



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 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 6:51 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Frye, Sheryl Bolstad

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, 5:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on November 15, 2023. The commission members reviewed the draft November 15, 2023 meeting minutes and had no changes.

It was moved by member **Johnston** seconded by member **Greene**, to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried, 5:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Joint work session presentation, Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Chair Schroeher shared the notes that he created for the joint workshop. The notes include details on current initiatives such as public education, zero waste events, clean water and water conservation, clean air and battery powered lawn equipment, invasive species, and pollinator habitat. Taillon reported that she is drafting a memo to Council that will summarize 2023 commission projects and upcoming 2024 initiatives that were

identified at the November Environmental Advisory Commission meeting. She will complete the memo and send to all commission members for review prior to January 8th. Chair Schroeher will organize his talking points to match the memo.

B. Park maps

Taillon presented the draft parks maps for the commission members to review. Each map highlights all potential project areas that were identified at the park site visits this past summer. Taillon asked each commission member to review their respective park maps to see if the project locations have been corrected identified. Member Greenleaf asked Taillon to move prairie restoration site SP-PR2 at Stellmacher Park to the east and away from the outfield of the baseball diamond.

In response to Member Luxford's question, Taillon noted that the woodland restoration sites and the invasive species removal sites are the same on the maps. For the current draft, it is assumed that buckthorn removal in wooded areas will be the primary invasive species removal completed at the parks and that restoration will follow buckthorn removal

Member Greene stated that the number of restoration sites seem overwhelming. He suggested brainstorming ideas on how to break up the projects. Commission members discussed various ways to accomplish this, such as completing projects at one park at a time, and possibly prioritizing the parks that have had the fewest upgrades to ensure resources are used in an equitable way; focusing on one specific type of restoration such as raingardens; or prioritizing by the cost of each project.

For buckthorn removal, Chair Schroeher noted that buckthorn removal is not a large cost and that Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District is willing to lend out their buckthorn removal tools. He also mentioned that Metro Blooms provided plants for a demo native plant garden at Battle Creek. He suggests that the commission meet with the Parks Department to get their thoughts on adding demonstration gardens in some of the City parks.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. June 2024 EAC meeting date

Taillon stated that the June EAC meeting falls on the new Juneteenth holiday in 2024. She requested that the commission come up with an alternative date for this meeting. The consensus among the members was to move the June 19, 2024 meeting to June 12, 2024, a week prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.

B. 2024 Draft Work Plan

For the sake of time, Chair Schroeher asked to postpone this item until the January meeting.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Parking lot deicing

Member Johnston showed the commission members a recent photo that he took of a parking lot on County Road E that had large amounts of excess deicing salt. He asked if the City sends letters to commercial properties about the importance of optimizing salt control. Taillon is not aware of any such correspondence. Member Johnston mentioned that Ground FX works with HB Fuller Company to manage salt use on their parking lots. Chair Schroeher noted that Ramsey-Metro Watershed District recently gave Ground FX an award for their smart salting efforts. Member Johnston wondered if the City could cooperatively send smart salting information to these businesses.

B. Staff updates

None

C. Commission member updates

Member Greenleaf mentioned that she talked with a resident at the volunteer banquet who reported a City raingarden that is not being maintained. She asked Taillon if she had spoken to him yet. Taillon stated that she talked with him at the event. She noted that all City owned raingardens are maintained by Natural Shore Technologies so the raingarden in question might be on private property. She will find his contact information and follow up.

Commission members discussed expanding the zero waste policy to other community events such as Marketfest. Taillon stated that this would require extensive coordination with Marketfest and its food vendors, so it is unlikely a food waste recycling program could be launched in 2024. Details such as the addition of food waste carts and pickup would need to be determined. Volunteers would need to be at each waste station to educate Marketfest attendees on what items go in the food waste containers. Commission members asked Taillon to determine if the City issues a permit for Marketfest and also the farmers market.

Regarding pollinator plantings and native habitat, Chair Schroeher mentioned that the University of Minnesota encourages the planting of more Oak trees and for farmers to plant buffer strips of native plant habitat.

D. Do-outs

New do-out items for December 20, 2023 include:

- Taillon to finalize the memo to City Council for the joint workshop and to email the memo to all commission members prior to January 8th.
- Chair Schroeher to re-order his talking points to match Taillon's joint workshop memo.
- Taillon to revise prairie restoration site SP-PR2 on the Stellmacher Park restoration map to remove the area from the outfield of the baseball diamond.

E. January agenda

Commission members asked Taillon to add a discussion of the joint work session and the 2024 work plan to the January agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Greene** seconded by member **Johnston** to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Motion carried, 5:0