



**MINUTES  
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 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 6:41 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sheryl Bolstad, Chris Frye, Chris Greene, Bonnie Greenleaf, Rick Johnston (Vice Chair), 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.

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

Motion carried 7:0.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

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

The commission members reviewed the draft August 16, 2023 meeting minutes and had the following change: Item 5B, add “a native plant demonstration garden” at the end of the third paragraph.

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

Motion carried, 7:0.

**4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS**

None

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. 2023 work plan – park visit reports

The commission members discussed how to present the findings from the park visits at the next joint meeting with the Parks Advisory Commission. Chair Schroeher suggested bulleted text descriptions of the park visit findings, and member Luxford mentioned

including images with the text in addition to the aerial map. Taillon asked the commission members to submit the write-up to her and she will compile them and include the aerial maps with the identified areas circled on the maps. She asked that any photos be included in the word document.

Member Frye noted that the commission should brainstorm possible questions that Council may ask about this project. The commission members responded that there are additional benefits of converting little-used lawn areas to native prairie such as reduced staff time, fuel costs, and fertilizer and chemical use. They also mentioned that restored areas are considered another type of 'use' for a park. Rotary Nature Preserve user counts in 2023 show that the trails, which wind through the natural areas, are a popular use. On a recent tour of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary, Blaine staff stated that the wetland boardwalks and trails are an extremely popular amenity.

**B. Budget (EAC shirts)**

Commission members discussed purchasing polo shirts with the remaining budget, and narrowed down the colors to royal blue or clover green. The color and shirt sizes will be finalized at the October meeting. Member Greenleaf mentioned that the remaining 2023 budget or a portion of the 2024 budget could also be used to purchase buckthorn removal tools for residents.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Board and Commissions Recognition Banquet presentation**

The commission members reviewed the 2022 banquet presentation and had the following changes:

Slide 2: Update terms.

Slide 3: Add 2023 statistics to the adopt-a-drain program. Taillon stated that the 2023 totals are not yet available but will add the 2022 results.

Slide 4: Remove slide.

Slide 5 and 6: Add 2023 Expo exhibitors and new photos.

Slide 7: Remove food scraps audit numbers.

Slide 8: Change to downtown parking and mobility study steering committee and add other community involvement such as the code update committee, recycling ambassador program, and RWMWD Citizen Advisory Committee.

Slide 9: Update pollinator map numbers and add Lakewood Hills raingarden.

Slide 10: Keep this slide (zero waste events).

Plus, add a new slide for the joint Parks Commission meeting and maps.

The commission members asked Taillon to revise the presentation and include this item on the October agenda for review.

B. Joint work session presentation

For the sake of time, the commission members asked Taillon to add this item to the October agenda.

C. 2024 draft work plan

For the sake of time, the commission members asked Taillon to add this item to the October agenda.

**7. DISCUSSION**

A. Staff updates

- NE Metro Climate Action September Program

Taillon noted that climatologist and meteorologist Mark Seeley will present "How Our Changing Climate is Impacting our Extreme Weather" at the NE Metro Climate Action September Program via Zoom on Wednesday, September 27th, at 7 pm. Member Greenleaf will try to attend.

- Oak Knoll Pond spent lime pilot project

Taillon stated that the spent lime project is on hold due to repairs at the Water Treatment Plant. The plant is scheduled up and running by the end of September if all goes well.

- Urban and Community Forestry Grants

Taillon stated that the City recently applied for two grants with the DNR to remove and replace boulevard ash trees. She will provide an update when the City hears back from the DNR. Member Greenleaf asked if the City has a recommended tree list. Taillon stated that the City does have a list, but it may need revising. Gary noted that Wild Ones has information on trees that are beneficial to wildlife. He will forward a link.

- Volunteer list

Taillon mentioned that she started a buckthorn removal volunteer list, which includes the Stillwater Natural Resources Technician and a two people that Taillon met at a VLAWMO event.

B. Commission member updates

- Downtown Mobility and Parking Study Steering Committee

Member Bolstad provided an update on the Downtown Mobility and Parking Study Steering Committee meeting held on August 23rd. There will be a total of 5 monthly meetings. Staff, consultants, citizens, and business owners were in attendance. The consultants showed a map of the project area, which is Banning Ave from 5th to 2nd street and one to two blocks west. A traffic data and parking study was completed. Maps were shown of the percentage of parking in different areas at various times of the day. She mentioned that EV charging stations and trees were discussed. There are plans for charging stations, but there is some resistance to the tree cover that the EAC

would like to see due to issues with underground utilities and tree maintenance. Member Bolstad pointed out the large trees near the hardware store, and the consultants stated that are aware of these trees. She brought up recycling containers at the meeting but there wasn't time to discuss this topic in detail. Once the study is completed, the consultants will report the results to City Council.

