grows with or without subsidy, how many full-time jobs would you create, like in the next three years, besides you and your wife?

- Honestly, using Blue Ribbon Organics, which does a lot of compost near Milwaukee, as an example, they are able to operate at a much larger scale than us with only eight people. You don't actually need a lot of people to do what we do. But it's a lot of work. It's time and labor intensive. So, I mean, you could get away with a staff with just a couple people and maybe you could use some volunteers. I know like places like the NEW Zoo have volunteers, even though they have paid staff too. You know, we'd make use of volunteers. I've had offers by UWGB. Daniela Beall, the sustainability coordinator, I know Mark met her at the time he visited me last August, she's actually offered to help send interns our way, but we just weren't ready for that. Basically, we don't take on the extra help. It just, you know, increases liability. If you don't need the help, don't take it. But we're definitely looking for volunteers, interns. If we need to, we'll go the employee route and get as much help as we need to do the everyday work that we have to do.

- [Staff] I know that, you know, and I spoke a little bit with Director Grenier about this after I read your proposal, and it really involves a lot with the county, because the city has a contract with the county for the landfill, and there's a lot of layers of things to consider. So I'll just put that out there that there is no fast and easy answer to any of what's contained in your proposal. And then the use of ARPA funds is also questionable for this because of the way categories established as far as what the city allocates for certain uses. And Susan House is on the call. I invited her to listen in so she could gather more information about this. And she also has your proposal. I guess one of my concerns is that your business is so young, and that's just a concern from a business standpoint. You know, as far as, you haven't been doing this that long, you know, you don't have, it's just, it seems like you need small business assistance. That's what this seems like to me, you know, for buying buckets and buying bags and things of that nature. So I'll just, that's just my general comment about that.

- Well, if I can interject, the one thing I would point out is, and I pointed this out in the proposal, is over the course of the last year or so, we've effectively run what is a pilot program for every municipality we serve already. So to the extent that we're asking the city to help fund a pilot program, we're basically just offering to have the city do it to see if the city likes the results that it's getting for its dollars. We already know that what we're doing works. As far as scaling it up, that's just a matter of time for us. I understand it looks like we're small, but I will tell everybody on this commission too, this is a numbers game. When it comes to community composting, route density is what profitability is all about. We would be far more profitable in terms of total revenue and net profit if we have more density. Right now we have about 80 subscribers just in Green Bay. If you were to double or triple that, you can imagine that instead of, say, three to four minutes between houses, I've got people who are neighbors right now, but if you think of, say, instead of driving five minutes between houses, you've got a person every half a mile or so, the whole thing just becomes way more profitable. And so if the city was investing in it, the city has to know that by doing that when we're small, the city is actually helping us reach profitability much, much quicker than if we were to grow on our own. So if one of the city's concerns is we're too small, the city has to know, going forward, if it doesn't want to throw any support behind it, at least not initially, and wants to have us do it on our own, from our perspective, it's hurting the long term goals the city has. Because if we're the only ones doing this service, and we're the best bet it has at getting this residential food waste taken care of- And we're doing it in a way, by the way, which is rated five stars on Google and Facebook by everyone, our customer service, in my opinion, is superb. We're not just doing a great service, and it's been running really smoothly and already took over 30,000 pounds out of the landfill in the last year, we're doing it in a way where people are super excited and super happy to actually be participating. So while I understand we're young, I'm not looking so much at how long we've existed. I'm looking at, how good of a job are we doing? I'd say we're doing at least as good of a job,

if not far better of a job, than I've seen other compost companies in other states do. In terms of how well the program's going and how well I think it could go if we had more capital to invest in it, I think that we've succeeded where a lot of other companies have actually failed. In fact, I don't expect people on the commission to know, but in the community composter circle, it's known that community composters like us pop up almost every single day and then they disappear almost as quickly as they appeared. Because it takes a special kind of person, and I think I'm that kind of person to even want to start this kind of company, let alone run it. It's a yucky, dirty job. It's hard. When I started this, I did it all with a pitchfork and now I'm actually using a tractor. And I should throw it out there too, I didn't put this in the proposal, but the commission should know this isn't just some little fly by night thing I'm doing. My wife and I have no debt. We don't have any debt in the business. We've already invested somewhere around \$200,000 of our own money in a company that's making a fraction of that because we believe in what we're doing. So if the city invests in us, they may be investing in a small company, but they're investing in a company with a heart and a soul that truly believes in what we're doing, really wants to make a difference, and is committed to working with the city to achieve our goals. And we're going to try to achieve it whether or not the city wants to help, but we just hope that the city comes along for the ride with us. Because, you know, I live in Green Bay. We started in Green Bay. This is all about Green Bay. They make up most of our subscribers. I want it to stay that way. And we're all in alignment about getting this food waste out of the landfill. I just want to know that the city wants to go to bat for us as hard as we're going to bat for the city.

