



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes - Final

10801 Town Square Drive
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, July 15, 2014

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

The Natural Resources Conservation Board members will conduct a tour of Hidden Ponds Park and Open Space (11465 Polk St.) beginning at 7:00PM. Following the tour, they will adjourn and reconvene at city hall to conduct their regularly scheduled meeting at 8:00PM in the council chambers.

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 p.m. The Board conducted a tour of Hidden Ponds Park and Open Space prior to the beginning of the regular meeting.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call - Staff Liaison Hafner called the roll call. Those present include: Boardmembers Anderson, Gunter, Perkins, Rafferty, Ruth, Truchon, Villella, Chair McKinley; Staff Liaison Jim Hafner and Recording Secretary, Debbie Wolfe.

Present: 7 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, and Gunter

Absent: 1 - Castillo

3. Approval of Minutes

Boardmember Villella noted on page three, item 6.c the minutes should be corrected to read Boardmembers Gunter and Rafferty are still working on their pamphlets.

Motion

4. Approve Agenda

McKinley added under Other Business - Oak Savannah and NRCB Meeting next month.

Motion

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the Board.

6. New Business

6.a Discussion on tour of Hidden Ponds Open Space

Chair McKinley asked for Boardmember comments on the visit to Hidden Ponds. Boardmember Villella stated he visited the Open Space this morning and was pleasantly surprised. Boardmember Rafferty stated the clean-up of the Park made it look very well. Boardmember Truchon commented on the habitat improvements. Boardmember Perkins stated it was interesting to learn more cannot be done with the area due to the underlying bog. Boardmember Ruth stated he found it interesting for a future plan of Tamarack trees and he liked the combination of the Open Space and the Park area for the kids. Boardmember Anderson stated there is not access to the second Pond, which would be nice to have in the future, and noted the area was well maintained. Boardmember Truchon stated it was very peaceful in the Park.

Staff Liaison provided an update on the prairie restoration. As it turns out there is a lot more peat in the area of the prairie restoration. The restoration people are finding it difficult to work with. Adding trees and shrubs, such as Tamarack, has been suggested. The restoration company has suggested the City alter what they were planning and changing the scope and working with some different species of vegetation. Some work will be completed in August-Sept 2014 timeframe.

6.b Staff report on Council action regarding Site 7 improvements

Staff Liaison Hafner reviewed on March 20, 2014, Council awarded a contract to Stantec Consulting Service, Inc. to develop a detailed conceptual plan of improvements (trails and other amenities) for the large, 500-acre open space west of Lexington and north of 109th Avenues. This design will serve as the base for final design and construction. At the June 5, 2014 Council workshop, Stantec presented their Concept Design, which incorporated the Natural Resources Conservation Board comments/recommendations.

Comments from the NCRB and the City Council have been incorporated into the concept design plan. Trail loops have been included, and the water feature has been expanded to 9.8 acres with a depth of 6.5 feet. Cost estimates for the trails and other features/amenities have been calculated. Staff will be pursuing possible grants and other funding sources to support the implementation of this project. One source of additional funding will be the sale of wetland credits from the new wetland restoration project approved by Council. These credits will begin to be available as early as 2017.

This project will be implemented in phases beginning in 2015 with projected completion in 2020. Due to cost considerations, not all of the proposed trails and features will be included at this time. However, a sufficient number of trails, loops, parking and other features will be included to provide access and enjoyment for the general public. The trails and features not constructed through 2020 will be retained on a list of future projects for expansion within the open space area.

A table was provided summarizing the recommended phases with the various tasks and associated costs. These proposed phases can be adjusted as needed to fit available funds. This project will be paid for through the Open Space Fund. The current balance of the Open Space Fund is \$846,374. It is projected there will be \$1,050,000 revenue to the Open Space Fund over the next 7 years from park dedication fees. Again, other funding sources will be pursued to offset the costs of the project. Stantec has done these types of projects in the past with other groups and they have provided a base to work from. Corporate sponsorships and grants will be sought to help fund the project.

Staff Liaison Hafner stated the Council is supportive. Councilmember Swanson would like to see some shorter trail loops. Councilmember Herbst is supportive of the water feature. Councilmember Burke was concerned about long term maintenance. The Council vote was 7-0 in support of the concept plan.

Boardmember Vilella stated the Council used the word "Legacy" when discussing the area. Mr. Hafner stated the Council passed the motion to accept the concept design for the open space improvements for Site No. 7, accept the proposed phased improvement plan, and change the name of Site 7 to The Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

6.c Update on restoration work at Laddie Lake Park/Open Space

Mr. Hafner spoke with Prairie Restorations and there is some more work to be done. Some follow up treatments have been done on the black locust suckers. Some mowing will be done to encourage the native plants to grow. Some additional seeding may be necessary.

