



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 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, January 20, 2015

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

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

2. Roll Call

2. Roll Call - Chair McKinley called the roll call. Those present include: Boardmembers Anderson (arrived 7:03 p.m.), Castillo, Gunter (arrived 7:03 p.m.), Perkins, Rafferty, Ruth, Truchon (arrived 7:12 p.m.), Villella, Chair McKinley, and Recording Secretary Debbie Wolfe.

Absent -Staff Liaison Hafner

Others Present - Jeff Bird, Parks Board Chairman

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

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the Board.

5. Approval of Agenda

Chair McKinley corrected on item 6.a Jeff Bird is the Park Board
Chairman.

Motion

6. New Business

6.a Discussion with Parks & Recreation Board Chairman Jeff Bird

Chair McKinley welcomed Jeff Bird, Chairman of Park Board to the meeting. She would like to review funding, staff issues, Adopt-A-Park program, Dog Park at Aquatore, issues in the parks, and community service awards.

Jeff Bird thanked the NRCB for having him at the meeting this evening. He stated in all the parks the NRCB plays a major role. He reviewed the mission of the Park Board as they are an advisory board to the City Council and any recommendations are made for Council approval. The Park Board receives funding through park dedication fees. A portion of park dedication fees from residential development goes to the NRCB. The Park Board is tasked with making sure the right policies and procedures take place from an administrative standpoint. Residents come to the Park Board with concerns and suggestions regarding the parks. City Staff makes recommendations to the Park Board. The Park Board is three new parks away from being done in the City. There are 69 parks in the City. General park maintenance is completed by the City maintenance staff. The Lexington Athletic Complex is currently being constructed. Monies have been borrowed from City funds to pay for the park. The Park Board carries over a balance to cover the next year's loan payments for the LAC. There are seven members on the Park Board. The LAC will be a state-of-the-art complex with two multipurpose irrigated and lighted fields, two baseball fields, two tennis courts, lighted parking lot to support a hockey rink in the winter, outdoor basketball court, and a multi-use building. The next park constructed may be a small park close to 128th and Harpers. Legacy Creek Park was completed last year. The City's plan is to put a 10-foot bituminous trail along Harpers Street to connect to the new park. There will be future discussion on Aquatore Park. Jeff Bird thanked the NRCB for all their work on the parks and open spaces within the City.

Chair McKinley stated she is very proud of the trail system that has been developing in the City.

Jeff Bird stated when the Curling Center was constructed at Fogerty Arena, a baseball field was moved at a cost of \$200,000. The Park Board is very conscious of spending and attempting to come up with alternative funding sources.

Earth Day will be held at Laddie Lake this year. Boardmember Truchon asked if the Park Board can go after legacy monies for parks and trails. Jeff Bird stated the City found one legacy account that was

deemed for repairing aged park amenities. Recommendations were made to the City Council on what repairs needed to be made and the City Council approves. The Park Board must stick to a strict budget. The Park Director position was eliminated from the City.

Jeff Bird asked if the NRCB had any plans for Laddie Lake, Lochness and Pioneer Parks. Chair McKinley stated buckthorn removal is ongoing. There is an ongoing prairie restoration project at Laddie Lake. Chair McKinley stated at Earth Day the restoration project plan will be communicated to the residents.

Jeff Bird stated they rely on Eagle Scout's to do projects for the Park Board. He suggested the NRCB may want to reach out to the local Eagle Scout troops for some projects such as benches and other items desired in the open spaces.

Chair McKinley asked if the two Boards should jointly request the City put in a Parks Director. Jeff Bird stated he does not believe that would happen in 2015. There is a possibility the position may be reinstated for 2016. The parks are not being maintained as they were in the past. Chair McKinley asked if the NRCB passed a resolution requesting a Parks Director would the Parks Board do the same. Jeff Bird stated the two park department managers are doing a great job but are very busy. He does not believe there would be a benefit with passing such a resolution.

Boardmember Anderson stated society is now in a "preventative" mode. Without a Director, projects are getting done but the responsibility for doing things is undetermined. The suggestion was made for Boardmembers to speak to their Council representative.

Boardmember Truchon referred to the pollinator problem and she believes things could be done in the City to help the pollinators. There needs to be native plants and areas with no pesticides/herbicides. There needs to be a conscious effort to help the pollinators. Boardmember Truchon will provide information to the NRCB and the Park Board. Jeff Bird will add that to the Park Board agenda.

Chair McKinley stated Boardmembers Ruth and Anderson will be promoting the Adopt-A-Park program. Jeff Bird stated the Park Board would like to be of assistance. This will be an opportunity for collaboration.

