

City of White Bear Lake Environmental Advisory Commission

MINUTES

Date: October 21, 2020	Time: 6:30pm	Location: WBL City Hall
COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	Bonnie Greenleaf, Rick Johnston, Gary Schroeher (Chair), Robert Winkler, Valeria Diaz, Sage Durdle	
COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT	Sheryl Bolstad, Chris Greene	
STAFF PRESENT	Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist	
VISITORS	None	
NOTETAKER	Connie Taillon	

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:43pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes. Commissioner Johnston moved, seconded by Commissioner Greenleaf, to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote:

Bolstad: Absent

Greene: Absent

Greenleaf: Aye

Johnston: Aye

Schroeher: Aye

Winkler: Aye

Diaz: Aye

Durdle: Aye

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) September 16, 2020 regular meeting

The commission members reviewed the September 16, 2020 draft minutes and had no changes.

Commissioner Johnston moved, seconded by Commissioner Winkler, to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2020 meeting as presented.

Roll call vote:

Bolstad: Absent

Greene: Absent

Greenleaf: Aye

Johnston: Aye

Schroeher: Aye

Winkler: Aye

Diaz: Aye

Durdle: Aye

Motion carried.

4. VISITORS & PRESENTATIONS

None

Commission member joined the meeting

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Work plan high priority goals

- Downtown area recycling containers

Commissioner Johnston reported the results of his downtown area trash and recycling container use investigation. He stated that it is difficult during the pandemic to determine if his findings are representative of actual use. The recycling container signage says 'bottles and cans only' so that was his focus. He found very little recycling in the trash, and some trash in the recycling containers.

Commissioner Johnston asked what level of contamination is still acceptable. Taillon mentioned that the level of contamination in the curbside recycling program is approximately 9.5% and this is percentage acceptable to our recycling processor. Commissioner Johnston noted that people appear to be using all of the recycling containers. There are only eight recycling containers in the downtown area but all are in high traffic locations. He noted that there was very little trash and recycling in the containers the day before the weekly pickup, with the heaviest use on Washington Square. He recommends replacing the current separate trash and recycling containers with a combined trash/recycling container. This would likely maximize recycling and pickup convenience, and minimize clutter.

- Pollinator plantings, mtg w/ Parks Commission

Taillon reported that the Parks Commission may be available for a joint meeting during their January or February meeting. The Parks Commission liaison will discuss a date with the commission members at their next meeting.

- Zero waste City events policy

Taillon stated that the next step is to bring the Zero Waste Policy to City Council for their consideration, and she will let the commission members know when the policy is on the Council agenda.

b) 2020 budget

- Expo banners

Taillon reported that the two Environmental Resource Expo feather flags have arrived. One stand was missing so staff will contact the company and have them mail the second stand. Staff will order the other two flags after the first of the year. Commission members discussed subsidizing home energy squad visits or purchasing pollinator seeds with the remaining 2020 budget. Taillon will research subsidizing home energy squad visits.

c) 2021 Work plan

Commission members reviewed the Natural Step Framework list and discussed priority projects for 2021. Commissioner Greenleaf is interested in a plastic bag ban and will report on plastic bag restrictions in Duluth and Minneapolis at the November EAC meeting. Commission members will each choose their three priorities for 2021 and report back at the November meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) Officer elections

Commission members discussed chair and vice chair candidates. Chair Schroeher agreed to continue on as chair. Commissioner Greenleaf moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnston, to nominate Chair Schroeher to continue as chair in 2021.

Roll call vote:

Bolstad: Absent
Greene: Aye
Greenleaf: Aye
Johnston: Aye
Schroeder: Aye
Winkler: Aye
Diaz: Aye
Durdle: Aye

Motion carried.

Commissioner Johnston moved, seconded by Commissioner Greene, to nominate Commissioner Bolstad to continue as vice-chair in 2021.

Roll call vote:

Bolstad: Absent
Greene: Aye
Greenleaf: Aye
Johnston: Aye
Schroeder: Aye
Winkler: Aye
Diaz: Aye
Durdle: Aye

Motion carried.

7. DISCUSSION

a) Staff updates

- East Goose Lake Adaptive Management
Taillon stated that City staff and VLAWMO gave a presentation about the Goose Lake Adaptive Management process at the October 13, 2020 City Council meeting. VLAWMO introduced the adaptive management concept and asked if Council had reservations about the process and partnership. Next steps include a neighborhood meeting before the end of this year, and gathering additional public input at the beginning of next year. Staff will keep the commission members informed of next steps.
- Curbside organics
Taillon reported that Ramsey County continues to move forward with a curbside organics recycling program, and plans to launch the program in both Ramsey and Washington Counties by early 2023. Staff will email commission members information about the program.
- Recycling Ambassador Program
Taillon mentioned that the Ramsey County Recycling Ambassador program is now in place, and registration will open this fall for a 6-week training program. Staff will email the program link to commission members.

b) Commission member updates

- Taking Action for Water Quality and Conservation Webinar – Chair Schroeder
Chair Schroeder provided an update on the ‘Taking Action for Water Quality and Conservation’ webinar that he recently attended. The webinar was hosted by Conservation Minnesota with presentations from

Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO), Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD), and Anoka Conservation District (ACD). The presenters highlighted that 60% of lakes in the state are currently impaired. ACD discussed water governance and the Adopt-a-Drain program in Anoka County, where 400 drains have been adopted. RCWD described their programs for water quality, flooding, wetlands, drainage, outreach, and grants. They also showed example projects from their small grant program and talked about the Lawns to Legumes program. VLAWMO talked about Amelia Lake and how to get involved with the Adopt-a-Drain program and VLAWMO cost share program. As part of the webinar, attendees took a real time survey, which Chair Schroeher said may be helpful with the Goose Lake public engagement.

c) Do-outs

New do-out items for October 21, 2020 include:

- Commissioner Greenleaf will provide a summary of plastic bag restrictions in Duluth and Minneapolis
- Commissioner Greenleaf to email compostable product company article to commission members
- Each commission member shall choose their top three priority project for 2021 and share at the November meeting
- Staff to order two more Environmental Expo feather flags after the first of the year.
- Staff to update the commission when the Zero Waste Policy is on the Council agenda.
- Staff to research subsidizing home energy squad visits
- Staff to email curbside organics and recycling ambassador links to commission members

d) November agenda

Add plastic bag ban discussion, 2020 remaining budget on the November agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Johnston moved, seconded by Commissioner Winkler to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 pm.

Roll call vote:

Bolstad: Absent

Greene: Aye

Greenleaf: Aye

Johnston: Aye

Schroeher: Aye

Winkler: Aye

Diaz: Aye

Durdle: Aye

Motion carried.