



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 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, August 16, 2022

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call - Chair Perkins, Boardmembers Filipi, Genet, Panning, Rafferty, and Truchon.

Absent - Boardmember McKinley.

Others Present: Recreation Manager Nate Monahan, Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom, and Adjunct Member Isabel Hobot.

Present: 6 - Rafferty, Chair Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Panning, and Filipi

Excused: 2 - Vedi, and Tripler

Absent: 1 - Vice Chair McKinley

3. Approval of Minutes

3.-1

Approval of the June 21, 2022 NRCB Minutes

Attachments: [06-21-22 NRCB](#)

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2022 board meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 6 - Rafferty, Chair Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Panning, and Filipi

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

5. New Business

5.-1 Pioneer Park Update

Attachments: [Trail Management Area](#)

Ms. Hedstrom stated on August 2, 2018, staff brought the opportunity of conducting a similar wetland restoration project in Pioneer Park to a council workshop and received direction to move forward with a consultant to assemble a draft plan for a wetland restoration project, including information on a potential wetland bank. This draft plan was presented at the November 8, 2018 council workshop, and council consensus directed staff to pursue a wetland bank at Pioneer Park. At the February 7, 2019 meeting, council approved an agreement between the city and the watershed district to move the project forward, and at the February 21, 2019 meeting a contract with a consultant was approved authorizing the consultant to conduct a wetland delineation and complete a prospectus report. A prospectus is one of the first steps to begin a wetland bank. Work on the prospectus was conducted over 2019 and 2020. The prospectus report identified a preliminary extent of tree removal.

Ms. Hedstrom explained at the April 6, 2020 council meeting, council indicated that the tree removals in the wetland and upland area were a primary concern, and directed staff to reduce tree impacts wherever possible. The prospectus was approved with the recommendation that neighborhood meetings be held and tree removals be re-examined. A comprehensive tree survey was performed by the consultant. The first step of the potential wetland bank is to remove the dead and non-native invasive trees from the wetland in Pioneer Park. This project was presented to the NRCB in October of 2021 during the budget process, and the NRCB recommended moving forward. The potential project was brought back to council on January 3rd for further discussion. Specifics on tree removals were discussed. More details, including cost, were brought to the August 8 council workshop for further discussion.

Council recommended that in the winter of 2022/2023 that the dangerous trees along the trails are removed. The topic will be revisited in 2023 to review the response from park users and neighbors on the tree removals, and to discuss the potential to remove dead/diseased trees from other areas of the park.

Boardmember Genet questioned what the city's responsibility was to manage invasive species. Ms. Hedstrom reported this was brought up by the council and noted in Pioneer Park there were several species that were being addressed, such as buckthorn and garlic mustard. In addition, she noted the city has set aside funds every year for ash tree removal.

Chair Perkins indicated the city had a fiscal and legal responsibility to take of dead and diseased trees. He supported the city taking care of this through a wetland bank as this would allow the city to improve the park, while providing a funding source. He wanted to be assured the council fully understood the impact of their decision and how the costs for this project would impact the city. He stated he was not in favor of the costs for the tree removal coming out of the open space fund.

Boardmember Truchon commented the more the city slows the project this down, the higher the costs would be to the community in the long run. She stated if buckthorn is not removed, it becomes worse and worse. She questioned where the city was with its discussions with the core, BWSR, DNR and watershed district regarding the wetland bank. Ms. Hedstrom explained to set up a wetland bank a draft prospectus has to be completed along with a formal prospectus. She noted a formal prospectus has been submitted to the core and BWSR. She reported the next step would be to formally apply for a wetland bank and to work through the permitting process. She understood the core would like to see this wetland bank pursued, given the fact there was a need in the market.

Boardmember Truchon asked how much communication has been held with the neighborhood. Ms. Hedstrom stated the last communication informed the neighborhood that work would be put on pause in order to allow staff to time to further investigate the loss of tree impacts. She explained now that staff has direction from the council to move forward with a portion of the tree removal, she would be sitting down with communications this fall to create an education plan.

Boardmember Truchon believed the city should be doing more education with the public regarding the value and benefits of wetlands. Ms. Hedstrom stated she would be happy to keep the board in the loop while staff creates the education plan for this park.

Boardmember Genet commented she would be happy to assist with this process as well.

Boardmember Panning suggested additional educational material be drafted regarding the importance of buckthorn removal as well. She was of the opinion the council's recommendation for Pioneer Park was a safety concern and the expense to remove these trees should not come out of the open space budget. She questioned when this tree removal work would begin. Ms. Hedstrom reported there would be a very tight turnaround and estimated the trees would be removed in January or February of 2023.

Chair Perkins questioned how big the wetland bank would be at Pioneer Park. Ms. Hedstrom stated this would be a 44 acre wetland bank. Further discussion ensued regarding the revenue that could be generated by creating a wetland bank at Pioneer Park.

5.-2

NRCB Update

Mr. Monahan provided the board with an update on the following projects:

Eagle Scout Project Update

AJ Genet locations for bat houses and further project detail discussion. Staff noted Loch Ness Park was being considered for the bat houses.

Sub-committee Updates

Learning Center Design Committee: Mary Jo Truchon, Kristen Genet

Boardmember Truchon explained she had interior and exterior pictures of Springbrook. She commented further on the layout and design of the Springbrook Nature Center. She stated she appreciated how this center was built specifically for the site.

Finance Committee: Sarah Filipi, Carolyn Panning
Boardmember Panning reported she had no updates at this time.

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail RFP

Staff explained proposals will be reviewed soon from area consultants.

Wetland Credit Sale Update

Staff will provided an update on the latest wetland credit sales. It was noted 30.1265 acres have been sold and 7.9329 acres were pending. Staff noted there was 1.6756 acres remaining.

Volunteer Opportunity for BWS

Staff will provided details on the volunteer opportunities at the BWS. Information was provided regarding the city's adopt-a-pond pilot project. The board requested signs be posted recognizing the groups that had cleaned the ponds.

Staff reported Great River Greening would be hosting milkweed planting event on Saturday, September 17 from 8AM to 12PM. Those attending should plan to meet at the North Meadows neighborhood.

Upcoming Fall BWS Programming

Fall Birding - All ages

Join a naturalist from Wargo Nature Center and grab a pair of binoculars (provided) to discover all the birds that use the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary in the fall.

Thursday, September 15 from 5-7PM

FEE: \$5 child or family

Biodiversity BioBlitz - All ages

Join a naturalist from Wargo Nature Center to explore and discover as many species as possible in the Blaine Wetland! Using the iNaturalist app we will identify and record as many species as possible to discover the biodiversity of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

Thursday, September 29 from 5-7PM

FEE: \$5 child or family

Adjournment

Chair Perkins adjourned the meeting at 8:01PM.