



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, October 21, 2014

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

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

2. Roll Call

Present: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Gunter, Castillo, and Anderson

3. Approval of Minutes

Boardmembers Gunter and Anderson arrived at 7:02 p.m.

Motion

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Gunter, Castillo, and Anderson

4. Approval of Agenda

Item 6.g was added to the agenda "Proposal for Dog Park at Aquatore Park".

Motion

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Gunter, Castillo, and Anderson

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the Board.

6. New Business

6.a Update on Blane Wetland Sanctuary projects

Staff Liaison Jim Hafner had provided the written report on the projects.

A. Improvements: The final report and maps for the Concept design have been delivered. A request for proposals has been sent out asking for quotes on the final design. Proposals/quotes are to be submitted by November 10, 2014. Once a firm is selected to begin the final design process a meeting will be arranged with the NRCB to provide input. Construction on Phase I is planned to begin in 2015.

Boardmember Perkins arrived at the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

B. Wetland Banking: CCES has completed the wetland delineations of the restoration area, including the 10 acres on Lexington Ave. The request to DNR for delisting the wetland area as a Public Water has been submitted. DNR has initiated a formal 60-day review and comment process, whereby comments are solicited from various DNR Divisions, the City, County, Watershed District and SWCD. We hope to have a decision by the November 2014 NRCB meeting.

Chair McKinley noted Staff Liaison Hafner will be at the November 2014 NRCB Meeting. Chair McKinley asked if the Board had any questions she could relay to Staff Liaison Hafner.

Boardmember Castillo noted there is a soft trail going toward the parking area and the distance seems quite long. Boardmember Truchon stated if you turn right, there is another way to go. If a loop is made through the ENRV area, the DNR would not want a trail put in there.

Boardmember Anderson stated that area is protected as a wetland and that is the reason the soft trail needs to go around that area. The quadrant in that corner cannot be touched.

Boardmember Perkins asked if for the next meeting the distances of the trails could be provided. A loop in that NE corner could be looked at being added which allow pedestrians to loop back without going into the wetland area.

Boardmember Truchon stated the Landscape Arboretum trails have been redesigned to allow observation of the wetland. They have a very nice boardwalk area.

Boardmember Truchon asked in the NE corner what does the dark green signify. Boardmember Villella stated he believes it is a farmland and not part of the wetland sanctuary. Chair McKinley stated he was referring to the other area. Boardmember Truchon stated that is mostly trees.

Boardmember Castillo asked who would be maintaining the woodchip trails and it was determined City maintenance and volunteers. He fears unless maintained well the width of the trail will decrease because of overgrowth. Boardmember Castillo stated that trail is 1.8 miles without a loop.

Boardmember Truchon stated that is why volunteers and stewardship of the residents is necessary.

Boardmember Perkins suggested some of the money from the wetland credits should be applied to the long-term maintenance of the area.

Boardmember Anderson stated the long-term goal is that it would turn into an area that brings many people into the area. There may be revenue generated from the future building and programs.

Boardmember Castillo stated one full time employee could be dedicated to the wetland sanctuary for maintenance. He asked for an explanation of the key to the map.

Boardmember Perkins stated he believes the numbers and letter represented the phases of the project for the particular areas. Boardmember Ruth agreed the numbers represented the phases. The letters are secondary trails that will be developed as funding is available.

Chair McKinley requested Boardmembers continue thinking of questions and bring them to the meeting or notify Staff Liaison Hafner prior to the meeting.

No board action is necessary.

6.b Update on List of Concerns

Chair McKinley provided a list she developed of Open Space/Park Issues for 2014. She provided that list to Staff Liaison Hafner, which he submitted to the Public Services Manager. She reviewed the list with the Board and reviewed the responsibility for each item whether Public Works, Park Board or NCRB.

Staff Liaison Hafner had provided a report of the list of maintenance concerns/needs has been submitted to the Public Services Manager for review and discussion. There is no final determination at this time.

Boardmember Truchon mentioned mowing would not be a solution in Pioneer Park. The Park Board needs to study which plants are desired in the area and re-establish those plants.

Boardmember Perkins asked what the NRCB can do other than discussion.

Boardmember Truchon suggested a motion to recommend to the City Council for Public Works and the Park Board to address the items on the list.

Boardmember Gunter suggested a joint meeting with the Park Board might be a better approach.

Chair McKinley stated she offered to review the items with the Park Board and Staff Liaison Hafner had stated he would like to speak with Bob first. Boardmember Perkins agreed this would be a good approach.

Boardmember Truchon left the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

6.c Update on NRCB History

Boardmember Rafferty reviewed he has provided some more information to Boardmember Truchon. He will provide more information at an upcoming meeting.

6.d Discussion on suggestions for 50th Anniversary Committee

Boardmember Villella stated he spoke with Sherry and she would like to know what the NRCB wants from the 50th Anniversary Committee. The NRCB has settled on May but a date, time and place need to be determined. She would like the date set in time to be published in a November 6 newsletter. The Committee has monies available for the groundbreaking. He stated World Fest will be May 16, 2015. There are a few other activities planned for May. He suggested the far NE corner of the wetland sanctuary be the place where the groundbreaking will be held.