- [Staff] Mark, I had a question for you. Do we have any current statistics for Brown County on how many households do their own home composting?

- [Mark Walter] Do we, not that I've ever, I mean, not that I know of.

- Okay. I didn't know, like maybe there was some surveys, or something like past surveys, that we would have an idea of how many people are doing that themselves.

- [Mark Walter] We could probably ask UW Extension Master Gardeners Program, you know, to get at least a sense of how many people are doing it. There are some caveats with home composting in Green Bay just because of some areas of the city you just can't, you know, we're too close to water. We're a water city, which means there are always gonna be rodents in anywhere near the river, in neighborhoods near the river, which is, you know, a problem in itself. But yeah, offhand, beyond that, I don't know. I'd have to ask the Master Garden Program in terms of what's going on with that. And they were selling compost bins. We had, over the last five years or so, between them and us, we've probably sold, well, you know, a couple hundred home-compost bins. How many are still in use? I don't know. Again, we don't track that statistic very well.

- [Seth Hoffmeister] All right, did we have other questions for Cory? All right, well thank you for presenting. That was extremely informative and you have given us a lot to consider and think about. And I'm just really impressed with the efforts that you're undertaking with this business to get compost out of the landfill. So thank you for all you do.

- Thank you Seth. If I can interject, just one last thing, Melissa might find this interesting. See, I've looked at a lot of ordinances, municipal code for other areas around here as specifically relates to compost. I wanted to make sure Melissa knows that we don't have any compost ordinances. Our city is almost completely lacking in them. The only things that are really even relevant to what I do is one

little mention of that it has to basically be in a container that has to be no more than, no closer than a foot to a property line. And the community garden section of our code has a little mention of it. But if you go look, and this is some homework I guess everybody can do, if you go look at what Appleton came up with for composting, they have one of the most- There are some typos in it, it's not perfect. But if you go look at what they did, I think it's in the public nuisance section. But it's not because they considered a nuisance. It's more to let people know what to do to not be a nuisance. I'd actually, honestly, based on my experience with looking at these ordinances, if I wanted to do backyard composting in Green Bay, and obviously Mark knows I did that, I'd actually be scared to try it because there's so much gray space. I would wonder, because of what isn't gray is the rat and rodent infestation related ordinances and the offensive odors related ordinances. And when you start doing backyard composting, you're running the risk of running afoul of any and all of those things. And I was actually made aware by one of our local inspectors, I don't know if anyone knows Brian Krokowski, me and Brian actually had a talk about the lack of ordinances. And he tried to come up with a way where somebody like me could do backyard composting in a rat freeway. I didn't find his suggestions to be satisfactory because what he was basically suggesting was building a bin with hardware cloth, which is like wire that's less than a dime-size holes so a mouse couldn't get through. But if you go look at our ordinances, there is no mention of that in the ordinances, the code. And so if I was to do what he suggested, I'd be running afoul of the ordinances on rats and on offensive odors, because there's really nothing to speak of related to compost. So one thing I had mentioned to Mark when I last met him in person was we really need to get the ordinances updated, kind of in a way like Appleton did. I wouldn't say do it cookie cutter. But I would say look at what they did, and then maybe look at like what Madison and South Milwaukee did, and some other places, and basically cobble together a bunch of things that Green Bay thinks would be good for Green Bay. But if you go look at Appleton, I think they have a really good blueprint over there for how to put together a really, kind of, well thought out composting-related ordinance. And I mean, they let you do everything from bin composting, to piles in certain circumstances, even doing it, like, in a trench where you bury in a trench, it was really well thought out. I don't know who put that together, but whoever did it was putting a lot of thought into it.

- Great.

- So maybe that's something Seth can look at at the city level here.

- Yep. I think that that's a lot of really good suggestions that we can consider. But we are straying a little bit from the initial presentation and we're going on about an hour. So I want to thank you for your time. Seeing as this is a presentation and not an item of regular business, we will not be making any recommendations. However, you've given us a lot of great information to consider and we can continue some of those conversations moving forward. But yeah, I wanted to thank you again for your time. And do we need to, Melissa, just have a motion to receive and place on file? Or just close the floor and move on.

