



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2022
6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Frye, Chris Greene, Bonnie Greenleaf, Rick Johnston, Jeff Luxford, Gary Schroeber (Chair)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sheryl Bolstad

STAFF PRESENT: Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist

VISITORS PRESENT: None

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes.

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

Motion carried 6:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on June 15, 2022

The commission members reviewed the June 15, 2022 meeting minutes and had the following change: Item 4C., fourth sentence, change 'Danes' to 'Dane'.

It was moved by member **Greene** seconded by member **Luxford**, to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2022 meeting as amended.

Motion carried, 6:0.

B. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on July 20, 2022

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

It was moved by member **Greene** seconded by member **Luxford**, to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 6:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

Chris Frye introduced himself as a new commission member. He has lived in the City of White Bear Lake for three years, and is originally from Oregon. He is interested in becoming more involved in the community and feels that his background in public service will be a good fit for his role on the commission.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Environmental Resources Expo Recap

Chair Schroeher gave a summary of the Environmental Resources Expo for the new members. The commission members recapped the 2022 event and the exhibitors were happy about the way things went. There were many visitors to the Expo. Ramsey County Recycling Ambassadors had a line of people who wanted to play their spin the wheel game. Chair Schroeher stated that both Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District and Ramsey County Recycling Ambassadors expressed interest in exhibiting at the 2023 Expo.

There were a couple of issues noted by the commission members. Member Greene mentioned that none of the EV owners showed up, so next year he plans to connect with each EV owner individually, instead of just one representative. Member Greenleaf noted that one of the exhibitors did not have a chair, and that next year we should bring a couple of extra chairs in case someone forgets or doesn't have their own.

Chair Schroeher asked Taillon and the other members to send thank you notes to the exhibitors. Member Johnston suggested that the commission start planning for the Expo earlier next year.

Member Greenleaf stated that she will bring tokens to give to the new members. These tokens are handed out to people that the commission members see doing something positive for the environment. She mentioned to the commission members to tell her when they hand out a token so she can keep track.

Member Johnston discussed the results of the survey that was conducted during the Expo. There were 33 surveys filled out by White Bear Lake residents, 13 by non-residents. An additional seven were filled out, but not as intended. All of the survey numerical rankings were entered into an Excel table. Member Johnston was hoping for more discussion or written feedback, but understood that people may not want to take the extra time during Marketfest to provide written comments. He didn't see any one topic that really jumped out at him. Member Greenleaf stated that she didn't want to turn non-residents away, so the White Bear Lake resident results were summarized separately than the non-resident results. Taillon noted that she heard a few people having trouble ranking the topics because many of them were equally important. Member Greenleaf added that some people didn't know what buckthorn is, so they

ranked it lower. If there is another survey next year, maybe buckthorn should be changed to the more general 'invasive species' instead.

Results of the WBL Resident survey (33 total), where 1 is most important and 6 is least important:

Topic	Average Rank	Number of 1s	Number of 2s	Number of 3s	Number of 4s	Number of 5s	Number of 6s
Plastic Use Reduction	2.8	7	9	7	5	4	1
Energy Eff./Alt.	3.2	9	3	6	6	6	3
Water Conservation	3.2	6	4	8	10	4	1
Pollinators	3.4	7	5	6	5	4	6
Waste Mgmt.	3.5	4	7	4	7	7	4
Buckthorn/Trees	4.9	1	4	2	0	8	18

WBL Residents expressed a slightly greater importance to plastics use reduction with buckthorn removal/increased tree plantings with the least importance. The other four were grouped in the middle.

Results of the non-resident survey (13 total), where 1 is most important and 6 is least important:

Topic	Average Rank	Number of 1s	Number of 2s	Number of 3s	Number of 4s	Number of 5s	Number of 6s
Water Conservation	2.1	6	3	2	1	1	0
Pollinators	2.9	2	4	3	1	3	0
Plastic Use Reduction	3.3	3	1	2	4	2	1
Energy Eff./Alt.	3.6	1	2	4	3	0	3
Waste Mgmt.	4.2	0	3	2	1	4	3
Buckthorn/Trees	4.9	1	0	0	3	3	6

The 13 non-resident surveys were received from eight communities; Woodbury, Hugo, Grant, Minneapolis, Lino Lakes, Oakdale, White Bear Township and Vadnais Heights. The top four topics were the same in both groups, but order differently.

