

Ecological Advocacy Committee Meeting 9-9-19

Location: Rum Village Nature Center

Committee Members Present:

Steve Sass
Sarah Nerenberg
Andrew Tucker
Allison Egan
Alicia Czarnecki
Rachel Novick
Lindsay Chadderton

Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA Rum Village Park Supervisor
Hannah Teshka – VPA Naturalist
Brent Thompson – VPA Forester
Patrick Sherman – VPA Project Manager
John Martinez – VPA Director of Facilities and Grounds

Call to order – Steve Sass at 8:30 am.

Vote to approve the minutes from July EAC Meeting by Sarah Nerenberg seconded by Andrew Tucker.

Discussion:

Mud Lake Nature Preserve Proposal – Mark Blassage and Chris Cobb

Mark and Chris were both actively involved in the group, colloquially known as Elbel for Everyone.

Proposal Title – *Proposal for South Bend Venues, Parks & Arts to Commit to Pursuing Protection for Mud Lake as a State Dedicated Nature Preserve*

- Questions and Answers on Proposal – EAC, Mark Blassage and Chris Cobb
 - They are asking the city to work on obtaining nature preserve status for the whole lake and property around the lake within the red boundaries on the map in the proposal (attachment 5).
 - The EAC recommended that the City of South Bend and VPA should start the process of finding out who owns the lake at the March 2019 Park Board meeting.
 - The EAC agrees that the lake and surrounding property should be taken care of properly and stewarded correctly.
 - The proposal states that VPA (as a landowner adjacent to) would have to initiate the process with the DNR to turn Mud Lake into a State Dedicated Nature Preserve.
 - As of right now, nobody knows who owns the lake itself. However, records indicate that there is an island that has been deeded to someone.
 - This proposal is just the first step in the process, and they hope to have more information once the process has started with the DNR.
 - The City of South Bend does not own Mud Lake. The golf course likely cannot be dedicated as a nature preserve.
 - The DNR will have to work alongside landowners to figure out the status with the City being a key player.

- There are other lakes around Indiana that have non-profit Lake Associations that help with invasive species, water recreation, etc. which could be an option for Mud Lake.
- The EAC believes that increased protection and stewardship is worth looking into for Mud Lake.

Motion-

Sarah Nerenberg recommends that the EAC forms a subcommittee to work on this proposal. Seconded by Andrew Tucker. Andrew Tucker will take lead on this subcommittee.

New Procedure for Future EAC Meetings – Matthew Moyers and Garry Harrington

The EAC is set up to provide recommendations to the park board.

New EAC Meeting Structure

- EAC meetings will have a new meeting structure, which follow the guidelines laid out by Robert's Rules of Order.
 - Determine quorum
 - Approval of previous minutes
 - Old business - Unresolved issues from prior meetings (deferred proposals)
 - New proposals - New items seeking recommendation
 - VPA and city updates - Regular facilities and grounds updates
 - Reports from EAC subcommittees
 - Miscellaneous

Proposals (to the EAC by the Park Board or by their representatives)

The EAC will have four choices when presented to them:

- Recommended
- Not recommended
- Deferred
- Passed to subcommittee

Complete proposal information shall be provided two weeks before EAC meetings to allow the EAC to review.

Subcommittees or leads from the EAC may help in the development of all proposals. VPA may create proposals (usually in working with volunteer EAC member) to receive recommendations.

The EAC may create proposals to pass as recommendations, which may be presented to the Board of Park Commissioners. VPA reserves the right to have staff involved in the creation of the proposals to help implementation, concerns, and limitations.

2020 Meeting Dates:

2020 Application Process begins on September 16th.

2020 Applications are due on October 25th (sent to Garry Harrington – gharring@southbendin.gov).

Recommendations for the EAC 2020 Committee will be presented at the November Park Board Meeting.

All meetings will be held at Rum Village Nature Center from 8:30am – 10:00am.

- January 6, 2020
- February 17, 2020
- March 30, 2020
- May 11, 2020
- June 22, 2020
- August 3, 2020

- September 14, 2020
- October 26, 2020
- December 7, 2020

*VPA is asking each EAC member sit on at least 2 subcommittees in starting in 2020.

Updates Concerning Park Properties – Patrick Sherman, John Martinez, Matthew Moyers, and Alicia Czarnecki

Pinhook Park:

- Updates on the removal of the Milfoil – Brent Thompson
 - The DNR will give approval to the removal on only half the lagoon.
 - The contractor (that was recommended by the DNR) recommended doing spot treatments throughout the year.
 - Complete eradication is the best way to go. Otherwise, it will have constant reinvasion so they will constantly have to do spot treatments. First step is to understand how the milfoil is coming into the system in the first place.
 - Action Item – Brent will update the EAC with follow-ups via email and the EAC Google Drive.
- Project updates – Alicia Czarnecki
 - Species list was revised with help from the EAC and sent to the designers.
 - The designers had to do additional surveys.
 - EAC has concerns about protection of the existing tree and tree root systems during construction.
 - Project will be started in the next construction season.

Action Matrix for Park Projects:

EAC is asking for an action matrix of each park property projects. This will include what phase the project is in, what the upcoming projects will be, and will highlight the sensitive properties. Patrick Sherman will create this list and updated in the Google Drive.

- The next project will be Leeper Park Phase 2 which includes the river overlook.
- Then trail along the river that leads to Howard Park. (This will come back to the EAC as a proposal for bank stabilization Best Management Practices).

Leeper Park:

- Thank you to the EAC for the quick responses. Facilities and Grounds was able to strike cultivars and come up with great substitution with the help from the EAC.

Pulaski park:

- Construction has begun.
- Brent will be planting around 70 trees in the park. All of the trees that will be planted are from the Purdue Native Tree List.

Howard Park:

- Interpretative signage information for the bioswale is going to the sign company. Thank you to the EAC for help with that!

West Bank Trail Project:

- Currently being re-scoped.

Seitz Park:

- Offline due to Notre Dame putting the hydroelectric dam.

35th Street Wetland Project:

- Eric Horvath ND civil environmental engineering class (4 groups of 4 students) will be working on this project.
- They are doing a site visit on Wednesday afternoon (September 11th).
- This project will entail:
 - Learning the project management process
 - Doing research
 - Studying access to the park via sidewalks and other rights of way.
 - Find out what is draining into the wetland
 - Looking into park improvements
 - Potentially park design
- EAC should have 4 different designs to review by Spring 2020. These will include rough cost estimates, park recommendations, background research, etc.
- Alicia Czarnecki will be the point of contact for the students.

Miscellaneous

NRMP – Steve Sass

- The process is now in place to begin working on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each Topic of Concern highlighted in the Natural Resource Management Plan.
- EAC will be creating subcommittees outside of regular scheduled meetings to work on each Topic of Concern.
- Garry Harrington will be working on management plans for each sensitive park property highlighted in the NRMP.
- The first 2 priorities will be Management of Trees and Bank Stabilization BMPs.

Ordinance 19.13 and 19.14 – is still in process and in the hands of the City Legal Department.

Coal Line Trail Site Visit - Monday September 23rd at 9:00 am (meet at Brown Field)

Next meeting is November 4th at 8:30 am at Rum Village Nature Center.

Motion to Adjourn by at 10:00 am by Sarah Nerenberg seconded by Steve Sass.

Minutes approved 1/6/19

APPROVED