



City of Blaine

Anoka County, Minnesota

Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Nat'l Resources Conservation Board

The Natural Resource Conservation Board is an advisory body to the City Council. The Board is charged with recommending acquisition of lands for open space and developing a Natural Resource Plan which includes environmental policy and guidelines for the maintenance and preservation of Blaine's existing and future open spaces and trail corridors. One of the Board's functions is to hold public meetings and make recommendations to the City Council. For each item, the Board will receive reports prepared by City staff, provide the opportunity for public response, conduct Board discussions and make recommendations. The City Council, however, makes all final decisions on these matters.

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Others Present: Drew Brown, Adjunct Member, Rebecca Haug, Co-Liaison, Water Resource Manager and City Clerk Cathy Sorensen.

Present: 9 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

Absent: 2 - Genet, and Syed

3. Approval of Minutes

3.-1 APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 16, 2019 NRCB MINUTES

Attachments: [04-16-19 nrcb \(002\)](#)

Ms. Haug stated she has the motion information for items #2 and #3 on the minutes and will provide that at the next meeting for minute approval.

Boardmember McKinley noted after item #2 it should be noted the Board adjourned sine die prior to the Administration of Oaths of office for NRCB Members.

She noted Boardmember Panning should be deleted from getting the Oath of Office.

After that, insert Chair Perkins called the meeting to order.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Panning, to approve the April 16, 2019 Minutes as revised.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

Approval of Agenda

Boardmember McKinley requested under Updates - Open Space Inspection Reports and she has one on Hidden Ponds and Lever Street Follow-up should be included.

MOVED by Boardmember McKinley, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the Board.

None.

5. New Business

5.-1

FIRST READING

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 12, MISCELLANEOUS AND TRANSITORY PROVISIONS, SEC. 12.05 SALES OF REAL PROPERTY OF THE CITY CHARTER OF THE CITY OF BLAINE

City Clerk Sorenson reviewed at the May 14, 2019, annual Charter Commission meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to approve language changes regarding sales of real property. Current Charter language states that removal of park or open space designation requires approval by the voters of 51%. The Commission is recommending changes to state the majority of those voting instead.

This ordinance, adopted in January 2000, was the result of direction of the then - Open Space Committee members and had three components:

1. All park and open space land would be designated by the City Council by ordinance to provide for public input following the introduction of park/open space land designation.
2. The City could not sell lands designated as parks or open space.
3. Removal of a park or open space designation would require approval of 51% of votes at a regular municipal election.

The Charter Commission is recommending amended language from the current specific percentage of voters of 51% to a majority of voters. This amendment, they believe, would capture the intent of the ordinance as the majority of voters and not a specific percentage of voters, which in some cases could require to be more than a majority. This change would also assist election administration by providing a clearer direction based on the term “majority” rather than a percentage, which could result in instances like rounding and again not meet the intent.

The Commission directed staff to bring the item forward for public hearing and Council consideration as outlined in the Statute but since staff learned that the amendment originally came from the Open Space Committee and not Charter Commission, they wanted to bring the item forward to both NRCB and Park Board for review and input, especially as current NRCB members helped draft the current language and have that history.

The NRCB is requested to provide comment on the proposed Charter amendment.

Ms. Sorensen noted Boardmembers Rafferty and Truchon were on the original Open Space Committee.

Boardmember Villella arrived at the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Boardmember Rafferty provided some background information on the Ordinance. He noted it has never been attempted to remove parkland from the parks.

Boardmember Truchon stated as long as the spirit is retained on what the Committee was trying to do back in 2000. Both the survey results and the bond passing shows the taxpayers was in favor of keeping the open space and park land. The open space and park lands need to be preserved.

Boardmember Villella asked why this is being brought forward. Ms. Sorensen stated it was brought forward by City Staff for ease of elections in changing to the majority rather than 51%.

Boardmember Panning stated she would feel better if the ordinance said the majority of registered voters rather than just the majority of the voters.

Boardmember Varian asked about the legality of taking something out of parks or open spaces. Ms. Sorensen stated the intent is not to remove any of the open space or park land. Boardmember Varian stated she does not know if it is legal for land to be sold for another purpose. Ms. Haug stated she will check with legal counsel and there will be properties affected in conservation easements.

Boardmember Vedi asked if the property would be used for another City function.

Ms. Sorensen stated that is true.

Boardmember McKinley agreed with Boardmember Panning's suggestion that the wording be the majority of registered voters rather than just the majority of the voters.

Boardmember Varian asked when the count would be taken for the number of registered voters. Ms. Sorensen stated it would be difficult to determine the number as voters are registered on election days.

Boardmember Panning stated the number of voters would be known after the election is held at the end of the day. Ms. Sorensen stated she will look into the wording more.

Boardmember Brown made some (inaudible) comments.

Boardmember Truchon stated she is in favor of using the majority of the registered voters.

Boardmember Theisen asked if it could be restricted to a major election so the vote is representative of the voter's choice.

Chair Perkins suggested all Boardmembers who have thoughts on this send them to Ms. Sorensen. No motion is necessary this evening.

Boardmember Vedi asked if 51% isn't equal to the majority of voters. Ms. Sorensen stated she researched the number of voters for the 2018 election. There were 29,971 voters in the 2018 election. She compared the difference between 51% and the majority.

