

City of White Bear Lake Environmental Advisory Commission

MINUTES

Date: December 20, 2017	Time: 6:30pm	Location: WBL City Hall
COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	Sheryl Bolstad, Gary Eddy, Chris Greene, Bonnie Greenleaf, Gary Schroeder (Chair), June Sinnett	
COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT	Eric Wagner	
STAFF PRESENT	Connie Taillon	
VISITORS	Samantha Crosby, Planning and Zoning Coordinator; Julie Drennen, Conservation Minnesota	
NOTETAKER	Connie Taillon	

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:37pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes. Commissioner Bolstad moved, seconded by Commissioner Sinnett, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried, vote 6/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) November 15, 2017 meeting

The commission members reviewed the November 15, 2017 draft minutes and had a question about the wording 'rent out' in the last sentence on page 1. Commissioner Greenleaf asked if VLAWMO rents out their stenciling kits for a fee or if the kits are loaned out free of charge. Staff will look on the VLAWMO website for correct wording. Commissioner Greenleaf moved, seconded by Commissioner Eddy, to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2017 meeting with the correction as appropriate. Motion carried, vote 6/0.

4. VISITORS & PRESENTATIONS

Samantha Crosby, Planning and Zoning Coordinator for the City of White Bear Lake, discussed the current Comprehensive Plan update and introduced the sustainability goals and objectives matrix. The matrix is divided into six sustainability topic areas: energy conservation, climate resiliency, water conservation, waste reduction, healthy living/food access, and natural resources. Staff created a list of goals and objectives under each topic that will ultimately appear in each chapter throughout the plan. Commission members were asked to provide feedback on the draft goals and objectives.

Commissioner Greene stated that there will be additions to Consumer Confidence Report in the coming years, including reporting on unregulated contaminants. The City may want to consider adding an objective that states that the City will closely following these reports and be prepared to react to the findings. He would also like to see other drinking water quality and safety goals and objectives included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Greenleaf likes the objective of treatment or removal of Ash trees each year in conjunction with the street reconstruction program, but encourages the City to identify specimen trees throughout the City that will receive treatment.

Other goals and objectives discussed include: discouraging 2-stroke engines and encouraging the adoption of

electric equipment through a rebate program, re-establish the Rambler Revolution project to promote energy conservation, encourage tap water use instead of bottled water, install exercise equipment in public places, promote battery recycling programs, include lake level information, and increase City involvement in community gardens to ensure that they continue to be available.

Commission members questioned the objective to consider a citywide ban of neonicotinoids because cities may not be able to legally ban pesticides. Commissioner Greenleaf asked if City's are allowed to ban chemical use in nurseries. She also suggested creating a list of questions that homeowners can ask nurseries about their use of neonicotinoids.

Commission members discussed drought tolerant lawn grass alternatives. Sam Crosby stated that the City ordinances could be updated to allow no-mow grass.

Julie Drennen with Conservation Minnesota mentioned that the 50% onsite energy production might not be feasible. She suggested looking at Mahtomedi's energy goal as an example. A more feasible number may be 15% to 20%. Julie will review the sustainability matrix and provide additional comments to staff.

Commission members asked if the goal of increasing tree canopy by 10% by 2030 takes into account losses due to emerald ash borer. Staff said that it does not take those losses into account.

Staff asked commission members to choose their top three objectives in each of the six categories and present at the January meeting.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) 2017-2018 Work Plan

The commission members chose their top three goals to pursue in 2018: establish a storm drain stenciling program; pair recycling containers with all trash containers in the downtown area; and increase pollinator plantings on City property. Commission members discussed the possibility of turning mowed lawn areas on City property into pollinator plantings, and asked staff to determine the number of acres of mowed lawn areas that are not used for recreation.

b) Budget updates

Staff updated the commission members on remaining purchases from the 2017 budget for the Environmental Resource Expo. The compost bin can be purchased from the City for \$50.00, and the banner will be ordered before the end of the month for a cost not to exceed \$250.00. This leaves \$5.60 remaining in the 2017 budget.

c) Review last month's do-outs

Commission members reviewed last month's do-outs and asked staff to contact Rice Creek WD, Valley Branch WD and Ramsey Washington Metro WD regarding their interest in starting a storm drain stenciling program, and provide a summary of the conversations at the January Commission Meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) SolSmart program

Staff met with a SolSmart Advisor from the Met Council last month to learn more about the program. The advisor will be available for the next 18 months to provide guidance to communities that want to participate in the program. SolSmart is a government recognition program that also provides no-cost technical assistance to help communities explore solar possibilities on public lands or facilities, and assist in making it easier and more affordable for residents and businesses to invest in solar. The SolSmart advisor is available to guide staff through the application and designation process. Commissioner Greenleaf

moved, seconded by Commissioner Eddy, to support the City participating in the SolSmart Program. Motion carried, vote 5/0.

b) New do-outs

- Commissioners:
 - Choose top three goals in the sustainability spreadsheet from each of the six categories (energy conservation, climate resiliency, water conservation, waste reduction, health/food, natural resources) and present at the January meeting.
- Staff:
 - Order banner before the end of December
 - Contact watershed districts re: storm drain stenciling prior to January meeting

7. DISCUSSION

• **Staff Updates**

- Best Practices for Pollinators Summit
The Best Practices for Pollinators Summit is scheduled for Thursday, February 8th from 8am to 12:30pm at Silverwood Park in St. Anthony. Topics include Pollinator Conservation and Ecology, Pesticides, Innovative Park Management Practices, and more. The event is free and commission members are welcome to attend. Staff will also forward the event information on to the Parks Department.
- GreenStep 4
Staff started working on the GreenStep Cities Step 4 designation, which is due in May. To be considered for Step 4, we need to answer a series of questions in five categories. Our answers to these questions provide baseline conditions for metrics in energy use, transportation, parks and trees, stormwater, drinking water, solid waste, and climate. To achieve step 5, we must show improvement for specific baseline metrics established in step 4.
- January agenda
Sustainability Objectives for Comprehensive Plan
Storm drain stenciling

• **Commission Member Updates**

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on January 17, 2018 at 6:30pm at City Hall. Commissioner Greenleaf moved, seconded by Commissioner Bolstad, to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 pm. Motion carried, vote 5/0.