



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023
6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Vice Chair Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gary Schroeder (Chair), Chris Greene

STAFF PRESENT: Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist

VISITORS PRESENT: Katie Piel, resident

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had the following changes: add Katie Piel to item 4. Visitors and Presentations, and add polo shirts to item 6. New Business.

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

Motion carried 5:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on May 17, 2023.

The commission members reviewed the draft May 17, 2023 meeting minutes and had no changes.

It was moved by member **Luxford** seconded by member **Greenleaf**, to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2023 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 4:0. Vice Chair Johnston abstained.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Katie Piel introduced herself as a White Bear Lake resident with a background in environmental studies. She expressed interest in supporting climate initiatives of the Environmental Advisory Commission. The commission members introduced themselves. They invited her to attend future meetings, and will contact her with any volunteer opportunities.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2023 work plan

Member Bolstad reported that she visited Matoska and Lions Park with Parks Commission Member Shepard to brainstorm areas to add pollinator plantings. She asked Taillon how to best report on her findings. Taillon stated that she envisions a report that includes photos, a description of what was seen during the visit, and a map that shows recommended areas of invasive species removal and possible restoration sites. Taillon will email the aerial photos of the parks maps which can be used to circle areas of invasive species and potential future restoration. Member Frye asked what fund the invasive species removal and restoration maintenance costs would draw from. He mentioned that it could be considered a parks budget if it becomes a staff task similar to lawn mowing. Taillon responded that we currently contract restoration maintenance because Parks staff does not have the time or plant identification expertise to maintain this projects. This service is currently budgeted in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention (SWPP) Fund. Vice Chair Johnston reported that he visited West Park. In addition to identifying pollinator planting areas, he is interested in a discussion of pairing recycling with trash containers in the parks. He asked Taillon if a City policy existing regarding recycling in public spaces. She is not aware of a public space recycling policy but will review the policies and report back at a future meeting.

Member Bolstad noted that she has not yet received an invite for the downtown mobility study work group, and she is wondering if they have already met. Taillon stated that the consultant and City are currently working on traffic counts so she thinks the work group will meet sometime after the counts are completed. She will check with staff involved in the study and report back at the July meeting. Commission members recapped their priorities for the downtown project, which includes tree planting, pairing recycling with trash, EV charging stations, and stormwater management using tree trenches.

B. Environmental Resources Expo

The commission members reviewed the latest exhibitor list. Taillon reported that Wild Ones-Oak Savanna Chapter and MPCA 'get the lead out campaign' will be in attendance.

Member Greene reported via email that he is has one EV and working on an additional 3 EVs to display. He is currently taking signups from the boy scouts for setup and takedown.

Vice Chair Johnston stated that Chair Schroeher would like to have a sign-up sheet at the Expo for people who are interested in volunteering to remove buckthorn. Vice Chair Johnston will contact Chair Schroeher to have him create the sign-up sheet.

The commission members reviewed the electric lawn equipment banner that member Greene created and everyone approved of the design. Vice Chair Johnston will ask member Greene to find a print company and Taillon will place the order.

Commission members discussed ideas for games. Member Luxford suggested having a

bin of items and quiz participants on which items are recyclable. Vice Chair Johnston offered to create the game. Member Luxford also suggested creating a list of film recycling locations. Commission members agreed to have Taillon order native seed as a prize for playing the game. Member Greenleaf suggested ordering only flowering plant seed this year, because the grass seed was not as popular.

Member Greenleaf discussed the possibility of volunteering for a half shift at the Expo. There was a consensus that members could sign up for half of a shift.

The commission members agreed to meet in July to finalize the Expo. At the request of the members, the only order of business on the July agenda will be the Expo.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Polo shirts

Vice Chair Johnston stated that he would like the commission to consider ordering polo shirts with the City logo similar to the Parks Commission shirts, and if possible have them ready for the Expo on July 27th. The commission members like the idea and asked Taillon next steps. Taillon stated that the City orders shirts out of a catalog and has a local business embroider the logos. She will research what shirts the Parks Commission ordered and how they were funded. The shirts most likely will not be ready in time for the Expo.

7. DISCUSSION

A. No Mow May Alternatives

The commission members discussed website links from the U of M extension and AP News that Member Luxford shared about different takes on the No Mow May movement, including potential stress to lawns and increases in pesticide use. Member Greenleaf stated that she read the articles and that the No Mow May movement seems controversial. The commission members discussed promoting higher mower heights, bee lawns, and native plantings in lieu of No Mow May. Member Luxford likes the visibility of the City parks for pollinator plantings. Vice Chair Johnston suggested adding an article in the spring newsletter about No Mow May alternatives. Visitor Katie Piel mentioned that a new slogan could be 'Milkweed May'.

B. Staff reports

- Reappointments

Taillon stated that Chair Schroeder's and Member Greene's terms expired on June 30th and that both have been reappointed for another 3 year term.

C. Commission member updates

Vice Chair Johnston noted that the DNR NE Metro Groundwater Management discussion will be held at Boatworks Commons on Tuesday from 9:30am to noon. The agenda and groundwater management plan are found on the DNR website at: dnr.state.mn.us/gwmp/area-NE.html.

D. Do-outs

New do-out items for June 21, 2023 include:

Environmental Resources Expo

- Chair Schroeder to create sign-up sheet for buckthorn removal volunteers
- Vice Chair Johnston to create recycling game
- Member Greene to continue recruiting EVs
- Taillon to purchase native seeds
- Taillon to print electric lawn equipment sign
- Taillon to create exhibitor map and email to Marketfest coordinator for review
- Taillon to email detailed exhibitor instructions to EAC
- Taillon to research polo shirts

Other

- Members to create a report that includes photos, a description of the park, and areas that may be good candidates for invasive species removal and/or restoration. Circle these locations on the parks maps that Taillon will provide.
- Taillon to email park maps to each commission member
- Taillon to research if the City has a policy regarding recycling in public spaces
- Taillon to report on the status of the DT mobility study subcommittee
- Taillon to research polo shirts

E. July agenda

Commission members discussed the July agenda and asked Taillon to only include the Environmental Resources Expo on the agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Frye** to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Motion carried, 5:0