



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes - Final

10801 Town Square Dr.
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 opens 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, February 21, 2012

7:30 PM

Council Chambers

Regular meeting

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call – Staff called the roll call. Those present include: Boardmembers Garner, Schrunck, Truchon (arrived 7:46 p.m.), Castillo, Chair McKinley; Staff Liaison, Jim Hafner; and Recording Secretary, Beth Bostrom.

Absent: Boardmembers Ochocki and Kustermann.

Chairman McKinley introduced two new future Boardmembers. They will be sworn in next month.

Gene Rafferty of 9801 6th Street stated that he is from District 1.

Kim Gunter of 13211 Taylor Street NE stated that she is from District 3.

Present: 5 - Chair McKinley, Schrunck, Castillo, Truchon, and Garner

Absent: 2 - Kustermann, and Ochocki

3. Approval of Minutes

Chairman McKinley requested the following changes:

Page 1, Approval of Minutes, "...Board Meeting as amended presented."

Page 3, 1st sentence: "...choose an open space or trail special use park area..."

Boardmember Truchon requested a change on page 4, paragraph 7: "pictures to

Blaine Katy Chayka, founder and creator of Minnesota Field Guide which are of native plants. These pictures can be used on the website or for the NRBC's other purposes.

Boardmember Castillo requested the following changes:

Page 2, 5th paragraph: Boardmember Kustermann Castillo asked about potential revenue..."

Page 3, 7th paragraph: Boardmember Truchon Castillo stated that she he was at a meeting and a Blaine..." "She He explained that there is a Lakes Facebook..."

Chairman McKinley requested to correct page 4, 6th paragraph: "...applications for future NRBC NRCB Boardmembers."

Moved by Castillo, seconded by Schrunk, that the Minutes be Approved as corrected. The Motion was adopted unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

None.

5. New Business

5.a Board members choose 2012 assignments

Chair McKinley stated that she would like to repeat the assignments where Boardmembers select a special use park or an open space to visit and report on at a future meeting. She asked Boardmembers to choose a park that they did not report on last year. She offered to provide a handout at the next meeting. She asked Boardmembers to provide a printed report to hand out and that they provide pictures for their presentation.

5.b Updates on projects

The Staff Liaison explained that he had planned to show an aerial photo of Laddie Lake but the equipment is not on the correct settings tonight to do this.

5.b.1 Open space Management

The Staff Liaison reviewed the progress that has been made. He commented that the Laddie Lake buckthorn removal has been completed. He mentioned that prairie restoration will take place this spring. Dead oaks have been removed that were identified by the city. This will become established as an oaks savannah ecosystem over the next few years. There was some buckthorn along ditch JD1 by Kane Meadows Park which was removed. There will be a controlled burn in the spring which may be delayed until there is more moisture in the ground. He explained that at Hidden Ponds the removal work has been completed and restoration work will be done.

5.b.2 Pioneer Park

The Staff Liaison stated that a proposal has not been received yet from Jason at Critical Connections. The city has taken out some dead trees.

5.b.3 Wetland restoration

The Staff Liaison reported that there was a controlled burn as part of the restoration work in late November and some thatch removal was to be done over winter or early spring which will open up the ground. He stated that woody removal was done a year ago and the native seed bank has been growing in very well.

Chairman McKinley asked about contacting Jason for a tour.

The Staff Liaison stated that Jason was going to try and attend tonight's meeting. He offered to provide a tour himself but would ask Jason to show the work that he has been involved in.

Chairman McKinley suggested asking Jason for an April tour.

5.c RCWD proposal to amend wetland mitigation requirements for ditch maintenance impacts

The Staff Liaison stated that the Rice Creek Watershed District is suggesting an amendment to their plans. They have four rules for singular cities. He stated that the first is regarding the watershed in Blaine. He stated that the plan amendment is requesting to perform mitigation from ditch maintenance or repair projects anywhere in the state. He stated that currently they must occur within the same drainage area if possible. He stated that the RCWD feels there are not as many areas to mitigate and they would like the authority to purchase credits for mitigation throughout the state. This would create a change in the laws which would include many agencies and may require a legislation change. He stated that the Department of Transportation is allowed to do this without making a special request already. He stated that these changes will be discussed at a meeting tomorrow and is out for public comment until March 16. He stated that the city will be making public comment. He stated that Blaine has some concerns with the proposal and they will respond with those in the future. He stated that he will share the city's comments in the future.

5.d Discussion on web site and social media

Chairman McKinley asked for a Boardmember to help with this project. She stated that the city has a webmaster.

The Staff Liaison stated that he found that individual Commissions do not have individual Facebook pages. He stated that there were 1,200 followers to the city's Facebook page. City policy would not allow the NRCB to have a Facebook page. He stated that more followers would catch information on the city's page and Twitter than by using a Commission dedicated page. He stated that the NRCB could post on both of these and have a link to the city's website which would have more information. He stated that this would help address the Boards interest in increasing exposure.

