

## **Minutes of the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting on August 2, 2021**

### **Committee Members Present:**

Lindsay Chadderton  
Allison Pudlo  
Charlene Allison Rountree  
Steve Sass  
Andy Schnabel  
Andrew Tucker

### **Others Present:**

Garry Harrington – VPA, Rum Village Park Property Manager  
Matthew Moyers - VPA, Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator  
Amy Roush - VPA, Development Director  
Paul Steury - Lead Educator - Urban Forestry Canopy Internship Program  
Hannah Teshka – VPA, Pinhook Center Manager  
Brent Thompson - VPA, City of South Bend, Forester

### **I. Call to order – Steve Sass 8:30 am**

### **II. Approval of minutes**

The minutes from the June 21, 2021, EAC meeting were approved. Minutes will be submitted to VPA secretary and then will appear on the city's website as official minutes.

### **III. Old Business**

A. Wildlife Coexistence Plan - Progress on the document continues, with hope for final document of recommendations in September; actionable plan would come from VPA at a later time.

### **IV. New Business**

A. Urban Forestry Canopy Program – Paul Steury reported on the activities of the Urban Forest Canopy interns, who worked to update the South Bend tree inventory, create fliers and mailers to educate the residents on opportunities to access free trees for their tree lawn, and eco-philosophize about how to get the underserved involved and connected. Their work was especially focused on District 2.

B. Howard Park Bioswale Plantings – Andy Schnabel and Steve Sass reported that about 500 plugs were planted in early July with the help of several AmeriCorps volunteers, VPA personnel, an IUSB student, and three EAC members. The plants appear to be surviving well. More native plants have been noticed blooming this year than were there last year, indicating that some species originally seeded have germinated and started to establish themselves. Several plug flats remain to be planted but will need to wait until a suitable fall planting date.

C. Vegetation Ordinance – Steve Sass reminded the committee that the ordinance will go into effect in September 2021. Questions were raised about plans for enforcement and about whether VPA was planning a press release as a reminder for the public and for private vendors.

D. Update from Pinhook Park – Hannah Teshka reported that VPA personnel are now leaving a unmowed 3-ft strip along the water’s edge. The recent flooding caused loss of 2 new trees due to beaver damage, but native plant gardens are recovering well. More native tree plantings are planned, but addition of more signage will depend on finding sponsors.

#### **V. VPA and City Updates**

A. River windows - Spring bird nesting season should be over, so work on ridding some areas of invasive shrubs (eg, honeysuckle) could begin again. VPA leadership would like most of the river corridor to resemble the work done at Kernan Park. Brent Thompson explained that removal of unwanted woody plants involves cutting and applying herbicide to the stump, but does not involve pulling stumps, because of the potential for erosion. Most of the removal is on the upper edges.

#### **VI. Miscellaneous**

A. Copperbelly Water Snake Survey Update – Garry Harrington reported that the survey will run from July - October; boards have been placed at Elbel Park in uplands to attract snakes moving from one area of Mud Lake to another.

B. Honeysuckle and autumn olive plants near Nature Center at Rum Village - EAC would like to see those invasive removed.

C. Cat houses at Riverside - Garry had left messages with Meow Mix, but had not received any word back.

Next meeting: September 13, 2021

**Meeting adjourned at 10:10 am**

Minutes submitted by Andy Schnabel, EAC Secretary 2021

**APPROVED**

Minutes approved 9/13/2021