



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 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 6:42 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Frye, 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. Taillon added item 7C: SWPPP Public Hearing – April 25, 2023.

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

Motion carried 5:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on March 15, 2023.

The commission members reviewed the draft March 15, 2023 meeting minutes and had the following changes:

Item 5B, last two sentences change to “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.”

Item 6A, second to last sentence: add the word “habitat” after “The discussion topic will focus on invasive species removal and creating pollinator...”

Item 7B, second paragraph: change to “Chair Schroeher also reported that the webinar he attended held by the League of Women voters identified that the Minnesota legislatures 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”). “

Item 7B, RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop, first and last sentence: change “Frye” to “Luxford”

It was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Luxford**, to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2023 meeting as amended.

Motion carried, 5:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2023 work plan

The commission members reviewed the parks maps for the upcoming joint meeting with the Parks Commission and discussed restoration and invasive species removal opportunities.

- Ebba Park: This park is not used often and certain areas may be appropriate for restoration.
- Heiner’s Pond: This may be a great area to remove mowed grass and plant a prairie.
- Bossard Park: The steep slope and lower southeast corner are potential locations for restoration.
- Hidden Hollow: This park is not level so it might be a good candidate for restoration.
- Lakewood Hills: There is Buckthorn around Handlo’s Pond and on the YMCA property. The park is also a good candidate for a woodland restoration.

Commission members discussed ways to prioritize ideas for these parks such as reduced mowing, public enjoyment, pollinator habitat, etc.

Member Greene noted that the City should get buy in from the residents around each park prior to implementing a project, and receive feedback on the restoration project and location and how the park is currently used.

Chair Schroeder asked if it would be possible to coordinate a community event for buckthorn/invasive species removal. Member Luxford suggested providing an opportunity to sign up to volunteer at the Environmental Expo. Member Greenleaf suggested to also approach churches for volunteers. Chair Schroeder stated that the scouts may also be interested in volunteering.

Chair Schroeder shared that the Decorah Community Prairie in Decorah Iowa is a great example of a restoration project on City property that includes unpaved trails for recreation.

B. Environmental Resources Expo

The commission members reviewed the Expo list and discussed exhibitor invitations. Member Bolstad stated that she will forward invite language for each member to use as a template and to start inviting exhibitors this month. Taillon stated that the League of Women Voters contacted her to inquire about exhibiting at the Environmental Expo. Member Bolstad stated that if the commission is agreeable to inviting them, that they focus on climate work and not election forms and voting information. Chair Schroeher and Member Greenleaf also noted that they will need to provide an interactive display. The members all agreed to extend an invitation to the League of Women voters. Member Greene asked if it would be appropriate to invite dealers to exhibit electric cars. Chair Schroeher is okay with this if the dealers can provide information on the environmental benefits and if they refrain from sales.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Valley Branch Watershed District questionnaire

Taillon mentioned that the Valley Branch Watershed District (VBWD) Board of Managers is in the early stages of updating its Watershed Management Plan. As part of the Plan development, the Managers are initially seeking input regarding water and natural resource concerns and priorities within the district's boundaries through an online survey. Responses to this survey will guide the early stages of Plan development. Feedback is requested from city staff, city council, environmental commissions, and other relevant city representatives. Taillon invited the Environmental Advisory Commission members to take the survey. In response to Member Greenleaf's question about how much of the City is within the VBWD, Taillon stated that only a small portion of the City in the southeast corner is within the VBWD boundary. Member Greenleaf suggested that since only a small portion of the City is within VBWD, the environmental advisory commission would choose not to complete the survey. Commission members agreed, and requested that staff take the survey instead.

B. Downtown Mobility and Parking Study steering committee representative

Taillon stated that the Mayor is requesting that a member the Environmental Advisory Commission be selected to serve on a Steering Committee for the Downtown Mobility and Parking Study. Committee members will provide input, review concepts, and help shape the future of the City's downtown area. The committee will remain active from May 2023 to January 2024, and will convene monthly in the evenings. The members discussed who should represent the commission and chose Member Bolstad, with Chair Schroeher as the alternate.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

- SWPPP Public Hearing April 25th

Taillon noted that she will be presenting on the City's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program 2022 activities at the City Council meeting on April 25th. All are welcome to attend.

B. Commission member updates

- MN Environment Commissions Conference

Chair Schroeher announced that the Minnesota Environment Commissions Conference is on May 20, 2023 in Minnetonka, and he encouraged the members to attend.

- RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop

Member Luxford provided a summary of the RCWD Climate Resiliency Workshop held on March 22, 2023.

- Emphasis on communication and building on what is already being done. Suggest shifting messaging to focus on the end result/outcome/goal instead of trying to dictate behavior changes and steer individuals' actions.
- Build community groups for cohesiveness and enhanced productivity (both knowledge transfer and to share physical implements, e.g. tool library).
- Emphasize regional support and collaboration: don't need every local group to solve every problem; work cooperatively.
- Consider utilizing invasives for revenue stream (e.g. harvest and sell carp); perhaps monies can be earmarked for specific conservation purposes

Chair Schroeher mentioned that the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Waterfest event is scheduled for June 3rd on Lake Phalen. He also mentioned that he watched the Down to Earth series on Netflix that included topics such as solar and green walls in London.

C. Do-outs

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

- Members to attend joint meeting with the Parks Commission on April 20th
- Member Bolstad to email Expo invite language to all members.
- Members to start inviting exhibitors to the Expo
- Staff to complete VBWD survey
- Members to attend the MN Environmental Commissions Conference on May 20th

D. May agenda

Commission members discussed the May agenda items and asked Taillon to include the Environmental Resources Expo and Parks Commission joint meeting update on the agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Greene** to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Motion carried, 5:0