- Yes, that's correct. That's correct.

- All right. All right, so move by Alder Steuer to receive and place on file. Is there a second? By Mark Walter, Mark, and Mark. All those in favor of say, "Aye."

- [Group] Aye.

- All those opposed say, "Nay." All right, well thanks again, Cory.

- You're welcome. Thank you everybody for your time. Have a good rest of the meeting.

- You too.

- Thank you.

- [Seth Hoffmeister] All right, and moving right along to informational, we have work group updates followed by announcements. Do we have any work group updates?

- (Ned Dorff) I have a couple updates for the Healthy Habitat work. I, it's been, trying to get a hold of Dave in the traffic department, and also Dan, and we finally were able to connect. So Dave Hansen sent me some thoughts about Dark Sky. And I won't go too far into him tonight, but he kind of had some points on light trespass, on things that should be exempt if we do move forward with the Dark Sky and codifying some of the work they've been doing with cutoff fixtures on street lights. So looking forward to actually moving some things forward with the Dark Sky, hopefully soon. And then with the discussion around Non-Toxic Neighborhoods. Dan and I were able to talk today afternoon, Dan Ditscheit from Parks Department, and we talked about how the Parks Department has changed over the course of his career as far as the use of chemicals, and how he thinks it would be smart to get some things codified, some best practices. And again, what are the exemptions when we talk about a chemical ban, because there are going to be important uses for ecological purposes. But also looking into new ways to manage weeds, and how we notify the public as to what the city actually does regarding using treatment, how we can improve process. So, there's a whole lot that we talked about. Dan really likes the Appleton template for their chemical use. So he's gonna send me a copy of that, and if anybody else is interested in looking into that, I can send it to Seth and Melissa and then get some feedback. I'll be giving some feedback to Dan. So hopefully within the next month I'll have a little more to say about the direction of our either, I don't know that we'll go with Non-Toxic Neighborhoods as a designation. That was a group that had been interested in working with Green Bay. Or if we just kind of create our own plan and move forward with that, regarding chemical use on public lands. That's that.

- [Seth Hoffmeister] Cool, thank you Ned. Other work group updates from folks? All right, and any, just, general announcements folks would like to share? I have two really quick ones. Yesterday, I kind of at the last minute was invited to sit on a panel at UW Oshkosh. It was like the, they do this annual Provost Summit on climate, and the topic was how are local communities addressing climate change? So I got to brag about all the good work that everybody here is doing. I think that the audience was mostly professors and how they can talk about climate with their students. So was just really grateful to, yeah, share all the good work that we are doing to that audience. And then today there was a group of folks that I met with via Zoom from Leadership Green Bay, and they just kind of wanted a overview of the work that we're doing here as well. So they were, again, all very excited about what y'all are doing, what we all are doing, and wanted to pass along that appreciation. That's all for me. Mark Walter?

- Yeah, I just, and John Arendt knows about it, yesterday was the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, and UWGB and NEW Water and a variety of dignitaries got together out at the STEM Center. But I think that's a, you know, you can't say enough about what the impact of that Act was 50 years ago. You know, and just hearing some of the successes and knowing what that meant for

the world, for us as a generation, I mean, I think that's great. It was also the 90th anniversary, 90th, right, John, of NEW Water or Green Bay Metropolitan Sewage District? So they were kind of coinciding there, but I thought that was well worth mentioning. It's something that-

- Yeah it was a good event.

- Yeah, great event, and yeah, if we could only keep that kind of success going. So anyway, thought that was worth noting.

- (Alder Steuer) Seth, I have one comment. You know, I deal with a lot of meetings each month, you know, for other things. But, you know, I find some of the things that are going on here are very good, very helpful. But I would just encourage, you know, the people on the committee to let myself know, I know there are emails, not that we get out, but if there's a conference or something going on that I can possibly go to or some of the other alders can attend, you know, just please keep us in the loop. And I know you folks have been, but there are times where, you know, we just have a lot on our plate and we just have to kind of prioritize. But I definitely want to keep this high for us, for me at least. So that's all.

- Kaurie.

- (Kaurie Mihm) Yeah, so I was just wondering, I know a little while back we had, I put together that cost estimate for, like, promotional materials for the commission, and I know, Alder Steuer, you had talked about maybe looking for funding. And just with budget talks and stuff going on now I'm wondering if there's been any progress on that?

