



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024
6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Chair Schroeher called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Frye, Bonnie Greenleaf, Rick Johnston (Vice Chair)

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 6B. Spring newsletter articles.

It was moved by member **Bolstad** seconded by member **Luxford**, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried, 4:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on January 17, 2024.

The commission members reviewed the draft January 17, 2024 meeting minutes and had no changes.

It was moved by member **Greene** seconded by member **Bolstad**, to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried, 4:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Park Advisory Commission meeting recap

Chair Schroeher and commission members Luxford, Greene, and Greenleaf attended the Park Advisory Commission meeting in February to review maps of the restoration area locations that were identified during park visits last summer. The group was mostly in agreement with the identified projects areas, with only a few changes made. Member Luxford was pleased with the how receptive the Park Advisory Commission is for this

project, given that likely no additional park space will be created within the City. Member Greene noted that the meeting was valuable because the Park Advisory Commission has knowledge of the parks and how they are used. Member Bolstad asked about next steps. Taillon stated that she will be updating the restoration area maps based on feedback from the joint meeting and will send out the revised maps to all commission members after they have been updated. Staff will then start drafting an implementation plan that will be brought to each commission for review.

Chair Schroeher mentioned that Paul from Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District is willing to meet at Lakewood Hills Park around the end of March to discuss buckthorn removal around Hanlo's Pond. Watershed District volunteers may also be able to help remove buckthorn. Gary will schedule a meeting with Paul and also contact the YMCA about buckthorn removal on their property.

B. 2024 Draft Work Plan

Chair Schroeher reported that he spoke with the Marketfest coordinator to gauge her interest in meeting to discuss zero waste at Marketfest. She said from 2006 to 2009 Marketfest promoted zero waste with Century College's help, but it faded away when the support from the college ended. She is interested in looking into Zero Waste again and accepted an invitation to meet with the commission during their March meeting to brainstorm ideas. Member Bolstad stated that the commission should have ideas for implementing zero waste prior to meeting with the Marketfest Coordinator. Member Luxford suggested preparing a list of ideas and possible action items prior to the meeting. Some topics to consider include compostable materials, food recycling bins, bin labels, hauler, volunteers, publicity, etc.

The commission reviewed the list of priorities in the 2024 work plan. For the electric City equipment priority, Member Luxford asked the commission's thoughts on sending a letter to the City's Public Works Department asking them to consider replacing gas equipment with electric equipment as gas powered equipment is retired. Taillon mentioned that she could pass along the letter to Public Works. Chair Schroeher offered to write the letter and site other municipalities that are electrifying their equipment.

When asked if the work plan should be approved, Chair Schroeher replied that it would be best to wait until next month when more commission members are in attendance.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2024 Environmental Resources Expo

The commission members reviewed the exhibitor spreadsheet from 2023 and discussed which organizations to invite this year. Member Bolstad stated that the number of organizations in 2023 was manageable and suggests not adding more in 2024. Member Luxford mentioned that it would be nice to have a few new vendors each year and to consider rotating vendors. Chair Schroeher suggested purchasing a game such as a spinning wheel or bean bag toss. He offered to research a few options for games that

the commission can purchase. Taillon asked the commission's thoughts on setting a deadline for sending invitations to exhibitors, and suggested the end of April. Having a final exhibitor list early would allow time to finalize an exhibitor map for review by the Marketfest coordinator. Taillon will contact the Marketfest coordinator to verify that the Expo is scheduled for the last night of Marketfest.

B. Spring newsletter articles

Taillon noted that spring newsletter articles are due on March 8th. She asked the commission if they have any specific topics in mind for the newsletter. Chair Schroeder asked to include a request for volunteers for a 'buckthorn busting' event this fall. Taillon mentioned that she is working with the County and Retold Recycling on a pilot program to collect textiles for recycling at the City's spring cleanup event. A short article about this pilot program will be included in the newsletter. If there is time to write a 'spotlight on sustainability article', Taillon asked the commission for ideas on an individual or organization to spotlight. The White Bear Press electric truck is one option. They may also have solar on the rooftop of their building that could be showcased.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

- VLAWMO Watershed Mgmt Plan public survey

Taillon mentioned that the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) is in the beginning stages of updating their 10-year Watershed Management Plan which will guide projects and programs from 2027 through 2036. VLAWMO is currently gathering feedback that will be incorporated into the next generation plan through numerous avenues including a public survey (both virtual and at hard copy stations), virtual coffee chats, and an initial in-person planning meeting. She encouraged the commission to consider taking the public survey or attending a meeting.

B. Commission member updates

Member Bolstad provided a summary of the fourth Downtown Mobility and Parking Study committee meeting. She stated that there were a few options discussed around limiting parking loss such as removing the large oak trees from the hardware store parking lot, making 3rd street a one way from Washington Square to Highway 61, and extending Clark Avenue to 3rd Street and making it 18 feet wide to keep some parking. The City may consider renovating the parking lots first, which may impact Marketfest. Trees were also discussed in the meeting. A public open house is scheduled for March 7th for participants to learn more about the project and provide feedback.

Commission members discussed what would be needed to add a Trash to Treasure day before the fall cleanup. Taillon stated that a volunteer runs the spring Trash to Treasure Day and she will contact the volunteer to ask her interest in coordinating a second Trash to Treasure Day.

D. Do-outs

New do-out items for February 28, 2024 include:

- Taillon to revise park maps and send to all EAC and PAC members
- Taillon to draft a restoration implementation plan
- Chair Schroeher to schedule an onsite meeting the end of March at Lakewood Hills with Paul at RWMWD.
- Chair Schroeher to contact YMCA about buckthorn removal.
- Commission members to draft a list of zero waste brainstorm ideas and action items prior to a meeting with the Marketfest coordinator.
- Chair Schroeher to draft a letter to the City's Public Works Department encouraging them to electrify their equipment and research other Cities that have electrified their equipment for inclusion in the letter.
- Chair Schroeher to research ideas for a game at the EAC Expo table.
- Taillon to contact Marketfest coordinator.
- Taillon to add a request for volunteers for the buckthorn removal event in the spring newsletter.

E. March agenda

Commission members asked Taillon to add the following to the March 20, 2024 agenda: 2024 Environmental Resources Expo, draft 2024 Work Plan, Marketfest zero waste.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Luxford** seconded by member **Bolstad** to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Motion carried, 4:0