- County Road E & Bellaire Ave  
(Figure 2 from the Terracon June 30, 2022 report was displayed at the meeting as part of Member Johnston's summary)

Member Johnston reported that he had reviewed reports provided by MPCA that were prepared by Terracon describing work they had conducted over the past few years for the MPCA at the subject intersection. This work was initially conducted to evaluate the presence of carbon tetrachloride (CCl<sub>4</sub>) on and around the former Speedway/Super America (S/SA) property on the northwest corner of E. and Bellaire (2491 Co. Rd. E). The presence of the CCl<sub>4</sub> was identified during the previous investigation of the petroleum release on the site. The MPCA had concluded previously (2007) that the source of the CCl<sub>4</sub> was not from the S/SA site. The recent Terracon reports indicated that the CCl<sub>4</sub> was limited to the S/SA property, and therefore not from an off-site source.

The MPCA petroleum leaksite file on the S/SA site (as well as the petroleum leaksite files for the former gas stations on the other three corners of the subject intersection) were previously closed by MPCA. Closure does not necessarily mean the sites are clean, only that they do not pose a risk to human health or the environment from the petroleum releases under the site uses at the time of file closure. The petroleum file closure determination does not apply to non-petroleum contamination (such as the CCl<sub>4</sub>) or if the site usage subsequently changes (say industrial/commercial usage to residential usage). In a letter from MPCA to S/SA, dated February 9, 2007, MPCA stated the following:

*"Due to the high concentrations of volatile organic compounds in soil vapor at the Site, plans to occupy the existing building or to redevelop the Site should be accompanied by a vapor intrusion evaluation and/or installation of an appropriate vapor mitigation system."*

The volatile organic compounds referenced in the italicized text above is the CCl<sub>4</sub>. Member Johnston was unaware if such an evaluation or installation had been subsequently conducted or reported to MPCA, or whether the more recent Terracon work would change MPCA's 2007 requirement for such work.

The Terracon work did identify the presence of tetrachloroethylene (also known as perchloroethylene or PCE) in soil vapor on the southeast and southwest corners of the intersection. This includes on the former Pfeffer's Cleaners site on the SW corner

(2490 Co. Rd. E), on the commercial property at 3577 Bellaire just to the south of Pfeffer's Cleaners, and on the right-of-way on Bellaire Avenue adjacent to former Amoco/PetroWash (A/PW) gas station on the SE corner (2502 Co. Rd. E). Based on that work, Terracon reported that:

*"Completion of VI mitigation activities is required at the 2490 Country Road E East and 3577 Bellaire Avenue buildings based on the reported detection of PCE in select sub-slab soil-gas samples at concentrations greater than 33 times its MPCA commercial/industrial ISV." (RJ note: VI = vapor intrusion)*

And recommended that:

*"VI mitigation activities should be verified as having been completed at the 2490 County Road E East commercial property and 3577 Bellaire commercial property."*

Member Johnston was unaware of whether that recommendation was followed up on by MPCA.

Terracon work at the residential properties adjacent to the A/PW site (3578 Glen Oaks Avenue) and just southwest of the commercial property at 3577 Bellaire, south of Pfeffer's Cleaners (2465 Jensen Avenue), did not identify PCE or other VOCs in excess of 33 times their respective residential soil vapor criteria. No additional investigation or mitigation was recommended by Terracon for those residential properties.

A soil vapor sample collected on the Bellaire Avenue ROW adjacent to the A/PW site exceeded 33 times the residential soil vapor criteria, but not 33 times the industrial soil vapor criteria. Because the most recent A/PW site use was industrial, it is likely the reason that no further investigation or mitigation was recommended by Terracon. Terracon did not conduct any work on the A/PW site, so the PCE soil vapor concentrations between the ROW and the residential property at 3578 Glen Oaks Avenue to the east of the A/PW property are unknown. This would not appear to affect commercial redevelopment of the A/PW property, but should be evaluated if the A/PW site is redeveloped as residential property. Mitigation of these contaminants for structures would be similar to that for radon gas.

#### C. Do-outs

New do-out items for August 16, 2023 include:

- Members to email park visit notes in a word document to Taillon. Any photos should be saved within the document.
- Taillon to attach park visit word documents to each park map.
- Members to choose the size and color shirt by the October meeting.
- Taillon to revise Board and Commissions Recognition Banquet presentation slides for review at the October meeting.

- Taillon to highlight environmental related items from the zoning code for a future discussion.

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Bolstad** to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Motion carried, 7:0