



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
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, November 21, 2017

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

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

2. Roll Call

Others Present: Recreation Manager Shari Kunza and Rebecca Haug, Co-Liaison, Water Resource Manager.

Present: 8 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Castillo, Lizakowski, Genet, and Theisen

Absent: 2 - Ruth, and Perkins

3.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Lizakowski, to approve the November 21, 2017 Board Agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 8 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Castillo, Lizakowski, Genet, and Theisen

4.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 17 MEETING MINUTES

Attachments: [10-17-17nrcb.doc](#)

Chair McKinley noted on page two last paragraph before item seven, she requested the wording be changed to "it was agreed to table approval of

the contract with Growing Green Hearts until it is provided for Board review”.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Rafferty, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2017 Board Meeting as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 8 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Castillo, Lizakowski, Genet, and Theisen

Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the Commission.

None

5.

PRESENTATION ON INTERPRETIVE SIGNS FOR THE BWS

The Board was requested to provide feedback and suggestions on the signs.

Boardmember Genet introduced students from Anoka Ramsey Community College who presented interpretive signs they have created for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. She stated only seven of the eight signs were available. Alex Richardson presented the “Subtle Transitions, Dramatic Differences” sign information in detail.

Boardmember Truchon stated she appreciates the partnerships formed to do the project. She stated the sign was very informational.

Chair McKinley asked Alex if Jason assisted with some of the wording. Alex stated the information came from Jason’s comments and website. Chair McKinley thanked Alex.

Boardmember Genet stated the “Where am I in my watershed” sign was done with cooperation from the Rice Creek Watershed District and some of the maps will be revised. The authors for this sign were not able to be at the NRCB Meeting this evening.

Chair McKinley stated this is good information showing the BWS as part of the watershed.

Boardmember Villella arrived at the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Boardmember Villella stated he liked the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary logo

and Boardmember Genet stated that was the City's doing. Boardmember Villella commented it was a good job.

Amara Isom Karypis and Rachel Geurts presented the "Upland Mesic Forest" sign and described it in detail. Amber Baumann was unable to be at the meeting.

Chair McKinley stated it was a good layout and including what the public can do was a great idea.

Amara reviewed the twelve links included on the sign.

Boardmember Villella asked if the QR codes were active on the signs and will each sign have its' own links. Boardmember Genet noted the QR codes are not yet active.

Boardmember Truchon and Chair McKinley stated they were impressed.

Boardmember Villella suggested a digital link to the signs be included on the City's website. Ms. Kunza stated staff is in the process of creating a new website for the BWS.

Boardmember Genet stated the sign "How are wetlands restored and managed" will have further input from Jason Husveth to reflect what is happening at the site. The main points addressed on this sign were reviewed. Boardmember Genet suggested the herbiciding which has been done be included on this sign.

Boardmember Truchon stated one of the great values of the BWS to the community is it will become a seed source. Ms. Haug stated she is working with the DNR on the BWS being a seed source allowing the DNR to come and take some seeds to use in other parts of the State along with the University of Minnesota.

Chair McKinley liked the portion of the sign stating wetland maintenance is an ongoing process.

Morgan Scheiller reviewed the sign "What Makes This Site Unique" in detail. Her partner on this sign Tong Moua could not be present at the meeting. This sign will be located on the platform. A better picture will be part of the sign. She stated there were hyperlinks that explain further the plants. Boardmember Genet stated the exact locations will not be included on the final sign.

Boardmember Truchon agreed not to show the exact location of the native plants. She suggested adding to the sign that these plants are very hard to transplant and the plants are site specific. She asked if there is any interactive reporting of sightings by visitors. Boardmember Genet stated the visitors will be able to report observations.

Boardmember Genet stated there will be an additional sign on the platform that has not yet been printed.

Boardmember Genet reviewed the "Habitats and Animals" sign in detail. The interactive links are still being worked on.

Boardmember Truchon asked about seasonal changes being noted. Boardmember Genet stated most of the visitors will see these signs in the spring, summer and fall. She stated that could be included in the interactive links on the sign. Boardmember Truchon asked if Wargo Nature Center and Anoka County Parks logos could be included on the sign as far as programming. Boardmember Genet stated this is a City area rather than a County area. Ms. Kunza stated the logos on the bottom of each sign are noting who participated in the signs. If there is any collaboration on programs Anoka County would be given credit.

Dominic McFadden, Matthew Ebeling and Brittanie Fort reviewed the "Wetlands in Our Neighborhood" sign in detail. The thirteen hyperlinks to this sign were reviewed. This would be the last sign on the trail.

Chair McKinley stated all the signs are awesome and the hyperlinks included are great. She thanked all the students for the work they have done. Boardmember Genet stated the signs are not completed yet and asked the Board to provide any further feedback on the signs if they wish. Some of the pictures will change. The goal is to have the completed signs installed by the spring.

