



**MINUTES  
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2022  
6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE**

Chair Gary Schroeher called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sheryl Bolstad, Chris Greene, Bonnie Greenleaf, Jeff Luxford, Gary Schroeher (Chair), Rick Johnston

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Lindy Crawford, Dane Huinker

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes.

It was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Greenleaf**, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried 5:0.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on April 20, 2022

The commission members reviewed the April 20, 2022 meeting minutes and no changes.

It was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Bolstad**, to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 4:0. Member Johnson abstained.

B. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on May 18, 2022

The commission members reviewed the May 18, 2022 meeting minutes and had no changes.

It was moved by member **Johnston** seconded by member **Greenleaf**, to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 4:0. Member Bolstad abstained.

*Commission member arrived at 6:39pm.*

#### 4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Welcome new member Jeff Luxford

Member Luxford introduced himself as a new commission member. He applied to be on the Environmental Advisory Commission because he was looking to become involved with the community. He didn't know that the Environmental Advisory Commission existed until recently. The other commission members welcomed Jeff and introduced themselves.

B. Lindy Crawford, City Manager

Lindy Crawford introduced herself to the Environmental Advisory Commission as the new City Manager. She stated that she has been with the City for approximately 6 months, and previously worked for the City of Mora and Tonka Bay. The commission members asked Lindy about upcoming City solar projects. She stated that the Sports Center will be the first to have rooftop solar installed.

C. Dane Huinker, Wildlife Forever – Prairie City USA

Dane Huinker from Wildlife Forever introduced himself and stated that he has been with Wildlife Forever for four years. Wildlife Forever is a national non-profit whose mission is to conserve America's wildlife heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat and management of fish and wildlife. Their work is categorized into four programs: Clean Drain Dry Initiative, Art of Conservation, Wild Spotter, and On-the-Ground Habitat Restoration. Dane is attending the commission meeting to introduce the Prairie City USA initiative, which is part of the On-the-Ground Habitat Restoration program. The mission of Prairie City USA is to build stronger communities through integrated prairie habitat, conservation best practices and civic leadership. Prairie City USA is a municipal certification program that restores underutilized public lawn spaces with prairie. There are financial and environmental benefits of this program through reduced maintenance, reduced fertilizer and pesticide use, and reduced watering. Replacing lawn grass with a native prairie also benefits wildlife and improves water quality. There are five steps to become a certified Prairie City USA community: 1) meet with community members to discuss benefits; 2) form a local Prairie City USA advisory committee; 3) change City ordinances to allow for prairie plantings if needed; 4) commit to Prairie City USA implementation/management level; 5) adopt a resolution to join Prairie City USA. Dane described the different levels of participation, and that the City can select a level that fits our capacity to become certified. Dane provided an example of the Fergus Falls pilot prairie project through Prairie City USA. The identified 101 acres of potential restoration sites, with 20 acres in Phase one. The cost savings is estimated to be \$24,000 over 3 years. Dane stated that they are looking for more pilot communities to become certified.

Member Greenleaf stated that she would like the City to consider being a pilot community. Taillon mentioned that this program would fit in well with the existing pollinator initiatives and with the EAC goal of reducing mowed lawn areas. She asked Dane how much staff time would be involved in this program since the City is already

prioritizing areas for restoration, and hires a contractor to maintain these sites. He stated that there is staff time to create and manage a plan.

The commission members thanked Dane for attending and presenting on the Prairie City USA pilot.

## **5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Environmental Resources Expo**

The commission members reviewed the list of exhibitors and map. Chair Schroeher mentioned that Conservation Minnesota is not able to attend. Taillon noted that she will invite CEE, H2O for Life, and Sierra Club.

Member Johnston mentioned that one of the GreenStep Cities best practices is community engagement. He suggested creating a survey for the Expo to gather input on environmental topics that the City and Environmental Advisory Commission should focus their efforts. Member Johnston offered to draft a survey and email to the commission members for review.

### **B. Draft presentation to Council**

The commission members tabled the draft presentation discussion until the July meeting.

### **C. Draft 2022 Work Plan**

Member Johnston stated that he met with Taillon to review the GreenStep Cities best practices list. He suggested that the work plan items be tied to the GreenStep Cities best practices to help focus discussion on outcomes and help move the City's GreenStep Cities program forward. The commission members asked Taillon to send the GreenStep Cities link to them for review.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

Nothing scheduled

## **7. DISCUSSION**

### **A. Downtown area trees**

Member Bolstad stated that she, with the help of her husband, mapped the downtown area where there should be trees. She then emailed the Public Works Administrative Assistant requesting to have trees planted or replaced in these areas. Member Bolstad mentioned that her response is that it is difficult for trees to grow in those areas and that the areas have instead been planted with other types of plantings. Member Greenleaf agrees that it is a challenge for trees to grow in these confined areas. Member Bolstad said that she will email the tree map to the commission members.

B. Staff updates

- RWMWD grant for Lakewood Hills Raingarden  
Taillon announced that the City received a grant from Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District to cover 100% of the cost to construct a raingarden a Lakewood Hills Park. The curb cut for this project was installed last fall as part of the parking lot resurfacing project.
  
- VLAWMO grant for Rotary Park planting  
Taillon stated that the City received a \$750 grant from Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization to help cover the cost of the phase 1 restoration project, which is a native prairie seeding and planting east of the trail near the parking lot. The project will be completed by fall of this year.

C. Commission member updates

Chair Schroeder mentioned that he volunteered to work the bouncy house and inflatable slide at the RWMWD Waterfest Event. Approximately 2,000 people attended the event.

D. Do-outs

New do-out items for May 18, 2022 include:

- Taillon to invite CEE, H2O for Life, and Sierra Club to Expo.
- Member Johnston to draft a community engagement survey for the Expo
- Taillon to email members the GreenStep Cities website link.
- Members to review GreenStep Cities best practices and tailor 2022 work plan items with this program.
- Member Bolstad to email downtown area tree map to the commission members

E. July agenda

The commission members discussed meeting in July to finalize plans for the Expo and continue working on the presentation to Council and the 2022 work plan, even though the members historically do not hold a meeting the month of the Expo.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Johnston** to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Motion carried, 6:0