Discussed.

5.-2

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR BWS PLANNING UPDATE

Ms. Haug stated the subcommittee has met twice. At the first meeting, the goals were agreed upon. The goals are as follows:

1. Maximize potential for wetland banking and SNA
2. Accessibility to the public that does not interfere with goal #1
3. Restoration of southern part of the BWS
 - a. City needs to hire an implementation contractor(s)
 - i. Contractor(s) will clear trees, provide reed canary grass management and conduct prescribed burning
 - b. Utilize grant from GRG if feasible. (not a lot of volunteer opportunities)
4. Work with the developer who is proposing development off of 109th and adjacent to city open space to incorporate a parking lot and trailhead in lieu of park dedication fees
5. Develop a communication plan for the proposed work in the southern portion of the BWS as well as the on-going maintenance of the northern wetland banks (Site 7 and Branch 3) in the BWS
6. Review wetland delineation and determine best trail routes and connections
7. Review options for an open space shelter/pavilion at the Lexington Ave trailhead location. (tour scheduled for June 25)
 - a. Needs to be under 2000 sq. ft. to not be sprinkled
 - b. Prefer to have a storage room for program supplies attached to shelter
 - c. Latrine building is also preferred.
8. Review pedestrian bridge feasibility to get across Lexington Ave to connect BWS with LAC (will be extremely costly and possibly not even allowed)
9. Adding a trail along ditch spoil piles
10. Budget for on-going maintenance of all areas of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. (added June 11)
11. Set the BWS up in phases with descriptions of maintenance needs. (added June 11)

The goal to install a pedestrian bridge across Lexington Avenue would be extremely difficult. Ms. Haug spoke with Anoka County Highways who would not support a pedestrian bridge because of two large power lines and Lexington Avenue being planned for expansion to a six-lane road. Pedestrians are recommended to cross at the intersections.

Jason Husveth was at the second meeting and spoke to the Committee about the history of the site. The next big step is to make the restoration south of Branch 3 and a parking lot in the southern portion along 109th

Ave. The City has quite a few easements in existing developments that would give access to the BWS. Some "Future Trail" signage should be added.

The next big change that was discussed was the interpretive center which is being reconsidered due to no sewer or water available to the site. There could be a pavilion/picnic shelter with a storage room off of it. The educators could have access to their materials needed for programs. When the parking lot was constructed some modifications needed to be made and the foot print for the building was reduced. At the next subcommittee meeting other facilities will be visited to gain ideas for the BWS. The number of trails may be reduced.

Chair Perkins asked if with the change in facilities would there be a latrine available. Ms. Haug stated there would be a porta-potty with enclosure. There would be electricity.

Boardmember McKinley stated the concept map needs to be destroyed.

Boardmember Varian thanked the Committee stating they have done an excellent job. Adding signage for the trails will be helpful.

Ms. Haug stated the next meeting will be a tour of facilities and Jason Husveth will not be included in that meeting.

Discussed.

5.-3

UPDATES

BWS Updates - Today there was a visit to the BWS by 20 students representing the MN Institute for Talented Youth. The Springs Alive program was done for them. They are returning tomorrow for another Field Trip.

Field Trips - Ms. Haug stated the city has been doing some programs with Wargo Nature Center and Growing Green Hearts.

Programs - 26 Participants in the Insect Hunt Program on June 20. The number of winter participants were down but the numbers should increase.

Credit Sales - at the June 17 City Council Meeting, the Council approved the sale of 10 acres to the State of Minnesota and 2.75 acres to a local business. At the previous meeting credits were sold to city for the Water Treatment plant. Ms. Haug will provide another update at the next NRCB meeting. Boardmember Varian asked why the State is buying credits and

Ms. Haug stated they are needed for road construction projects.

T&E Species - Ms. Haug stated there is a large population of Lance-leaved violets in the BWS, which proves the restoration is working.

Open Space Inspection Reports - Boardmember McKinley stated the Lever Street update is staff is working on getting signs made and installed. A sign will be put at the trail head also. Boardmember McKinley asked to see the plan for the development in that area and Ms. Haug stated that is not available at this meeting. Ms. Haug stated as developments come in staff will work with them for trail accesses.

Boardmember Truchon asked about Site 7 and noted she is happy to see all of the communities of lance-leaved violets off the boardwalk.

Boardmember McKinley provided a written report to the Board on Boardmember Panning and her visit to Hidden Ponds. The report was read in full. She noted the entire wood chip trail needs to be re-established. Next to the park by the paved trail surrounds a pond. Boardmember Panning stated the sign at the entrance to the park, another trail has been added so the sign needs to be updated.

Boardmember Truchon thanked Boardmembers McKinley and Panning for their report. She hopes before a trail is established the Board needs to get some advice from staff noting where we are with habitat restoration and appropriate place for the trail. Ms. Haug noted the pond is a storm water pond.

Chair Perkins asked what the process is for handling items from these report updates for modifications and repairs. Ms. Haug stated work orders are submitted to staff about what can be done. Chair Perkins requested updates be provided.

Boardmember Theisen asked if there is an update on the elevation change for the BWS. Ms. Haug stated Site 7 was not hydraulically modified.

Discussed.

Adjournment

MOVED by Boardmember Panning, seconded by Boardmember McKinley, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning