

## **Ecological Advocacy Committee Meeting 11-4-19**

Location: Rum Village Nature Center

### **Committee Members Present:**

Steve Sass  
Sarah Nerenberg  
Andrew Tucker  
Allison Egan  
Alicia Czarnecki  
Rachel Novick  
Lindsey Chadderton  
Amy Kryston

### **Others Present:**

Garry Harrington – VPA Rum Village Park Supervisor  
Hannah Teshka – VPA Naturalist  
Matthew Moyers – VPA Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator  
Brent Thompson – VPA Forester  
Patrick Sherman – VPA Project Manager  
Andrew Force – VPA Horticulturalist

**Call to order – Steve Sass at 8:32 am.**

**Defer approval of minutes until January 6, 2020 EAC meeting.**

**\*Meeting minutes will need to be reviewed and edited one week prior to the meeting.**

### **Discussion:**

#### **Introduction – Andrew Force, Horticulturalist**

- Andrew is responsible for making and keeping the parks pretty. His job includes establishing landscape for parks from design, plantings, and keeping things watered.
- Andrew and Garry Harrington are working together on planting native plants around Rum Village Nature Center which will include removing most of the existing plants including the Burning Bush near the Nature Center parking lot. Most of the plantings will happen in Spring 2020, except for a few that will be planted in the next couple of weeks. Garry will share the design and species list with the EAC.
- Upcoming projects for the Spring:
  - Howard Park
  - Leeper Park (including Leeper Park West – the new path behind the Tennis courts)
  - Pinhook Pavilion
- Pennsylvania sedge will be going into Howard Park and will be used at other parks as ground cover.
- The greenhouse near Potawatomi is heated but not ventilated so starter plants need to be monitored.
- There is no policy for the horticulturalist to avoid planting invasive species.

- The EAC recommends avoiding any plantings of invasive species just in case the plants escape cultivation. Only plant species that are native to Indiana. Work with the EAC to figure out how to fit these native plants into the landscape design.
- River window – Kernan Park:
  - Issues:
    1. The slope of the bank
    2. Invasive Honeysuckle (which is the only thing stabilizing the bank currently)
  - Possible Solution:
 

Split the bank up into two sections (remove invasive Honeysuckle & plant native ground cover)
- Current plan is to remove the lower sidewalk and create landscape beds near the boathouse.
- EAC encourages the horticulturalist to work closely with Public Works on plantings within the city.
- EAC would like to see the city be more involved and search for programs/grants like the Mayor’s Monarch Challenge which encourages pollinator gardens within the city.
- The Japanese knotweed is being eradicated within Rum Village Park by the horticulturalist with hopes to reclaim that area with some natives in the Spring. The process began with Roundup. Currently, any new sprouts are being removed. There are other parks within the city are being treated as well. Eradication of the knotweed at Frederickson Park will be next.
- Horticulturalist was asked to share any documents on the Google Drive so the EAC can make notes and can help with planting lists.

### **Updates Concerning Park Properties – Patrick Sherman & Brent Thompson**

#### Howard Park:

- Trees are being planted.
- Bioswale area has been seeded.
- Interpretative signs are being put near bioswale including small “no-mow” signs.

#### Seitz Park:

- Phase one is at 90% design.
- Phase 2 will not start until Notre Dame’s hydro-electric dam is complete.

#### Future Project:

- Planning a pathway on Lincolnway East near Crooked Ewe. This would be a 10-foot multi-use pathway.

#### Riverwalk from Sample Street to Howard Park:

- Lower sidewalk is being removed.
- An upper sidewalk will be constructed.
- EAC tasked with providing suggestions of native plants/ground cover for bank stabilization.
- EAC believes it would be in the best interest to get input from a designer that deals with bank stabilization.

#### Leeper Park:

- Phase one is almost complete. Trees are still being planted and they are working on the water that is pooling where the duck pond used to sit.

- Phase 2 is the overlook on the river. This will give people a chance to observe/interact with wildlife in their natural space.

Pulaski Park:

- In process.

EAC would like a plan in place to save more mature trees during the park designs. The designs should work around the mature trees since the mature trees play a significantly different role in their habitat.

35<sup>th</sup> Street Wetland:

- Andrew Tucker will be working with the students on Wednesday, November 6, 2020.
- There are 4 groups of students working on proposals which should be done by the end of the school year.

**Mud Lake Proposal Update – Andrew Tucker and Lindsay Chadderton**

The subcommittee drafted a letter that will be sent to Aaron Perri along with the original proposal. In this letter, the EAC recommends all references to a state nature preserve be removed from the proposal.

The EAC recommends the following language:

*“Mud Lake is an important ecological resource. As an owner of adjacent property, the City of South Bend VPA will pursue opportunities to ensure that Mud Lake and its contributing watershed are protected and restored including but not limited to, researching property ownership, considering opportunities for conservation through a lake association or with other owners whose properties border Mud Lake, pursuing easements, and engaging other partners such as DNR and land trusts.”*

**Motion from the Subcommittee to recommend the proposal with the recommended changes as stated in the letter.**

**Motion passed with 8 I’s and 0 opposed.**

**Service recognition for Rachel Novick, Sarah Nerenberg, and Allison Egan – Garry Harrington and Steve Sass**

Thank you for your service!

**Miscellaneous**

Carbon Neutral 2050 South Bend’s Climate Action Plan -

- Consultants from Delta Institute, who authored the plan and Therese Dorau, Office of Sustainability will be presenting the plan on November 6<sup>th</sup> in a Joint Session Committee Meeting for the Common Council.
- This plan will be presented in the next few weeks to the whole Common Council for a second hearing and a vote in the next few weeks.
- The initial document has no mention of parks and trees.
- There is mention of a second document that will focus on mitigation.
- EAC would like to be involved in future documents surrounding this topic.

**Next meeting is January 6, 2020 at 8:30 am at Rum Village Nature Center.**

**Motion to Adjourn by at 10:04 am by Steve Sass.**

Minutes Approved 1/6/2020

***APPROVED***