- (Alder Steuer) I'm glad you bring that up before we- One of the things I've dealt with, and you know, Ned, you can talk about this too because you were on council, you know, a lot of times we don't get the budget booked until, you know, a week or two before we have to talk about it. So I guess what I would suggest is that you possibly email that to me again. I've been going to the various committee meetings ahead of time and I've also been meeting with department heads on my own. Other alders have done that as well, gathering data, and then eventually we will be meeting for the combined personal finance meeting. I think that's November, November 3rd, Joint Personnel. That'll be a big meeting. That's on a Thursday at 3:00 PM. You're all welcome to come to it and it takes a while. So be prepared, bring snacks. And then we will, yeah, that's the Joint Personnel meeting. So that'll be, that's the important one. So, yeah, anything you can send me would be great. And I know you probably have done that already, but just, you know, please redo it if need be so it's fresh in my memory.

- Okay, I'll plan to do that.

- Okay.

- (Kaurie Mihm) One other question I had then, I think, too, we've talked about in-person meetings and I don't know if that's something we want to shift back to or not, or I can't recall if, what was determined about that, if anything? So just curious.

- That's, I don't know, Seth, have you done some of that? We have our I&S and Parks meetings. We do meet in person, but there's no virtual with that. So there are, you know, I think that people like

the option of having them both if possible, but we just have the one. So that's one of the issues.

- Yeah, I think when this was raised initially when the city started going back in-person meetings, just with busy schedules, it was more convenient for a lot of folks on the commission to continue to meet virtually. If folks have strong feelings either way, we can also reach out to Amy and Julia and whoever our new member is once they're appointed, we can revisit that conversation and see if we could do either a hybrid or in-person meeting.

- Yeah, I personally would, yeah, I don't mind the Zoom calls from the sake of it's much more expedient, but there is a fair amount of interaction that just doesn't occur in a Zoom call. And not necessarily, you know, it may be even that having an option of doing, you know, every third meeting in person, or every twice a year or something like that, at least. Just to, you know, reacquaint ourselves with the whole body, not just the face. But, you know, that's kind of my comment, I do like meeting in-person. Yeah, I know Mark. I don't necessarily want to see your whole feet.

- Well, yeah, sorry.

- I did notice though, just looking at this that, have you noticed that every single male on this call has a beard?

- What?

- It's in the ordinance, it's a requirement. That's why we kicked Randy off.

- Good point.

- I like the idea of mostly virtual, but, you know, occasional quarterly meeting in-person, or twice a year. For me there's the, I have the considerations of childcare and dog care to be honest. But, you know, I can certainly work things in, but having it virtual most of the time has been really positive for me.

- [Staff] I know one of the considerations was, as far as for members of the public, to either, you know, initially to either have it all in-person when we went back as an option or virtual. Because the city, we didn't have the right technology to be able to do the hybrid meetings. But I think that has recently changed because an email came out. So that might be a more feasible option. But if we flip flop back and forth, or if this committee, it's confusing for the public if they want to know when to attend a meeting. If they think, "Is this an in-person one or is this a virtual one?" So we have to, I think whatever you decide, it needs to be consistent.

- Got it. Well, Melissa, maybe we can discuss that before our next meeting. So we could do virtual now for committee meetings, or I'm sorry, virtual hybrid, partial, virtual partial meetings?

- [Staff] Yeah, so the email just came out today from, I don't know if it was HR or IT, but there's certain committee meeting rooms now that are equipped to be able to hold hybrid meetings is my understanding. I'm at a conference today so I didn't get a chance to, you know, ask any questions after the email was sent out. But it sounds like we're getting there.

- All right, cool.

- And maybe we are there. But whatever it is, we'd have to make sure that it's reflected in public notice when the meetings are posted, what the options are.
- Got it. Well, cool. We can discuss that before the next meeting. And then if we need to bring anything before the commission for a decision, perhaps we'll just plan on having November be virtual and then either December or January making that switch over, if we do. And yeah, if anybody has any feedback in the meantime, you can email Melissa and I about that.
- Holiday party in December, you know.
- Yeah, yeah, we could do that. In person meeting, and then-
- Mark, he's got a better beard so he could do that.
- Cool.
- Just a thought.
- I like that idea. Alright, any other announcements? Cool, well, we'll entertain a motion to adjourn.
- So moved.
- By Mark Walter. Is there a second?
- Second.
- By Mark Steuer. All right, the Marks with the motions. All those in favor say, "Aye."
- [Group] Aye.
- All those opposed say, "Nay." All right, have a good night everybody.