



**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 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 6:34 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: Lisa Beecroft, Marketfest Event Coordinator

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes.

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

Motion carried, 7:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of the Environmental Advisory Commission meeting on February 28, 2024.

The commission members reviewed the draft February 28, 2024 meeting minutes and had the following changes: Item 5A, first sentence - remove the apostrophe in the word "member's"; Item 5B, remove the first sentence of second paragraph and replace with "The commission reviewed the list of priorities in the 2024 work plan"; Item 5B, second paragraph – add "as gas powered equipment is retired" to the end of the second sentence. Item 7B, second sentence – add "from the hardware store parking lot" after "large oak trees", remove the 2 from 612, and replace "Park" with "Clark". Item 7B, add a second paragraph that states "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."

It was moved by member **Luxford** seconded by member **Greene**, to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2024 meeting minutes as amended.

Motion carried, 7:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Chair Schroeher welcomed Marketfest event coordinator Lisa Beecroft and asked each commission member to introduce themselves. Lisa introduced herself and stated that she runs Beecroft Marketing in White Bear Lake and has been the Marketfest Event Coordinator off and on for 18 years. She noted that from 2007 to 2009 Marketfest promoted zero waste with the help of Century College students, but it faded away when support from the college ended. This was at a time when compostable products were difficult to find. She stated that she has limited resources, but is excited to partner to consider making Marketfest a zero waste event and is interested in discussing options. When asked how many participants attend Marketfest each week, she replied that there are 3,000 to 5,000 people that attend each week.

Lisa noted that the City's Parks Department delivers trash and recycling carts to Marketfest and coordinates with the hauler for pickup. The Parks Department also provides leaf blowers for Marketfest volunteers to use in removing trash off the streets. When asked if it is too late to implement zero waste this year, Lisa suggested researching what can be done this year and consider beta testing in 2025 when Marketfest is anticipating a shortened schedule due to the road renovation project. Lisa is open to attending a meeting with the Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) and the Parks Department to discuss collection details.

Lisa stated that there are approximately 200 vendors a night with roughly 25% or 40 to 50 food vendors. She hosts a vendor meeting 1 to 2 weeks prior to the start of Marketfest. She said that if the commission is interested in creating a zero waste best practices brochure, she could hand out brochure to the vendors at that time. She is open to inviting the EAC to the meeting if interested. There is also an opportunity to include the brochure in the vendor packet that she emails out after May 1st. Member Luxford asked if the vendors are consistent each year. Lisa replied that many have been there every year. Some come and go but they need to commit to all 7 weeks.

There was further discussion about how to phase in zero waste. One idea discussed is have the first year be voluntary participation with special recognition for those vendors that choose to be zero waste, and then future years be mandatory participation. If zero waste is required in the future, Lisa mentioned that the deadline to make changes to the Marketfest guidelines is February 1st. Taillon noted that it may be challenging to implement a voluntary zero waste program. When only a few vendors participate in the program, this could create confusion for participants and volunteers in determining which silverware, cups, and plates are compostable and which belong in the trash.

Member Bolstad mentioned that there should be a volunteer at each station to ensure that each bin is used properly. Lisa suggested that volunteers be paired, so there would be at least two per station, plus two 'floater' volunteers to take over for the paired volunteers who need breaks. Lisa mentioned that Century College provided student volunteers in the past, and that other volunteer options include boy scouts, history club, etc. Chair Schroeher

also suggested Ramsey County Recycling Ambassadors, as they need service hours and are trained in recycling. He mentioned that Ramsey County might also be willing to provide signage and containers.

Lisa asked if the City has a list of compostable product suppliers that she can share with the food vendors. Taillon responded that there is not currently a list, but staff can create one and share it with her. Lisa mentioned a couple of options for purchasing compostable products: compostable products could be purchased in bulk and provided to the vendors, or the vendors could purchase their own. When asked about trying zero waste at only one Marketfest night, Lisa replied that products are purchased ahead of time so do all Marketfest events in a season, not just one.

Lisa suggested as a first step to survey the food vendors and ask if they have been at a zero waste event, and if so, what they liked and disliked. Member Luxford would like an idea of how much waste is generated to show that this program will be effective. Lisa offered to provide a vendor space for the Environmental Advisory Commission to observe how much waste is generated, to promote Marketfest as a zero waste event, and provide community engagement and education.

