



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 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 6:37 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Frye, Chris Greene

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

Motion carried, 4:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on September 20, 2023. The commission members reviewed the draft September 20, 2023 meeting minutes and had the following changes: Item 5A, 2023 work plan – park visit reports, second paragraph, delete the sentence “For example, how we will know when there are enough pollinator gardens.”; Item 7B, discussion, delete the 7th sentence “Preliminary results show that parking may not be an issue.”, 8th sentence delete the phrase “which is in line with the EAC priorities.” and add the sentence “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.” before this deletion.

It was moved by member **Johnston** seconded by member **Greenleaf**, to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting minutes as amended.

Motion carried, 4:0.

B. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on October 18, 2023. The commission members reviewed the draft October 18, 2023 meeting minutes and had the following change: Item 7B, Commission member updates, delete the sentence “A parking study concluded that there is no shortage of parking in the downtown area” and

replace with “The study indicated that parking is not a serious issue as long as people are willing to walk one or two blocks.”

It was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Johnston**, to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2023 meeting minutes as amended.

Motion carried, 4:0.

Member Luxford arrived at 6:53pm

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Tobias Davis, a new resident of White Bear Lake, was in attendance to learn more about the City. The commission members introduced themselves and welcomed him to the community.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Joint work session presentation

Taillon noted that the joint work session with the City commissions and City Council is scheduled for January 16, 2024. The Environmental Advisory Commission is scheduled from 6:00pm to 6:30pm. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of accomplishments for 2023 and to discuss 2024 priorities. Taillon stated that she will prepare a staff report to City Council highlighting 2023 accomplishments and what’s to come in 2024, which is due on January 10, 2024. The commission members brainstormed ideas for 2024 priority projects. Member Luxford mentioned that the commission should stay focused on specific topics when discussing 2024 priorities at the meeting. Ideas for 2024 projects include:

- Buckthorn removal events
- City electric vehicles
- EV charging stations
- Electrify lawn equipment policy, similar to the zero waste policy
- Downtown tree planting/tree trenches
- Park Commission joint restoration project planning and implementation
- Water conservation

The commission members chose their top 4 priorities from the brainstorm list to discuss at the joint work session: 1) pollinator and buckthorn removal projects including possible demonstration gardens, 2) downtown tree planting/tree trenches, 3) water conservation, and 4) electrify city equipment. At the 2023 joint work session, the Mayor stated that water conservation is a priority. The commission members discussed types of projects that might reduce water use. In addition to rebates for water saving appliances and toilets, policy changes such as charging more for water, enforcing the watering ban, and revising the weed law to allow for lawn replacement with draught tolerant native plants could be considered. In addition to the commission’s 2024 priorities, they also want to ask the Mayor and City Council what initiatives they would like to see the Environmental Advisory Commission focus on in 2024.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Officer Election, Chair and Vice Chair – *Action item*

Member Bolstad nominated Chair Schroeher to remain as the chair and member Johnston to remain as vice chair for 2024. Both accepted the nominations.

It was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Greenleaf** to appoint chair Schroeher as chair and member Johnston as vice chair in 2024.

Motion carried, 5:0.

B. 2024 Draft Work Plan

Chair Schroeher requested that this agenda item discussion be postponed until the December meeting because two members are absent.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

Taillon reported that the polo shirts are in stock and ordered, and to bring treats to the December meeting.

B. Commission member updates

Chair Schroeher would like to invite Metro Blooms to a future Environmental Advisory Commission meeting as part of the demonstration garden discussion.

Vice-chair Johnston would like to have the option to meet virtually, but he said that the audio is a challenge. Taillon stated that she will look into having a microphone on the table.

Taillon noted that she will compile the park maps and site visit notes for the commission members to review at the December meeting. Member Bolstad requested that Taillon contact those that have not submitted their reports to do so before the December meeting.

Member Greenleaf thanked the commission members for being kind to her guest Tom at the Board and Commissions Recognition Banquet. She also mentioned that someone at the event wanted to talk with her about a raingarden that had been completed by the City. Taillon will follow up with him. Member Luxford was not able to attend the banquet, so Taillon will bring a gift blanket for him at the December meeting.

C. Do-outs

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

- Taillon to prepare a draft memo for the City Council workshop for review by the December Environmental Advisory Commission meeting.
- Taillon to prepare draft invasive species and restoration location maps for review at the December commission meeting.

- Taillon to bring a volunteer recognition blanket for member Luxford.
- Taillon to contact members who have not submitted their park visit reports.
- Members to bring treats to the December meeting.

D. December agenda

Commission members asked Taillon to add the joint work session presentation, draft 2024 work plan, and park maps to the December agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Johnston** seconded by member **Bolstad** to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Motion carried, 5:0