Written Comments were received from only two respondents as follows:

Commenter 1:

Keeping pond habitats healthy!

Commenter 2:

1. Listed in the order to reduce our reliance on carbon emitting pollutants. (this appears to refer to ranking on front of the survey, which was as follows: 1. Energy Efficiency; 2. Increased Tree Planting; 3. Waste Management/Recycling; 4. Water Conservation; 5. Plastic Use Reduction; 6. Pollinator-friendly Activities.)
2. Trees --- If there can be increased plantings in larger areas beyond the small-scale decorative trees, that is ideal.
3. Waste management & reduction. Pick-ups for recycling in public – increase if needed.
4. Continue water conservation discussion, visibility & implementation.
5. Always reduce plastic – BAGS for one!
6. Pollinator things. The county and state do this a lot so use city resources for 1, 2, 3.

Member Greenleaf suggested adding the results of this survey to the Council presentation.

B. Draft Work Plan

Chair Schroeder provided a background on the draft work plan for the new commission members. The work plan includes a list of possible priority projects to work on in the coming year. Each commission member chose their top three priorities from the list. To further refine the priorities, each commission member chose at least two of the priorities and answered the following questions:

- Why is this worthy of our effort?
- What would we like to see as an outcome?
- What steps could we take to reach the outcome?

Taillon will send the spreadsheet and Google document link to member Luxford and member Frye for them rank each priority in the list and help fill in answers to the questions within the Google document.

Chair Schroeder mentioned the high contamination levels in the curbside recycling in 2021. Taillon stated that the contamination levels in the curbside recycling went down this year, from 13.03% in 2021 to 12.04% in 2022; however, this is still higher than 2020, at 9.56%. Member Frye mentioned that it would be interesting to see what other community's reports show for contamination levels. Taillon noted that the City's recycling processor, Eureka Recycling, mentioned that the contamination percentages increased for many communities during the pandemic.

Member Frye stated that there is no sticker on his recycling container to show what can and can't be included in the recycling. Taillon said that she will see what she can do about getting stickers on the recycling carts.

C. Draft presentation to Council

For the sake of time, the commission members decided to postpone discussion of the

draft presentation until the September meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Fall newsletter ideas

Taillon stated that the fall newsletter articles are due by the end of August. She asked the commission members for ideas on newsletter article topics. The commission members brainstormed ideas and would like to see articles that focus on recycling contamination, the City's fall cleanup day, and smart salting.

Members discussed Trash to Treasure Day the weekend before the spring cleanup and wondered if a second event could be added the weekend before the fall cleanup. Taillon stated that the City partners with White Bear Township so she will need ask them about the idea.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

Taillon noted that the City Council is considering a joint work session with the City's commissions, which is tentatively scheduled for February. Each commission would have a half hour to meet with City Council at an evening work session and talk about current and upcoming projects. Taillon will let the commission members know when a date has been set. Chair Schroeher asked if he should present at the joint work session instead of at a regularly scheduled Council meeting this fall. Taillon will ask the City Manager and get back to him.

B. Commission member updates

Chair Schroeher stated that he joined Nick from VLAWMO at Lakeaires Elementary School for a filming of an Adopt-a-Drain educational video.

Chair Schroeher noted that he and Taillon met a group from Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District to give them a tour of the City's prairie restoration on Buerkle Road.

Chair Schroeher mentioned that the Ramsey County curbside organics program will be implemented in 2023.

C. Do-outs

New do-out items for August 20, 2022 include:

- All to send thank you notes to Expo exhibitors
- Member Greenleaf to bring token to members Frye and Luxford
- Taillon to email the Work Plan goals spreadsheet and Google Docs work plan worksheet link to members Frye and Luxford
- Taillon to look into recycling cart stickers
- Taillon to include recycling contamination, City's fall cleanup day, and smart salting articles in the fall newsletter.

- Taillon to ask about starting a fall Trash to Treasure day
- Taillon to ask the City Manager about separate presentation vs workshop presentation

D. September agenda

The commission members asked Taillon to include the draft work plan and presentation to Council on the September agenda.

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 8:35 p.m.

Motion carried, 6:0