

Minutes of the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting on March 28th, 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
John Martinez – VPA, Director of Facilities and Grounds
Hannah Teshka – VPA, Pinhook Center Manager
Evelyn Bauman – Director, Office of Sustainability

I. Call to Order - Steve Sass 8:40am

II. Approval of Minutes

Steve Sass called the meeting to order and prompted the approval of the February 14th, 2022 minutes. Andy Schnabel moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Amy Gillan. The motion passed unanimously.

III. New Business

A. EAC Tree Advisory Council

Andy Schnabel and Amy Gillan have met with Brent Thompson with regards to the city's municipal code and how it pertains to tree board needs. Matt Moyers shared this with the VPA and once applicable this will be placed before the Common Council for legal approval. Andy shared certain specific details that he, Amy, and Brent thought are important to include as duties of the tree board. Also, in how the tree board would be an advisory council part of the EAC based on how the EAC was structured to fulfill tree board responsibilities.

Charlene Rountree pointed out that this initial list of responsibilities and procedures is a well outlined framework for a tree board to begin with. Steve Sass brought up some concerns about how there is no oversight for this committee nor mentions of obligations of the city's responsibilities to the board, too, to fulfill any arboreal goals. Andy and Amy will keep consulting with Brent and Matt and others as this framework gets put together over the course of this year.

IV. Old Business

A. River Windows Management Plan

Lindsay Chadderton put together the memo to the park board that he and Steve compiled on River Window recommendations and concerns the EAC has. Matt Moyers suggested a special discussion prior to the next meeting with Aaron Perri to address this. This would have to be scheduled. A specific meeting dedicated to

discussing these riparian areas recommendation would help to address the numerous concerns being had by the EAC and others.

After much discussion, the end resolve was suggested for Matt to coordinate with Aaron Perri to schedule a special meeting to address this topic.

B. Invasive Plants Flyer and Brochures

Charlene Rountree summarized what the subcommittee had gathered as both information and booklet development. Amy Gillan had confirmed how frequently nursery inspections are taking place. Ally Pudlo and Charlene had reviewed the brochures provided by the DNR and MIPN. It was concluded by all members of the subcommittee upon meeting together that these already existing brochures are more than sufficient, any further booklet creation would just be repetitive, and additionally a one-page flyer made relevant to South Bend's invasive plant needs would be more prudent and practical.

Steve brought up that South Bend's invasive plants list is more extensive than that of Indiana DNR. These can be prompted by information on the created flyer.

Amy weighed in on her meetings with Eric Biddenger, the Nursery Inspector and Compliance Officer for St. Joseph County.

Matt and Garry both discussed how the printing of these existing DNR and MIPN brochures as well as any flyer created by the Invasive Plant Species subcommittee can be done. Timeline for completion is set to prior to May, so that distribution to stores selling plants in South Bend can be done by Charlene shortly thereafter. This can be placed as an item for the EAC to come to an agreement on prior to distribution at the special meeting to be arranged for river window discussions.

C. Wildlife Coexistence Plan

The plan is still under review. Matt Moyers will nudge the executive decision people see if this can be moved forward in its review process.

Matt shared that Elkhart is having their own discussion on this plan being used as the basis for what they plan to do for their own version. Many areas of the region have shown interest in the use of this plan as a basis tool on how to approach cohabitation with Canada Geese.

V. VPA and City Updates

Matt Moyers shared the rough mow schedule for some parks according to their schedules. Some concerns about mowing areas along river banks that would be a discouragement to Canada Geese from nesting in some parks was brought up, in line with the Wildlife Coexistence Plan mentions.

Evie Bauman does not have too much to update. In May there may be more opportunities mentioned for the EAC to get involved with the Climate Action plan. Steve Sass inquired on how the Office of Sustainability could be involved with Invasive Plant Species educational outreach. Charlene Rountree on behalf of the related subcommittee indicated that she is happy to meet up to go over ideas on such.

VI. Miscellaneous

A. 35th Street Wetland Clean-up

Garry Harrington updated how he will be supervising the Notre Dame University students that will be part of the Back the Bend spring clean-up. Andrew Tucker is in coordination on this and also brought up questions about Meow Mission and the

placement of their cat houses again. Steve Sass once more reported to the VPA that Meow Mission continues to maintain cat houses at Riverside Park.

- B. Reminder on April's Arbor Day event at Pinhook Park. Discussion on how the EAC could participate more.
- C. Short discussion on coordinating a couple of future in-person meetings of the EAC while maintaining mostly virtual meetings.

Next meeting: May 9th, 2022 at 8:30am still by Teams.

Action items for follow-up:

- Andy and Amy will work on putting together a Tree Advisory responsibilities list draft together with Brent and Steve. Then this will be presented to the EAC a week prior to the next meeting if possible.
- Matt to coordinate VPA special session with the EAC for riparian areas recommendations and Invasive Plants Flyer and Brochures.
- Evie and Charlene to coordinate Office of Sustainability educational outreach.

Meeting adjourned at 10:23am.

APPROVED

Minutes approved 5/9/2022