



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes - Final

Blaine City Hall
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, January 19, 2016

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Others Present: Recording Secretary, Debbie Wolfe

Present: 7 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Castillo, and Comissioner Anderson

Absent: 2 - Rafferty, and Gunter

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Boardmember Perkins, seconded by Boardmember Villella to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2015 Board Meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 7 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Castillo, and Comissioner Anderson

4. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Boardmember Castillo, seconded by Boardmember Ruth, to approve the January 19, 2016 Board Agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 7 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Castillo, and Commissioner Anderson

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

There was none.

6. New Business

6.a Update on Blaine Wetland Sanctuary

Chair McKinley stated there was a meeting with MSR and Stantec on January 8, 2016. No NRCB representative was present. Chair McKinley read the staff report prepared by Mr. Hafner.

A written staff report was presented summarizing Stantec and the architect met with staff on January 8. They presented a close to 90% proposal of the exterior design and site layout for the proposed nature center. Staff is still concerned over potential wetland impacts and is asking the design to move the main building closer to the parking lot to eliminate any wetland impacts. These impacts would result in extra cost; but, the city needs to show developers that adjustments can be made to avoid wetland impacts and still achieve project goals.

The proposed three building modules would fit a potential need of starting with one building and adding additional structures later. NRCB input can be provided on the exterior appearance at this time. Staff feels good about the design and how it fits into the setting of the location. There will be ample opportunity down the road to discuss interior features and layout. However, we have identified such things as the plan only showing one bathroom; the need for wash areas for lab and work rooms; storage areas, etc. that should be addressed now. Given the water table and soils of this site the buildings will not have basements. There is also a timing scenario of when city sewer and water would be available to the site; it is not currently available. There is a well on the site but no septic. On-site septic would need to be a mound system which we would hope to avoid. There is a fair chance that by the time we are ready to build the utilities will be available.

Documents should be ready by early February to package permit applications and submit them to the RCWD and the Corps. The plan would be to build the parking lot on the nature center site this spring/summer and begin work on trails. The first trail would be from the East Lake Park loop to the nature center site, including the crossing of Ditch 53-62 on the east side. The overall schedule is

being moved back one year. If we are able to obtain corporate contributions that could change again but we will play that by ear as things progress. The main focus now is getting in the ground and having something to attract attention to the project.

In connection with the new banking project, some clearing of trees near the upland island could take place this winter yet. We are still waiting for approval from the Army Corps on the banking project but trees would need to be cleared for both the trail and the banking projects. Other work in the wetlands would have to wait until all approvals and permits are in hand. A more realistic outlook would be for the wetland work to start next winter. The parking lot, ditch crossing and upland trail work can start as soon as we have the RCWD permit in hand.

Boardmember Perkins noted the cost of the building is somewhat high. The Funding Summary presented includes:

Phase 1 - Segments 1-3 and C Parking, Park Amenities - \$1,170,000

Phase 2 - Open Water Feature, Turn Lanes from 109th, Parking - \$580,000

Phase 3 - Segments 6-7 and K, Restroom - \$680,000

Phase 4 - Segments 5 and E-I, Wildlife Viewing Platform - \$600,000

Phase 5 - Segments 4 and J, Wildlife Viewing Platform - \$310,000

Phase 6 - Nature Center, Gathering Shelter - \$3,100,000

Total \$6,440,000

Boardmember Perkins requested a breakdown of what is include in the Nature Center. Boardmember Villella agreed he would like to see the breakdown.

The plans were reviewed by the boardmembers.

Boardmember Truchon arrived at the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

A discussion of the number of restrooms at the site was held.

Boardmember Truchon requested the message be sent to the architect team that any wetland impacts be eliminated.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Chairperson McKinley, to direct staff to make the will of the NRCB known that they wish to support the idea that they don't want the wetland impacts and move the main building closer to the parking lot. The motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 7 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Castillo, and Commissioner Anderson

6.b Update on Open Space Management

Chair McKinley read the written staff report summarizing staff met with Prairie Restorations in late November. Scheduled mowing and herbicide applications were accomplished at Laddie Lake, Hidden Ponds and Sites 8,9,10,11. There is scheduled work for Hidden Ponds and Laddie Lake for 2016. Control of black locust is the main item at Laddie Lake. At Hidden Ponds there will be a revamping of the prairie area into more wet condition vegetation. There is more peat in that area than originally anticipated so a change in vegetation and the planting of some trees, to include tamarack trees, will be the focus. The trees and some vegetation seeding will be covered by Prairie Restorations as compensation for some previous work that did not take.

There is no immediate plan for work in Pioneer Park for 2016. Staff is working with Jason Husveth on an overall plan and coordinating that with his other work for the BWS.

6.c Board discussion on 2016 goals and activities

Chair McKinley reviewed a list she created with ideas on goals for 2016.

2016 Goals/Activities

Continue to focus on plans for development of Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

Continue to utilize the Open Space Management plan for guidance and setting priorities.

Continue to explore ideas/activities for enhancing public awareness of the NRCB and use of our open spaces and trails.

Suggestions:

Earth Day with P&R
Green Expo @ NSC April 23
American Wetlands Month in May
Blaine Festival in June
Monitor kiosks for contents
Promote Adopt-A-Park
Write a newsletter column
Conduct park/open space tours
Consider trail names

Complete NRCB history

Other ideas mentioned were kite flying activity, GPS activity, geo-caching, promote use of trails, city-wide park visits, passport to the open space program, bird watching walk (Boardmember Truchon will research), friends of open space, Jason Husveth tour of BWS, benches in parks/open spaces, picnic tables, naming/sponsorship of trails within BWS, green roof on building at BWS.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Adjournment

MOVED by Boardmember Perkins seconded by Boardmember Castillo, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 7 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Ruth, Perkins, Truchon, Castillo, and Commissioner Anderson