Chair McKinley stated after the tour some signage is needed to let residents know what is going on there. Mr. Hafner stated some signage can be very expensive depending on the design. A decision would need to be made as to what the signs should read. Mr. Hafner suggested possibly photos be enlarged. Chair McKinley suggested there be a sign that reads "Restoration in Progress".

Chair McKinley asked if there was oak wilt in the park as there have been a lot of trees cut down. Mr. Hafner stated the City Forester had previously identified oak wilt in the park and some trees were removed. Also, there has been some plowing to address the oak wilt. The city has also been selectively removing ash trees as a preventative measure against the emerald ash borer.

Boardmember Vilella asked if there are coyotes in the park. Mr. Hafner stated there have been some reports of some sightings.

Boardmember Anderson asked about the building. Mr. Hafner stated that is a Parks Department building and he does not know if it is currently being used for programming.

Chair McKinley stated a problem is the level of activity in the park. If there was more going on with more people in the park it might help with the vandalism.

6.d Discussion on Aquatore Park trail

Boardmember Truchon reviewed she visited the trail in Aquatore Park. She said a great job was done in the removal of buckthorn. The trail could use some more woodchips. She was very happy to walk through there and see the money at work. There does need to be a sign there as it is not easy to find.

Mr. Hafner stated there is a parking area to the east of the senior center and you walk into the woods to find the trail. It is a loop and you enter and exit at the same point.

Chair McKinley asked if this was a one time project or if further buckthorn removal will happen. Mr. Hafner stated he will mention to Park Department staff about mowing the entrance to the trail.

6.e Report on NRCB booth at Blaine Festival

Chair McKinley reviewed the NRCB had a booth at the Blaine Festival. She thanked Boardmember Ruth for his help in working in the booth. She summarized some of the visits she had with people who came into the booth. Chair McKinley will ask for someone from the Board to handle the booth next year.

6.f Blaine well study - report and discussion

Staff Liaison Hafner stated the City is looking at putting in a new well field in the NE part of the City. A study was done. In order to put in the well a permit is required from the DNR. A pumping test was just completed to see if, under maximum demand, there would be any negative impact to surface waters. All wells were run at full capacity for eight days. The results will be submitted to the DNR for their review. There is a DNR study being done about using groundwater for municipal and industrial water supply. Blaine is included in that study area. Mr. Hafner showed the Board where they could find the Northeast Well Field Study.

The Study can be found on City Hall website:

*Blaine Home Page/Government/Engineering/Engineering Projects/11-08
Northeast Well Field Study*

Mr. Hafner reviewed the drawings in the study showing the future plans for wells.

6.g Discussion on roof gardens for proposed community center

Chair McKinley stated there is a group working on the possibility of a community center in Blaine. Chair McKinley was asked if the Board thought the idea of a roof garden was a good one.

Boardmember Anderson stated it would depend on the design of the building.

Chair McKinley stated the community center would be built where the community gardens currently are near City Hall.

Boardmember Truchon stated there are roofs like this in other areas. Mr. Hafner stated there are a number of buildings in the Twin Cities with green roofs. There is substantial heating/air-conditioning savings for buildings with green roofs. Storm water management is also addressed with a green roof.

Boardmember Perkins stated it is fiscally minded.

Boardmember Ruth stated they are becoming more popular and there should be data available to show the savings with a green roof. He would be interested in learning more about green roofs. He added the entire building would not need to have a green roof. It would depend on the design of the community center.

Motion

Chair McKinley suggested Boardmembers contact the Community Center Committee directly with any comments they have.

7. Other Business

7a Oak Savannah - Chair McKinley stated all the pamphlets were gone and she will have more made and put in the information box. She noted the woodchip trail is in need of some work. There is a large pile of woodchips and she is hoping public works would be putting them on the trail.

7b Boardmember Gunter provided a draft of the Pioneer Park pamphlet. She revised the trail map. Chairperson McKinley will make copies. Boardmember Anderson found some typos and Boardmember Gunter will correct. Mr. Hafner will proof the document also.

7c Boardmember Rafferty provided a draft of the Kane Meadows pamphlet. Chair McKinley provided some updates, which Boardmember Rafferty will add to the pamphlet.

7d Boardmember Truchon will change a picture in the Laddie Lake pamphlet and email to Mr. Hafner.

7e Chair McKinley stated next month the Board will meet at Kane Meadows. She suggested they meet at 6:30 p.m. for the tour.

8. Adjournment

Adjourned