

City of White Bear Lake Environmental Advisory Commission

MINUTES

Date: November 17, 2021	Time: 6:30pm	Location: WBL City Hall
COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	Sheryl Bolstad, Rick Johnston, Gary Schroeher (Chair)	
COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT	Chris Greene, Bonnie Greenleaf, Robert Winkler	
STAFF PRESENT	Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist	
VISITORS	Nick Voss, Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization	
NOTETAKER	Connie Taillon	

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and added Nick Voss to item 4. Visitors & Presentations. Taillon added County E and Bellaire to item 7a. Staff Updates. Commissioner Johnston moved, seconded by Commissioner Bolstad, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried, vote 3/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) October 20, 2021 regular meeting

The commission members reviewed the October 20, 2021 draft minutes and had the following change: Commissioner Bolstad moved, seconded by Commissioner Johnston, to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2021 meeting as amended. Motion carried, vote 3/0.

4. VISITORS & PRESENTATIONS

Nick Voss, Education & Outreach Coordinator with the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization, was in attendance to share education and outreach strategies planned for 2022 and to discuss possible partnerships. The first strategy is spotlighting local business, community groups, and residents to showcase behaviors that the City and VLAWMO would want to model. Possible partnership opportunities could include identifying residents or businesses to spotlight such as Adopt- a-Drain participants, conducting brief interviews, taking photos, and dispersing the spotlight articles via social media, newsletters, Nextdoor, and homeowner association newsletters. The commission members discussed possible businesses or residents to showcase in an upcoming spotlight, and Nick suggested Big Dog Woodworks in White Bear Lake. Nick will reach out to Big Dog Woodworks for a spring or summer Adopt- a-Drain business spotlight. Nick welcomed EAC members to scout out additional businesses, community groups, or residents within the VLAWMO and City boundary and forward their contact information to Nick.

The second strategy involves creating videos showing Spiderman, Drippy, or other characters cleaning a storm drain. Nick stated that he needs helpers to assist with filming. Chair Schroeher volunteered to help Nick coordinate two filming and photo sessions, one in June/July, and the other in October, 2022. The summer session will include Drippy and an "adopt me" sign, fall will include Spiderman and/or other Halloween costume. Locations will be at strategic park or other landmark locations such as Lakeaires Elementary, East Goose shoreline, and other sites identified by the team.

Nick also asked the commission members for ideas on how to increase Adopt-a-Drain participation in the East Goose Lake subwatershed. Nick stated that Adopt-a-Drain door hangers are available for any volunteers or

volunteer groups throughout 2022. Chair Schroeher suggested an 'adopt me' sign for available stormdrains.

Nick will attend the December EAC meeting to share new educational materials that the City can customize for use in meeting MS4 education and outreach requirements.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) 2021 budget

Commission members discussed purchasing reusable shopping bags or native plant seeds with the remaining 2021 budget funds. The reusable bags are between \$1 and \$5 each and can be handed out at the Environmental Resources Expo. Commissioner Johnston stated that he may not want to add more bags to people's homes, and liked the idea of giving away native seeds at the Expo instead. Commission members decided to hold off on making a decision until the December meeting when the other commission members will be in attendance.

b) 2021 work plan

Chair Schroeher stated that he reached out to other surrounding communities and none are looking at a bag ordinance. Taillon mentioned that she has a meeting with Ramsey County on Friday and will ask about available grants to purchase recycling containers for the Downtown area. Chair Schroeher noted that Merrick, Inc. in Vadnais Heights has a plastic bag recycling program and wondered if the City could collect its plastic bags and have Merrick pick them up to recycle. Taillon stated that she would need to research how many plastic bags the City generates each month from received shipments and other sources to help in determining if this becomes a priority for the commission in 2022.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) 2022 draft work plan

Commission members brainstormed ideas for 2022 priority initiatives such as increasing green space and tree plantings, becoming a certified Prairie City, partnering with Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District to remove buckthorn at Lakewood Hills Park, and promote No Mow May in the spring. Taillon also suggested looking at the GreenStep Cities website for other project ideas. Chair Schroeher volunteered to create a list of possible 2022 initiatives and will email the list to the commission members. He asked each commission member to pick their top 5 priority items from the list. Chair Schroeher also mentioned that he will invite a Prairie City representative to the February meeting.

Commissioner Bolstad noted that there are no trees in some of the cutouts on Banning Avenue. Taillon stated that she will ask Public Works about this.

b) Officer elections

The commission members discussed waiting to hold officer elections in December when the full commission is in attendance. Taillon will add officer elections to the December agenda.

7. DISCUSSION

a) Staff updates

- Environmental updates memo to Council

Taillon summarized three projects that were highlighted in the November 3, 2021 Environmental Updates memo to Council: 1) As part of the 2021 raingarden and street renovation program, one raingarden was built within the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) boundary. The homeowner received a 90% cost share grant from VLAWMO to help cover the cost of materials and construction; 2) The Rice Creek Watershed District and City were invited to speak about the raingarden and street renovation program partnership at the 36th annual Conference on the Environment on November 9th; and 3) the City received a grant from Rice Creek Watershed District to

help cover the cost of two rain guardian turret structures as part of the 2021 Matoska Park parking lot rehabilitation project. The Turrets remove sediment and debris from parking lot runoff prior to discharge into White Bear Lake. A third Turret was installed at Lakewood Hills in anticipation of a raingarden project in 2022.

- Video of Climate Smart Municipalities presentation
Taillon noted that Sam Crosby and Tracy Shimek from the City's Community Development Department presented on the Climate Smart Municipalities trip to Germany at the City Council meeting on November 9, 2021. She will email a link to the Council meeting video if commission members are interested in watching the presentation. Taillon also mentioned that she will send a link to the upcoming VLAWMO Board aquatic vegetation management discussion.

- County E and Bellaire
Taillon provided a brief update on the testing completed at the intersection of County E and Bellaire. Additional testing identified soil vapor at one property but not enough to mitigate. Access restrictions prevented testing on another property. A more detailed report will follow at a future meeting.

b) Commission member updates

Chair Schroeher noted that a Vadnais Heights Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission member would like to attend the January meeting to learn about environmental initiatives in White Bear Lake. Chair Schroeher will send out an invite.

c) Do-outs

New do-out items for November 17, 2021 include:

- Chair Schroeher to create a spreadsheet of possible 2022 work plan goals
- Chair Schroeher to invite a Prairie City USA representative to February meeting
- Commission members to review GreenStep Cities list for 2022 work plan ideas
- Chair Schroeher to invite member of the Vadnais Heights Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission to January EAC meeting
- Staff to add Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission member to January 2022 agenda
- Staff to add Prairie City USA to February 2022 agenda
- Staff to email link to CSM presentation, aquatic vegetation management meeting, and East Goose Lake web hub
- Staff to request a grant application from Ramsey County for DT recycling containers
- Staff to check with Public Works about empty tree cutouts on Banning

d) December agenda

Include Nick Voss as a visitor again in December to discuss partnership opportunities to help meet the City's MS4 program education and outreach requirements; 2022 draft work plan discussion; officer elections; County E and Bellaire update.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Johnston moved, seconded by Commissioner Bolstad to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 pm. Motion carried, vote 3/0.