Chair McKinley asked who designed the BWS Logo. Ms. Kunza stated the City's in-house graphic designer developed the logo.

Chair McKinley suggested the interpretive signs be constructed of materials able to withstand vandalism.

Ms. Kunza commended the students on their work and they will make a big difference in the BWS. Boardmember Genet stated the feedback from the Open Forums to review the signs has been taken into the modifications on

the signs.

Boardmember Truchon suggested all the students should receive an "A".

Discussed.

6.

OPEN SPACE REPORTS

Kane Meadows - Boardmember Villella reviewed photographs taken at Kane Meadows back in July 2017. There is a facebook page for this park.

Chair McKinley noted the railing appears to have been restored on the viewing deck. Ms. Kunza stated a few years ago this open space was part of an Earth Day project where the trees and brush were removed. This area needs to be maintained regularly.

Boardmember Truchon asked if the bank continues to be well vegetated and Chair McKinley stated there is plenty of vegetation on the bank. Ms. Haug stated she will look at the area and noted the City does not want residents removing a lot of the vegetation along the buffers of the ponds because of erosion.

Chair McKinley stated this is a gem of an area. It does not have off-street parking so it is difficult for people to use it. The trail is heavily used by the neighbors.

Lochness Park - Boardmember Castillo reviewed photographs taken at Lochness Park. The pond was already iced over. He noted the platform may need to be replaced within five years. He noted it appears residents are mowing some paths to their backyards and there are some "No Trespassing" signs posted.

Chair McKinley asked for written reports for all the open space areas that can be provided to the Public Works Department.

Boardmember Castillo stated the only way to get to the area is to drive or walk from the St. Andrews neighborhood. Boardmember Castillo was not even aware this park existed. Boardmember Genet stated she lives near this park and off leash dogs are a big problem in the park. Boardmember Castillo stated it would be ideal to get more paths from the neighborhood into this park.

Chair McKinley stated there is a disc golf course in the park. Chair McKinley stated it was a landfill and sledding was not allowed due to some of the debris coming to the surface.

Boardmember Genet stated at the trail at the top of the hill there is always a pile of woodchips at the end of the path. She asked if the woodchips would be spread. Ms. Haug stated staff will look into that as well as the dumping. Boardmember Castillo stated there are some vehicles going on the path.

Hidden Ponds Park - Chair McKinley stated she will cover Hidden Ponds Park for Boardmember Ruth. She read a prepared report on Hidden Ponds. The park is beautifully maintained with playground, basketball, etc. There is a nice paved trail coming in from the street. The open space is 5.3 acres adjacent to the park. The condition of the open space is very disturbing to her. The peat has been left alone as the prairie could not be planted on peat. The growth there is weeds. There had been a woodchip trail that went through the open area to meet up with the paved trails. The woodchip trail is overgrown completely. She added Prairie Restoration did a good job of removing the buckthorn. She will notify Public Works and see if the woodchip trail can be restored.

Boardmember Truchon suggested the managing of the FEN in this area be added to the plan for the NRCB. She would like to see it restored as it should be (the 5.3 acres). This should be added to the list of priorities. Chair McKinley stated it was planned to be a prairie and Prairie Restoration suggested tamaracks. The management plan showed Oak Forest. Boardmember Truchon suggested the goal for the area be determined. Ms. Haug stated she contacted Prairie Restoration after the last meeting and sent them a list of questions. She did not receive a response before the meeting and she will follow-up and report back at the next meeting.

Chair McKinley stated the NRCB needs to keep an eye on all the open spaces with an annual review.

Boardmember Theisen stated Hidden Ponds Park is near his home and there is not a good way to enjoy the surface water within the park. The trails are too far from the water and asked if there were plans for a viewing deck in that area. Ms. Haug stated that is a storm water pond and there should not be recreational activities in storm water ponds.

Chair McKinley stated she has seen canoes on the storm water pond.

Boardmember Truchon asked about the County pond to the north and Ms. Haug stated she will research and report back to the NRCB.

Chair McKinley stated there will be a December meeting of the NRCB.

She stated the suggestion that came out of the Council work session that if trees are desired for privacy they should be planted on their own property.

Chair McKinley noted some of the boardmembers are up for re-appointment to the NRCB. She asked Boardmembers Rafferty, Castillo and Lizakowski to please re-apply.

Boardmember Castillo stated he will not be reapplying to be on the NRCB in March when his term is up. He stated his position is an at-large position. He commended Boardmember Genet on her work on the Board. He thanked everyone for accepting him on the Board.

Discussed.

Adjournment

MOVED by Boardmember Genet, seconded by Boardmember Villella, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 8 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Castillo, Lizakowski, Genet, and Theisen