Taillon noted that she worked with Ramsey County in 2015 to add organics recycling stations at Marketfest. She showed a location map of the trash and recycling containers and where the organics containers were placed. There were a total of 22 trash and recycling stations, with organics recycling containers at 8 of the busiest stations. The County ultimately decided to postpone marketing organics recycling because of high contamination rates and lack of a formalized County program. Taillon stated that the County now has a food scraps program and offers drop off food scraps recycling dumpsters and are beginning to phase in curbside food scraps recycling in both Ramsey and Washington Counties. The drop off and curbside programs are being marketed for food scraps only, at least for now, to simplify the program and help keep contamination low. Taillon suggested following the County's strategy by focusing on food scrap collection only at Marketfest for at least the first year, and to strategically place food scrap containers at a select few trash stations to make the program more manageable. With this transitional period, the commission suggested changing the name to low waste instead of zero waste.

Lisa suggested creating a bullet point 'to do' list and prioritizing the tasks. Member Bolstad suggested creating a subcommittee for this project that she is willing to take part. Lisa volunteered to attend the subcommittee meetings when she can. She asked the commission members to email the survey when it's completed. Member Frye suggested researching other zero waste events to get ideas.

Member Greenleaf thanked Lisa Beecroft for attending the meeting and for her interest in discussing zero waste events. Lisa stated that she would like to see zero waste brought back to Marketfest and is happy to partner.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2024 Draft Work Plan

The commission members reviewed the 2024 draft work plan and priority goals and had no changes. Chair Schroeher stated that he contacted Metro Blooms about a demo garden and suggested exploring grant options.

It was moved by member **Greenleaf** seconded by member **Frye**, to approve the 2024 work plan.

Motion carried, 7:0.

B. 2024 Environmental Resources Expo

The commission members reviewed the exhibitor list and determined which exhibitors to invite in 2024. Taillon noted that two organizations recently reached out about exhibiting at the Expo. One is a private company that sells worm castings as a soil amendment and the other is Vadnais Heights Green Team. Member Luxford and member Frye were concerned about inviting private companies, since the commission is more focused on non-profits and education. Member Greenleaf is okay with inviting the private company. The consensus of the group was to invite the Vadnais Heights Green Team but not the private company. Chair Schroeher will contact Vadnais Heights Green Team and Taillon will contact the worm casting company.

Member Bolstad left the meeting at 8:08pm.

There was further discussion around whether to invite electric vehicles. As EVs become more popular, it may not be as necessary to have EVs on display, but the consensus was to invite electrical vehicles again this year through the local EV club.

Taillon asked if exhibitor invites can be emailed by April 30th at the latest. This gives her ample time to create an exhibitor location map and have it reviewed by the Marketfest coordinator prior to the event. She will email sample invite language to the commission members within the next week. Chair Schroeher asked that invites be emailed prior to the April commission meeting.

Member Luxford asked if the Environmental Advisory Commission table should be moved to a different location based on the Marketfest coordinators offer to provide a free space for a zero waste education table. Member Greene suggested that the EAC table remain in the same area during the Expo because we host the event.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. None

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

- Textile recycling at spring cleanup

Taillon noted that the City is partnering with Ramsey County and Retold Recycling to offer textile recycling at the spring cleanup event this year. All textiles must be clean and dry.

Member Greene said that National Geographic did a story this month on textile recycling.

B. Commission member updates

Chair Schroeher mentioned that he is meeting with Taillon and Paul from RWMWD on April 10th at Lakewood Hills Park to walk around to get ideas about a buckthorn removal event this fall.

Member Greenleaf said that she signed up with Ridwell for a twice per month pickup. She puts items in the provided container that cannot be recycled in a curbside recycling program such as electronics, plastic bags, toothpaste tubes, denim and other textiles, etc. and the company finds markets for the products.

C. Do-outs

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

- Taillon to set up a meeting with Parks Department to discuss Marketfest trash and recycling logistics.
- Chair Schroeher to create a vendor survey and email to the commission members for review.
- Commission members to establish a subcommittee to create a zero waste 'to do' list and prioritize.
 - Zero waste best practices brochure
 - Certified compostable product supplier list
 - Research other zero waste events
 - Determine hauling cost and seek grant funding
- Taillon to email Expo exhibitor invite language.
- Commission members and Taillon to send invites to exhibitors before April meeting.

D. April agenda

Commission members asked Taillon to add the following to the April 17, 2024 agenda: Marketfest low/zero waste, 2024 Environmental Resources Expo, buckthorn removal site visit update.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Greene** seconded by member **Frye** to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Motion carried, 6:0