Chair McKinley suggested May 2, 2015, which would fall on Earth Day. If the wetland sanctuary is not ready for people to visit, the celebration could be moved to the park across the street. Plan B would be for May 30, 2015. May is National Wetland Month. Chair McKinley suggested May 2, 2015 Earth Day remain at Laddie Lake and the ceremonial ground-breaking for the wetland sanctuary be on May 30, 2015 at 10 a.m. to 12noon.

Chair McKinley suggested East Lake Park be utilized for parking as the primary location with the possibility of the Lexington Avenue access.

Boardmember Anderson suggested that 10 acres could be flattened for temporary parking for the groundbreaking.

Boardmember Ruth stated it is a good idea to go in with a couple options as we are presenting.

Boardmember Perkins suggested refreshments be served.
Boardmember Castillo stated a gold shovel is needed. Boardmember Perkins asked that police be on hand to assist with parking.

Boardmember Villella will summarize the discussion and send an email to the Board for approval prior to sending to Sherry.

Boardmember Gunter suggested a 3-D model be provided showing trees, trails. Boardmember Villella stated Stantec would probably be willing to provide that.

Boardmember Anderson suggested information about all Blaine Open Spaces also be available.

6.e Begin Discussion on 2015 CIP

Staff Liaison Hafner had provided written documents for the Board showing the current condition of the Open Space Fund, previous CIP, and an update on management status. The City Council approved the management work for 2014 and 2015 at their October 16 Council meeting. The work scheduled through 2015 will complete the management work at most of the open space areas, leaving the future work as long-term maintenance. The Open Space Fund will not be able to pay for maintenance as dictated by State Statute (park dedication fees cannot be used for maintenance). This emphasizes the need for the wetland banking project and the use of revenue from the sale of wetland credits for future open space maintenance, as well as seeking contributions from corporate sponsors. The percent of park dedication fees may remain at 20% for the next couple years. Mr. Hafner is lobbying for review of that decision and will hopefully know more in November.

Restoration projects at Hidden Ponds and Laddie Lake will continue to be paid for from the Open Space Fund for the next several years until those projects reach the maintenance stage. A proposal and cost estimate is being prepared by Prairie Restorations and will be presented at the November NRCB meeting.

A draft reflecting some estimates of cost that are based on the concept plan for Site 7 were included for Board review. This is a draft and is intended to be a working document. More discussions will be held as more facts and hard numbers are gathered.

The Board is asked to discuss potential projects for the next five years. These would be in addition to the two projects already approved for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary and the ongoing restorations at Hidden Ponds and Laddie Lake. A list should be forwarded to staff for inclusion in final discussions at the November meeting.

Board member Gunter asked if any contracts needed to be renewed. Board member Perkins stated the NRCB should consider a controlled burn on some of the sites.

The consensus of the Board was to delve more deeply into the numbers when Staff Liaison Hafner is at the meeting in November 2014.

Board member Castillo asked how much the wetland sanctuary is

costing in total.

6.f Announce: Earth Day 2015

Chair McKinley stated Earth Day will be held on May 2, 2015 at Laddie Lake Park.

6.g Proposal for Dog Park at Aquatore Park

Staff Liaison Hafner had provided a report that the Park & Rec department is proposal that a dog park be approved at Aquatore Park. The proposal would fence in the wooded area on Lincoln Street as well as the first twenty feet of the open area south of the woods. The wooded area is where buckthorn removal and a general cleaning up have taken place previously. That work was paid for jointly by the NRCB and Park Board. An agreement was made that the NRCB would oversee future management of the area.

A dog park had been proposed for Lochness Park but costs were projected to be quite high for the small dog park that would be constructed. Pioneer Park and potentially other open space areas were brought up. Staff communicated that those recommendations would not be consistent with the open space management plan and should be removed from consideration. Park & Rec staff then brought up the Aquatore suggestion. If this proposal is approved, all future management of the Aquatore site would be under the responsibility of the Park & Rec department.

The NRCB is being asked for comment. Park & Rec is also seeking comment from the Blaine Festival Committee and will be presenting the recommendation to the Park Board at their Oct 28 meeting. Some members of the NRCB might consider attending the Oct 28 Park Board meeting if it is decided some discussion is needed.

Staff recommendation is to approve the proposal. Locating the dog park at Aquatore would take focus off the other open spaces and remove the location from NRCB responsibility. The location has adequate parking, electricity and water readily available.

Staff recommends the Board approve the proposal for a dog park to be located at Aquatore Park, including the wooded area previously being maintained by the NRCB.

Board member Ruth stated management of Aquatore Park would transfer from the NRCB to the Park Board.

Chair McKinley stated this would be a perfect spot for a Dog Park.

Board member Anderson stated he would be in favor of the location for the dog park. Board member Gunter stated she agrees but it would be nice to recoup the costs the NRCB paid for buckthorn removal and woodchip trails.

Boardmember Perkins asked how large the area was.

Motion

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Gunter, Castillo, and Anderson

7. Other Business

Chair McKinley stated four boardmembers are up for re-appointment. The application is due back to the City by the end of October.

Chair McKinley requested the Board start thinking about 2015 group goals.

8. Adjournment

Adjourned

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Gunter, Castillo, and Anderson