



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023
6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rick Johnston

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 **Luxford** 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 January 18, 2023.

The commission members reviewed the draft January 18, 2023 meeting minutes and had the following change: replace 'all of the meeting' with 'most of the meeting' in the first sentence of paragraph two in agenda item 5A work session recap.

It was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Frye**, to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023 meeting as amended.

Motion carried, 6:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2023 work plan

The commission members reviewed the top 4 priority projects on the 2023 work plan which includes reduce recycling contamination education, pollinator plantings, solar on buildings, and buckthorn removal. Chair Schroeher asked how the commission members

would like to proceed with the top 4 priorities. Member Greenleaf would like to work on all of the priorities at the same time.

Member Bolstad asked what the commission can do about solar on buildings. Taillon replied that solar on City buildings will be considered by staff and Council when a roof is due to be replaced or when a new building is built. The commission can work to educate the public on the benefits of solar, and provide resources to residents and businesses such as hosting Solar Power Hours. Chair Schroeher stated that he would like to host Solar Power Hours and invite a solar company to exhibit at the Environmental Resources Expo.

The commission members discussed how to move forward with pollinator planting and buckthorn removal projects. Chair Schroeher will email the Parks Commission Chair to schedule a joint meeting to discuss possible partnerships. Taillon will give the Parks Commission staff liaison a heads-up about the joint meeting and create an agenda. Member Luxford stated that if a buckthorn removal project is scheduled for this fall, the commission could consider asking for volunteers using a QR code at the Environmental Resources Expo. Member Frye stated that a plan should be created after receiving a commitment from Public Works. He asked if there is funding for sustainability work. Taillon responded that the stormwater fund and park fund have budgets for tree planting and native plant restoration work. There was consideration in the past about setting up a new budget that is funded by the savings from energy efficiency and solar projects.

For the recycling education priority, Member Greenleaf mentioned that previous leadership would offer recycling workshops, and if the commission should consider doing this again. The commission members also considered creating a recycling display at the Environmental Resources Expo. Commission members asked about contamination in curbside recycling. Taillon replied that the current residual (non-recycling) is 12.21% which is more than the 2022 percentage of 12.04% but lower than the 2021 residual of 13.03%. The residual percentage is determined by a composition study completed by Eureka Recycling each year in late fall. Member Frye mentioned that outreach should occur 2 to 3 months prior to the composition study.

The commission members discussed priorities mentioned in the joint workshop with the Mayor and City Council. Member Bolstad noted that their priority is water conservation. She asked that the goal and problem statement information in the Google Doc be added to the March packet.

Commission members discussed wanting to be part of project reviews, and asked to see a copy of the winning proposal for the downtown project. Taillon will work with staff to provide. Member Frye stated that potential projects should include an environmental review.

B. Environmental Resources Expo – July 27, 2023

For the sake of time, the commission members asked Taillon to include this item on the March agenda.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Spring newsletter articles

Taillon asked the commission members if there are specific topics for articles that they would like included in the spring newsletter. She listed environmental topics from past spring newsletters such as the spring cleanup day, yard waste, illicit discharge education, Mayors water challenge, food scraps drop off site, adopt a drain, and spotlight on sustainability. The commission members asked Taillon to include these topics in the 2023 spring newsletter and also include a ‘what can and can’t be recycled’ article with the slogan ‘when in doubt, throw it out’ to try reduce the amount of residual/trash in curbside recycling.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

- Northeast Metro Climate Action February program

Taillon noted that the Northeast Metro Climate Action February program speaker is Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, who will be talking about Ramsey County’s Climate Action Plan. The in-person and virtual meeting is scheduled for 6:30pm on Tuesday February 28th and is open to the public.

- RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshops

Taillon stated that Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) recently received a community resilience planning grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to understand how to reduce the risk of impacts due to changes in precipitation patterns. One part of this process is a series of workshops to identify community vulnerabilities and strengths, and actions to improve resilience. RCWD is collaborating with Freshwater to develop and host these workshops. Two workshops have been scheduled for February 28th and March 22nd at the Shoreview Community Center from 3 to 7pm. Taillon asked if one member of the commission would like to attend. Chair Schroeher stated that he will plan to attend the March 22nd workshop. Member Luxford will check to see if he can attend the February 28th workshop. Taillon will email the invite to all commission members.

- Rotary Park field trips

Taillon mentioned that Rotary Club and the City are partnering with Birch Lake Elementary School to host field trips at Rotary Nature Preserve for students on May 24th and 25th. Nick from VLAWMO will have a macroinvertebrate station where students can learn about the animals they observe in the wetland, and Taillon will have a native plant planting station where students will learn about and plant their own native plant in the park.

B. Commission member updates

Chair Schroeher reported that he attended the January 24, 2023 City Council meeting to

learn about 2023 legislative priorities. He noted that State Senator Heather Gustafson was in attendance. One of the topics discussed was the water use restrictions. Senator Gustafson mentioned that she and Karin Housley will work with legislators to determine what can be done about the water issue. Councilmember Jones mentioned the downtown renovation project tentatively scheduled in 2024 and 2025.

Chair Schroeher mentioned that he attended the League of Minnesota Voters Q & A session. He asked about a non-reusable bag ban, but it was not one of their priorities. He then asked about the Extended Producer Responsibility strategy but they were not aware of this.

Chair Schroeher noted that the Metro Environmental Commissions meeting is coming up in May and the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District Waterfest is scheduled for June 3rd at Lake Phalen Park.

C. Do-outs

New do-out items for February 15, 2023 include:

- Chair Schroeher to email the Parks Commission chair to set up a joint meeting.
- Include an article about what can and can't be recycled in the spring newsletter.
- Include information from the Google work plan document for the 2023 priority topics in the March agenda.
- Taillon to research downtown proposal.
- Taillon to email RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop invites to all members.
- Commission members to choose one or two members to attend the RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop after receiving the formal invite.

D. March agenda

Commission members discussed the March agenda items and asked Taillon to include the joint Parks Commission agenda, 2023 work plan and Environmental Resources Expo on the agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Greenleaf** to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Motion carried, 6:0