Jeff Bird stated the dog park at Aquatore is not a done deal. The City

Ordinance states a dog has to under the owner's control and command. The Park Board was trying to find a location, which is not residential for the dog park. Aquatore Park was discussed as a possibility. The dog park is in the 2016 budget and during the next couple of months they are tweaking the plan to leave as much of the wooded area alone. Boardmember Truchon stated the forest area at Aquatore Park should be left alone. Jeff Bird stated it was not the Park Board's intent to remove any trees; however, the area could be cleaned up further. Boardmember Truchon stated she would not like to see the forest area manicured. Jeff Bird stated they are looking at a fee-based dog park to pay for maintenance. The City Council is strongly committed to having a dog park.

Chair McKinley stated there is a need for a crossing across Lexington into the Athletic Complex. Jeff Bird stated that is a County Road and it was suggested the Anoka Commissioners be contacted. Jeff Bird stated the Park Board is concerned about a crossing across Lexington also.

Jeff Bird suggested a joint-workshop be held in the summer between the Park Board and the NRCB.

Chair McKinley submitted a list of maintenance items that need to be done in the City Parks to Jeff Bird. Jeff Bird invited the NRCB Boardmembers to the Park Board Meeting on Tuesday when the volunteers are recognized.

6.b Update on Blaine Wetland Sanctuary projects

Staff Liaison Hafner had provided a written update on Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Project.

Background

A. Wetland Banking Project - The MN DNR has agreed to reclassify PWW 02-577, the public waters wetland, which is located in the central part of the new wetland banking project. This now places that wetland under jurisdiction of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) of MN and means we will receive credit for the improvements to that wetland. The next hurdle is obtaining project recognition from the Army Corps, which would mean they will allow Army Corps credits for the wetland improvements. They typically only allow credits for wetland restoration projects that improve the hydrology on the site. The approach being used here does not include hydrologic alteration, only plant community improvement and protection. It is a more rigorous process but we are optimistic that they will accept the proposed process. Once we are over this hurdle, we will begin the permit process with the Corps and the Rice Creek WD. With permits secured, the field work will begin. The schedule originally laid out had the field work beginning in the winter of 2015-16 and we are still shooting for that goal.

B. Improvements - Staff met with the consultant, Stantec, in December to begin laying out a schedule for the project. This included itemizing the tasks to be completed before actual field work of trail construction could begin, having a public meeting to introduce the project and gain input from residents and a meeting with the NRCB. Early March is projected for the public meeting and possibly meeting with the NRCB at the March meeting. Stantec is planning on the May event and is designing a 3-D model of the site for the event.

Reps from Stantec, Jason Husveth and staff walked the northern area of the site to collect GPS data, which will be used for more accurately defining trail footprints to connect the loop from East Lake Park to the future nature center site. It is anticipated that the trail head off Lexington will be constructed this year with the trail work beginning late in the year. There are lots of wetlands to work with and frozen ground will facilitate much of that work.

No action is requested of the Board as this is for information purposes. Any

questions should be e-mailed to Jim Hafner.

6.c 2015 NRCB goals

Chair McKinley provided a list of 2015 Goals:

- 1 Give attention to development of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS)
- 2 Continue to utilize the Open Space Management Plan for guidance and setting priorities.
- 3 Continue to explore ideas for enhancing public awareness & use of our open spaces and trails.

List of ideas/suggestions for NRCB members to choose and pursue this year:

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Kickoff - May 30th (Boardmember Villella will lead)

North Metro Home & Garden Show - Feb 28th

Green Expo - April 25th (Chair McKinley will lead)

Earth Day - May 2nd (Chair McKinley working with Park Board)

World Fest - May 16th

Blazing Festival - June 26-28

NRCB History (Boardmembers Rafferty/Truchon)

Adopt-A-Park program (Boardmembers Ruth/Anderson)

Hiking our trails program

Write a column for the City Newsletter? (Boardmember Truchon/others)

Continue work on trail maps/info brochures - maintain what we have
Website updating? (Boardmember Perkins)

Name more trails this year? (Chair McKinley) Jason Husveth will be asked for suggestions.

Conduct Open Space tours this year - which places? Blaine Wetland Sanctuary,

Other ideas/suggestions???

Promote water conservation in the City (Boardmember Truchon)

Promote information on the pollinators (Boardmember Truchon)

7. Other Business

7.a Announcement by Chair McKinley

Chair McKinley stated the volunteers will be recognized at the Park Board Meeting on Tuesday January 27, 2015 at 7pm. The presentation will be made by the Mayor.

7.b Presentation by Jason Husveth at February 17, 2015 meeting

Jason Husveth will make a presentation to the NRCB on February 17, 2015.

8. Adjournment

Adjourned