



Memorandum

To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Garry Harrington, Liaison for the EAC
Subject: Ecological Advocacy Committee Update
Date: 8/3/20

Commissioners,

Here are the bullet points from the last EAC meeting:

Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting 8-3-2020

Location: Tele-meeting (Zoom)

Committee Members Present:

Steve Sass

Andrew Tucker

Andy Schnabel

Ally Pudlo

Lindsay Chadderton

Alicia Czarnecki

John DiTillo

Jo Borrer

Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA, Rum Village Park Supervisor

Hannah Teshka – VPA, Naturalist

Matthew Moyers – VPA, Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator

Brent Thompson – City of South Bend, Forester

John Martinez – VPA, Director of Facilities and Grounds

Therese Dorau – City of South Bend, Office of Sustainability



Call to order – Steve Sass at 8:39 am.

Vote to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2020 EAC meeting.

Motion by Andrew Tucker seconded by Ally Pudlo.

Discussion:

Old Business – Field at Veteran’s Memorial Park – Garry Harrington

- Garry Harrington visited the park:
 - Plants are coming back nicely except for some invasive species.
 - Milkweed is coming in as well.
 - Geese are present.
- VPA inherited this property from Public Works and have been managing this property.
- VPA Facilities and Grounds (F&G) have been tasked with cutting river windows (areas that the public can view the river).
- F&Gs is trying to balance the input from the public/leadership and from EAC recommendations. F&Gs are willing to change how they manage the properties. They need best management practices so they can properly train their staff.
- It will take some time to create the site-specific management plans.
- F&G would like the sensitive properties information prioritized. Come up with simple, real quick mowing and river window guidelines.

New Business – Mud Lake Update – Sub-Committee Members

- Original Mud Lake proposal was submitted to the EAC in September 2019.
- A revised proposal was submitted to the Mud Lake Subcommittee in June 2020.
- The Mud Lake subcommittee drafted a letter to Aaron Perri and the Board of Park Commissioners with recommendations on the proposal. This letter also highlights the Natural Resource Management Plan.
- **Motion to approve the letter of recommendations as drafted on the proposal for Mud Lake to Aaron Perri and the Board of Commissioners by the Mud Lake Subcommittee seconded by Andy Schnabel.** Motion pass with 8 – 1’s 0 – opposed.
- The next step would be to have the Director, Aaron Perri, and the Board of Park Commissioners create the proposed working group.
- The Mud Lake Sub-committee has been disbanded.

Presence of Beaver at Pinhook Park – Garry Harrington

- A citizen near Pinhook Park has voiced concerns about a beaver taking down 25-30 trees on within the Park.
- According to a VPA employee, the damage is on private residential property.

- It has been reported that there are currently 2 beaver lodges on the property.
- The drainage system that goes directly into the St. Joe River is blocked frequently by these beavers.
- One of the potentially actions that VPA could pursue would be to trap and remove.
- It was suggested that VPA could plant some sacrificial trees or VPA could create an environment that is suitable for the beaver since they are a native species.
- There is fencing around certain trees at Pinhook Park and more can be added.
- Fencing only goes around trees that are 20 inch or more.
- VPA will continue to monitor the situation.
- VPA and the EAC could take a trip to evaluate the damage along the cemetery and contact the adjacent landowners where the damage is being reported.

Assessment of Park Properties- Garry Harrington and Steve Sass

- Garry Harrington and Steve Sass have visited park properties to make assessments.
- There are plenty of areas that do not need to be mowed.
- EAC needs to identify some stop gap measures to prevent incidents like mowing the bio swales and prairies.
- Create a short list with maps of ecological sensitive areas within the properties (showing no mow zones, how/when to mow).
- Prairies like at Rum Village and Fredrickson should not be cut until late November or early spring (March).
- Stakes could be placed around the areas that should not be mowed until they have a better idea of the area and can clearly see where to stop mowing.

Land Policy Issues and Sensitive Properties – Garry Harrington and Matthew Moyers

- Garry Harrington revisited half of sensitive park properties listed in the NRMP. He plans to visit the other half soon.

VPA and City Updates – Patrick Sherman, John Martinez, Brent Thompson, and Matthew Moyers

- JF New was out at Pinhook to discuss some native plantings.
 - Native plantings will be done around the parking lot (to catch some of the parking lot run-off), around the electrical tower, and around the sides of the fishing docks.
 - Phase 2 of the plantings will include shoreline plants to deter the geese from coming off the lagoon.
 - EAC recommends that Pinhook park should have some designated fishing areas along the water so that the fishermen do not trample the plants around the lagoon. Also, that VPA does not mow to the water's edge.
- Boland Drive and Boland Trail could potentially cause some run-off into the Pinhook Park lagoon. This could create some water quality issues.
 - Boland Trail is not owned by VPA, but it is managed by VPA.

- * • The northern half of Pinhook's lagoon was treated for milfoil weed. The first application was done in the beginning of spring and the second application was done 3 weeks ago.
- Ponader Park Update – The County Legal Team has asked the EAC to look over the shrub and seed list. They need any input by Friday, August 7th.

Miscellaneous – As Warranted

- The Board of Park Commissioners would like an update on the 35th Street Wetland and the student presentations.
- The EAC will need to put together a formal report.
- NRMP will be updated on the Google Drive soon. Should be at the 90% complete.
- We should add recycling and other sustainability issues within parks into the NRMP. This could be added to the Land Management Section. Look to the Office of Sustainability for assistance.

Next meeting is September 14, 2020 at 8:30 am.

Motion to Adjourn by at 10:05 am by Steve Sass.

Sincerely,

Garry Harrington

Director, Rum Village Nature Center