

Minutes of the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting on February 14, 2022

Committee Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA, Rum Village Park Property Manager
Brent Thompson - City Forester, VPA
Matthew Moyers - VPA, Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator
Hannah Teshka – VPA, Pinhook Center Manager
Evelyn Bauman – Director, Office of Sustainability

I. Call to Order - Steve Sass 8:34

II. Approval of Minutes

Small changes suggested by Andy Schnabel to adjust wording regarding the EAC Chair documentation. Amy Gillan moved to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2022 meeting. Ally Pudlo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. New Business

A. Tree Board Advisory Subcommittee

Andy Schnabel and Amy Gillan explained how they researched, discussed, and concluded what would be best in preparing the EAC to act as a Tree Board for the city. Main priorities would include improved and streamlined communication. Main sources of their information included the NRMP, Tree City USA information, and municipal codes. They have both met with Matt and Brent to understand more about what the best next steps are on how to address being a Tree Board and addressing public outreach regarding segments of the community that may not be so interested in trees. Getting the city council involved would be prudent to do once this is more established, too. The EAC is also welcome to perform some outreach at Pinhook Park's Arbor Day celebrations.

B. 35th Street Wetland

Andrew Tucker, Steve, Matt, VPA project manager Patrick Sherman, and Aaron Perri met on January 13th to review the McCormick construction site designs for the wetland park. Andrew and Steve suggested certain trail routes based on their own visual recommendations.

Some resources regarding reed canary grass control as a priority for this site were sent to Patrick as well in order to help control this invasive plant species.

This is meant to be a mixed use park property and other mixed use parks, such as Strebel Pond, were suggested as examples to exemplify.

Naming of this park is also up for consideration, too.

C. Invasive Plant Species Brochure

Charlene Rountree updated everyone on what she, Amy, and Ally have been up to regarding progress on putting together the invasive plant brochure from their subcommittee. A list of stores most likely selling plants in South Bend, IN has been compiled, the ordinances regarding invasive plant species checked for any recent updates, and the brochure itself is getting ready to be made with the goal of being ready this March.

In coordination with Matt, VPA has possible city funding to be used for the printing and laminating of this brochure or booklet that can be handed out to these stores.

How official this brochure will be is something that can be followed up by with Matt and Aaron Perri among the VPA.

IV. Old Business

A. Plaza Park Update

Garry Harrington informed visits to examine Plaza Park have been postponed thus far due to weather. With snow cover, it is hard to review the grounds. Will organize EAC members being able to be present for the walks. Work is scheduled to commence still around summer potentially.

Amy commented that with how steep the riparian area is that river windows should be reduced in number and in size.

Convincing those who make decisions on riparian area river windows on how to prevent erosion and invasive species proliferation to be more concerned about EAC suggestions here is becoming more pressing. Andy Schnabel brought up having VPA members at our next meeting to be present so that concerns such as this can be discussed at next month's meeting. Matt said this was possible and would arrange for it.

Lindsay would be glad to take on putting together a short document describing EAC concerns to present to any VPA member.

B. Seitz Park

Concerns regarding Asiatic plant species addressed by Garry. Requests for Steve and Andy Schnabel to come up with a list of better resilient and showy native alternatives was brought up.

V. VPA and City Updates

Brent had No updates. Matt had no other new updates other than the Wildlife Coexistence Plan is still in review for the implementation of it.

Evie shared about events in April for us to be aware of. She also mentioned that the climate action plan is being updated as well as IU having more public engagement with changes to look into implementing ecological efforts. There might also be a grant program involving tree interns being gathered as well.

VI. Miscellaneous

Short discussion on how to share information over Teams as this is being used.

Next meeting: March 28, 2022 at 8:30am still by Teams.

Action items for follow-up:

- Andy and Amy to continue addressing establishing the Tree Board needs that the EAC can help with.
- Matt to follow-up with Aaron Perri on how official the Invasive Plants Brochure will be from VPA's standpoint.
- Garry is still following up on Plaza Park meeting days once weather improves.
- Matt will look into arranging VPA members to be present at the March EAC meeting to address riparian area river window concerns.
- Lindsay will write up a short document explaining EAC riparian area concerns and overall recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 9:59am.

Minutes approved 3/28/2022

APPROVED