

City of White Bear Lake Environmental Advisory Commission

MINUTES

Date: October 16, 2019	Time: 6:30pm	Location: WBL City Hall
COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	Sheryl Bolstad, Pam Enz, Chris Greene, Bonnie Greenleaf, Rick Johnston, Gary Schroeher (Chair), Robert Winkler	
COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT		
STAFF PRESENT	Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist	
VISITORS	Council Member Edberg, Lynzy Tran	
NOTETAKER	Connie Taillon	

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The commission members reviewed the agenda and had no changes. Staff added 50th Anniversary of Earth Day to Item 6b New Business. Commissioner Winkler moved, seconded by Commissioner Bolstad, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried, vote 7/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) September 18, 2019 regular meeting

The commission members reviewed the September 18, 2019 draft minutes. Chair Schroeher removed 'received a grant from Hennepin County to add' in the first sentence of item d) Prairie Planting, and added 'is adding' in its place. Commissioner Bolstad moved, seconded by Commissioner Greene, to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2019 meeting as amended. Motion carried, vote 4/0. Commissioners Enz, Greenleaf, and Johnston abstained.

4. VISITORS & PRESENTATIONS

The Environmental Advisory Commission members introduced themselves to Lynzy Tran and Council Member Edberg. Lynzy Tran stated that she is one of fifteen members of the White Bear Lake High School Environmental Club. She was invited by the Mayor to attend an Environmental Advisory Commission meeting and to become a student member of the commission.

Council Member Edberg was invited to attend the meeting to discuss his recent trip to Germany as part of the Climate Smart Municipalities (CSM) program and to answer questions. CSM delegates from five Minnesota communities visited Germany the week of September 23, 2019. Mayor Jo Emerson, Council Member Edberg, Council Member Biehn, and City Manager Ellen Hiniker represented the City of White Bear Lake. They visited the Cities of Münster, Lüdenscheid, Düsseldorf, and Saerbeck. While in Saerbeck, they toured an old army munitions plant that was converted into an energy park. Citizens and businesses invested in the park and sell energy to the grid. In Düsseldorf, the group spoke with an investment banker who described the energy transition as an economic and energy restructuring. The cost of solar has become competitive with most other sources of energy. Council Member Edberg summarized some of the insights of the trip including the need to have cleaner energy and the idea of decarbonizing energy sources, and the awareness that this technology exists as proven by firms in Germany that have accomplished their zero emissions goals. These firms remain connected to the grid but are self-reliant, mostly from solar power. They also conserve energy by utilizing heat exchangers to preheat the air in the building. The main take home messages from Council Member Edberg's

trip to Germany are: 1) we need to rethink our systems by reducing energy use, include renewables such as solar, and monitoring our systems. He would like to see our local leaders in systems management visit Germany as part of a future CSM delegation; and 2) The role of young people are key. A high school club in Lüdenscheid monitors a weather station and has 80 to 100 years of records. This may be a great opportunity for White Bear Lake high school students to collaborate on a project. Council Member Edberg would also like to see a student exchange program created as part of the CSM initiative.

Chair Schroeher asked Council Member Edberg about rooftop solar and his thoughts on potential barriers to installing solar on City buildings. Council Member Edberg stated that with limited funding, we need to prioritize and determine what investments make the biggest impact. He stated that Xcel Energy has made a commitment to be carbon free by 2050, so he questions what role the City should play, how do we leverage with Xcel, and how do we act locally.

The commission members asked what environmental issues are a concern for City Council. Council Member Edberg listed several concerns including drinking water policy, pollutants such as PAH's in stormwater and lead in drinking water, lake water quality and quantity, energy, transportation efficiency, waste reduction, recycling markets, urban forests, emerald ash borer, and invasive species.

Commissioner Bolstad asked if the Environmental Advisory Commission's support for a project is of value to the City Council. Council Member Edberg replied that all commissions play an important role. The Environmental Advisory Commission is already an important part of a system of education, engagement, and messaging. To be effective, Council Member Edberg suggests that the EAC identify a small number of priorities with the greatest chance of return, and to be thoughtful on how to accomplish these priorities. Commissioner Greenleaf stated that she wants the Environmental Advisory Commission to be proactive and a leader on environmental issues.

As the Climate Smart Municipalities, partnership moves forward, Council Member Edberg encourages the Environmental Advisory Commission and newly formed CSM steering committee to define action items and make a case to City Council for each item. He envisions action items categorized into four strategies: engaging the community, creating City policy that will empower individuals to take their own actions, determining where the City will take action, and identifying partners. He also encourages the steering committee and commission to have a vision as part of a broader plan, to prioritize projects, and to be mindful of costs.

The commission members asked Council Member Edberg about his thoughts on Water Gremlin. He stated that public health issues get a lot of attention with City Council; but in the case of Water Gremlin, the City only plays a supporting role.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Downtown Area Recycling - update
Postponed until the November meeting
- b) 2020 Work Plan
Postponed until the November meeting

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Officer election
Postponed until the November meeting
- b) 50th Anniversary of Earth Day
Postponed until the November meeting

7. DISCUSSION

a) Topics of discussion for joint Parks Commission meeting

The commission members discussed topics for the joint meeting with the Parks Commission on November 21, 2019. Topics include increasing pollinator plantings, reducing lawn grass in parks, and inviting the Parks Commission to exhibit at the Environmental Resource Expo. The first hour of the November agenda will be dedicated to the joint meeting.

b) Staff updates

- Goose Lake update

Postponed until the November meeting

- Organics dumpster enclosure

Postponed until the November meeting

- 4th and Otter update

Postponed until the November meeting

- MPCA update

None

- Burning regulations

Postponed until the November meeting

- LEAP Award

The Edgewater ROW prairie planting won a Landscape Ecology Award Program (LEAP) award from Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District. The awards dinner is on Thursday, November 14 at 6:30pm at Keller Golf Course. There is space for one commission member to attend.

- Volunteer Recognition Dinner – Tuesday, October 29

The volunteer recognition dinner will be held at Boatworks Commons on Tuesday, October 29 at 6pm.

c) Commission member updates

None

d) Do-outs

Postponed until the November meeting

e) November agenda

Include the joint parks commission meeting and the postponed agenda items from the October meeting on the November agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held at City Hall on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 6:30pm. Commissioner Greene moved, seconded by Commissioner Greenleaf, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm. Motion carried, vote 7/0.