Boardmember Schrunck stated that people she has visited with still like the newsletter.

The Staff Liaison stated that more people are using electronic media and are accessing their information in this way. He stated that a larger number of people will be reached by using both the newsletter and social media. He stated that the NRCB has information on their website that needs updating. He commented that

Environmental Policy and Guidelines has no information under it. He stated that there is a title of High Quality Open Space which has some pictures under it and additional pictures could be added. They could be labeled for the open space area that they represent. He stated that Friends of Open Space is listed and could be updated. The Regional Greenway Concept Plan and the Greenway Concept Plan are from around 12 years ago and may need updating. He reviewed that city policy allows links for Facebook and Twitter.

Chairman McKinley asked about using webmaster to put information on the city website.

The Staff Liaison stated that the information needs to be submitted to him and he will forward it on to the webmaster.

Boardmember Truchon recommended having a committee who would work on the website and social media. She recommended having a few meetings where ideas are gathered and then to move forward with updates. She offered to participate in the committee.

Chairman McKinley offered to be on the committee. She suggested meeting soon.

Boardmember Truchon stated that previously there was an environmental policy group which was dissolved when the NRCB was started. She suggested that an environmental policy could be reviewed. She offered to bring the suggestions from the website and social media committee meeting back to the Board for review.

5.e Discuss agenda items for joint meeting with Park & Rec Board

Chairman McKinley requested ideas for the agenda.

Boardmember Schrunck asked for a better sign for Lochness Park because when driving by the park you miss the park and then have to turn around and go back. Boardmember Truchon asked about discussing general signage. She suggested talking about kiosks because parks are a location they would like to display them in.

Boardmember Castillo suggested putting a kite flying event on at the Lakes during the winter by partnering with the Parks Board. He suggested having a winter Festival on the Lakes.

Boardmember Truchon requested to discuss Earth Day because it is hosted jointly with the Parks Department.

Chairman McKinley stated that Earth Day will be held at Hidden Ponds this year.

Boardmember Castillo suggested discussing trails. He asked if changes were made following his report on Pioneer Park. He recalled that the boardwalk had overgrowth hanging onto the boardwalk and coming up through the boardwalk. He requested to ask about maintenance.

Chairman McKinley asked about Kane Meadows which has an abundance of willows.

Boardmember Truchon suggested talking about shoreline management. She asked to discuss the topic of people encroaching on public open space when they live on open space and trails.

Chairman McKinley suggested discussing illegal dumping.

Boardmember Truchon suggested discussing environmental policy. She asked what Park and Recreation has on their website.

The Staff Liaison reviewed the headings on the Park and Recreation website. He suggested adding a discussion topic of development of interpretive signage. He stated that this tells people what to look for when a park is being developed and restored. He stated that it could describe the benefits of the park features such as how an oaks savannah is beneficial.

Chairman McKinley reviewed the list for the joint meeting. She stated that it includes signs in general but requested something better for Lochness Park. She mentioned interpretive signage as well. Other topics are trail maintenance and how it is going, kiosks, kite flying on the lakes, a festival on the Lakes, shoreline management, Earth Day, encroachment, illegal dumping and environmental policies.

Boardmember Castillo suggested adding the topic of adoption of trails.

The Staff Liaison suggested another activity. He stated that at Laddie Lake Park under the power line there is a lot of trillium. He stated that the electrical company periodically sprays the area as it is in a power line easement. He suggested enlisting volunteers to transplant the trillium to nearby park land area.

Boardmember Truchon stated that they are endangered plants and should be moved after they bloom.

The Board discussed options of meeting jointly with the Park Board.

The Staff Liaison offered that they could meet together in March and identify items to focus on and then meet in a worksession at a later date to work on further details. He offered to talk with Park and Recreation Director Jim Kappelhoff and reply back to the Board. He suggested an idea of holding a regular March meeting and then also attend the Park Board meeting to present their ideas and request a worksession.

Chairman McKinley reviewed that they will meet at the NRCB regular March meeting and then attend the Park Board meeting the following week. She offered to attend the Park Board meeting and represent the NRCB. The NRCB will meet at 7:30 next month on their regularly scheduled date.

6. Other Items

Chairman McKinley stated that on February 15 there was an open house on the University Avenue upgrading project. She stated that from 109th to 125th it will be widened with trails on both sides of the highway. Construction will begin in 2014. She explained that both sidewalk and trails are planned for. She commented that this will meet a long term goal of theirs to have a trail in this area.

Chairman McKinley stated that she is providing a small presentation to be displayed at the North Metro Home and Garden Show at the Schwan's Center.

Boardmember Castillo suggested having this information posted on the website. He explained that this is an example of how the website can be used to communicate.

7. Adjournment

Moved by Castillo, seconded by Schrunk, that this meeting be Adjourned. The Motion was adopted unanimously. the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.