



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 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 6:45 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist

VISITORS PRESENT: None

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes. Taillon added item 7E: email from resident regarding volunteer opportunities.

It was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Greene**, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried 7:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on February 16, 2023.

The commission members reviewed the draft February 16, 2023 meeting minutes and had the following changes: remove Member Johnston from the 'members present' list; under 7B, commission member updates, second and fourth sentence, replace the word 'representative' with 'State Senator' and third sentence replace the word 'ban' with 'use restrictions'.

It was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Luxford**, to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2023 meeting as amended.

Motion carried, 6:0. Member Johnston abstained

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2023 work plan

The commission members will discuss the pollinator planting and invasive species removal work plan priorities in agenda item 6A and will postpone discussion of the other priority items until the April meeting.

B. Environmental Resources Expo

The commission members reviewed the expo exhibitor spreadsheet. Member Greene will reach out to dealers and individuals for the electric car display. Member Bolstad suggested having 3 different brands of cars on display. The commission members agreed to invite the autonomous bus again this year. There was discussion on how to draw more people to the electric lawn equipment display by creating a large banner with a portion of the commission's \$500 budget. Member Bolstad suggested spending the budget on the sign, and purchasing seed packets as giveaways. Member Greenleaf suggested a game or survey. Member Luxford suggested creating flip cards of recyclable and non-recyclable items with a 'yes' or a 'no' on the back. Chair Schroeher mentioned that the Parks Commission used a QR code to direct expo participants to the parks page on the City's website. He is wondering if the EAC could do something similar to direct people to the pollinator page. Member Bolstad suggested a volunteer buckthorn removal sign-up sheet. Taillon mentioned that she received an email from the League of Women Voters asking if they could table at the Expo because of their involvement with climate initiatives. She will update the Expo spreadsheet and include in the April agenda packet.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Joint Parks Commission workshop

Chair Schroeher reported that he emailed the Parks Commission to request a joint meeting at one of their regularly scheduled Parks Commission meetings sometime this spring. The discussion topic will focus on invasive species removal and creating pollinator habitat in City Parks. Taillon will email the EAC a draft agenda for the joint meeting.

The commission members discussed buckthorn removal and if the City could commit to invasive species removal as part of their normal duties. Member Greene mentioned that clearing buckthorn would be a good Eagle Scouts project. Member Greenleaf suggested making a buckthorn puller available for use by staff and residents.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

- Rotary Nature Preserve Vegetation Management Plan

Taillon stated that the City is entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with VLAWMO for the creation of a Wetland Vegetation Management Plan at Rotary Nature Preserve. VLAWMO offered to cover the cost for a consultant to create the plan which will identify wetland restoration implementation items, prioritization, and

budget. The City will partner with VLAWMO on the implementation of the plan as funding becomes available.

- EPA Climate Grant

Taillon mentioned that the Environmental Protection Agency announced the approval of 250 million in non-competitive planning grants for climate action planning, with 67 million of this being distributed to municipalities. Another 4.6 billion is slated for climate action implementation through a competitive grant process. Taillon stated that she is closely following any updates on this program.

- National Mayor's Water Challenge

Taillon noted that the National Mayor's Water Challenge is coming up in April and encouraged the commission members to take the pledge.

B. Commission member updates

- NE Metro Climate Action Meeting

Chair Schroeher reported that he attended the NE Metro Climate Action Meeting. Ramsey County Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo spoke about the county's climate action planning which will be completed this summer. She highlighted some of the county initiatives that are in the plan: planting pollinator plants in the Pierce Butler Right of Way, resiliency in county parks such as solar lights, purchasing an anaerobic digester to convert food waste into energy, community resource hub for recycling, household hazardous waste, fix it clinics, etc., and curbside composting in 2024.

Chair Schroeher also reported that the webinar he attended held by the League of Women voters identified that the Minnesota legislature's priorities are a climate impact analysis, supporting communities impacted by pollution such as along I94 where asthma attack rates are higher, and reducing/eliminating PFA's. Other initiatives include the Right to Repair, and a bottle deposit bill. Member Greene noted that the MN Department of Health is in the process of revising its drinking water guidance for PFOA and PFOS (commonly described as "forever chemicals").

- RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop

Member Luxford reported on the RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop that he and Taillon attended on February 28th. The workshop focused on identifying vulnerabilities and strengths for various climate related impacts within Rice Creek Watershed District. The vulnerabilities and strengths were organized into three categories: infrastructure, environmental, and societal. The next workshop will be held on March 19, 2023 and will focus on brainstorming solutions to the vulnerabilities identified in the February workshop. Chair Schroeher stated that he may not be able to attend the March workshop. Member Luxford volunteered to attend in Chair Schroeher's absence.

Member Frye mentioned that his blue curbside recycling container does not have recycling labels. Member Luxford suggested that the labels be put inside the lid to keep them from fading. Member Frye also noted that the new trash hauler contract splits the fees and added more cost to recycling.

C. Do-outs

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

- Members to create a large sign for electric lawn equipment display
- Taillon to purchase seeds to give away at the Environmental Resources Expo
- Taillon to email revised Expo spreadsheet to members
- Taillon to create draft agenda/talking points for joint meeting with the Parks Commission and email to members for review

D. April agenda

Commission members discussed the April agenda items and asked Taillon to include the 2023 work plan and Environmental Resources Expo on the agenda.

E. Volunteer request

Taillon noted that a resident reached out to her and Member Bolstad about an interest in helping to support the work of the Environmental Advisory Commission as a volunteer. She is mainly interested in helping with waste reduction, freshwater, and environmental justice initiatives. Taillon will respond back and invite her to a future EAC meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried, 7:0