

Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting 3-30-2020

Location: Tele-meeting (Zoom)

Committee Members Present:

Steve Sass
Andrew Tucker
Alicia Czarnecki
Andy Schnabel
Ally Pudlo
Lindsay Chadderton
John DiTillo

Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA Rum Village Park Supervisor
Hannah Teshka – VPA Naturalist
Matthew Moyers – VPA Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator
Patrick Sherman – VPA Facilities & Grounds (F&G) Project Manager
Brent Thompson – City of South Bend Forester
Therese Dorau – City of South Bend Office of Sustainability
Jake Teshka – City of South Bend Common Council 5th District

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

Vote to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2020 EAC meeting.

Motion by Andrew Tucker second by Ally Pudlo

Discussion:

Old Business –

Tree Ordinance Update – Steve Sass

- The PARC Committee held on March 23, 2020 was postponed.
- Potential next step is an education campaign.

35th Street Wetland Update – Andrew Tucker and Alicia Czarnecki

- Alicia Czarnecki will be attending the Notre Dame Engineering class's Zoom meeting on March 30th for updates on the project.
- It is unknown when/how the final projects will be presented due to the current situation regarding COVID-19.
- Back the Bend has been canceled. Andrew Tucker reached out to Amy Roush from VPA about the possibility of a volunteer group coming out this summer to help with trash clean-up and invasive species removal.

Boy Scout/Fredrickson Prairie Meeting – Steve Sass

- Steve Sass met with the Boy Scouts and the Notre Dame STEM Education group about ideas/projects at Fredrickson Park on March 13, 2020.
- Notes from this meeting will be put on the EAC Google Drive.

- Boy Scouts have reached out to VPA for a meeting to discuss the potential 5 ideas/projects that were discussed at the meeting. The hope is to make one of these ideas/projects a reality in the next year.

Miscellaneous – Tree Removal/Zoning Code

- The city's zoning code needs to be more aggressive in protecting trees from developers.
- The EAC's current changes to the ordinance only address trees that should not be planted.
- Tree preservation will be added to the Office of Sustainability's Climate Adaptation Plan.
- Bowman Creek Interns or AmeriCorps could potentially investigate the current zoning codes and work on development of tree canopy goals.
- Lindsay Chadderton will draft a memo of concern regarding the loss of trees due to developers and ways to minimize the loss.

Balloon Release Resolution – Matthew Moyers & Jake Teshka

- The Balloon Release Resolution was passed by the Common Council at the March 9, 2020 Common Council Meeting.
- The Resolution was originally drafted as an Ordinance.
- Next steps will be to start an educational campaign.
- There is discussion of starting a remembrance program or memorial program as an alternative in which the city could donate a tree sapling to be planted instead of releasing balloons. Trees Sub-committee will investigate the possibility of a program like this.
- The balloon releases happen more often than we would like. These primarily happen at memorials for people that have fallen due to acts of violence.

New Proposals –

Back the Bend Cancellation – Steve Sass

- Back the Bend was canceled. Notre Dame might have some groups available this summer to help with 35th Street Wetland projects.

VPA and City Updates – Patrick Sherman and Matthew Moyers

- Riverwalk modifications from Sample to Howard Park has started.
- Leeper Park river overview is currently underway. Some of the grades are being corrected to fix the pooling of water in the park.
- Pinhook Park walking trail is set to begin. Interpretative signage is being worked on. The boat launch is being redone with an accessible kayak launch. Lindsay or Andrew will reach out to IDNR about signage to make sure your boat is clean before and after exiting the water to decrease the invasive species spread.
- Pulaski Park is primarily complete. The grand opening has been postponed due to the current COVID-19 crisis.
- Timelines for parks projects have not been disrupted for the most part, just have had a few delays.

Office of Sustainability Report – Therese Dorau

- The Office of Sustainability will have event recycling and water bottle filling stations at Best Week Ever's Signature Events.

Reports of EAC Sub-committees –

Land Policies – Alicia Czarnecki

- Alicia Czarnecki will be the lead for the Land Policies Sub-committee.

- The committee met last week via video chat to discuss the committee's next steps.
- The call included Chuck Beutter who is acting as an advisor on strategies for responsible night sky lighting.
- Check out the work that the Land Policies sub-committee is doing in their folder on the Google Drive.

VII. Miscellaneous –

Cancellation of Park Board Report – COVID-19 – Steve Sass

- Park Board Meeting was canceled due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

Q & A Regarding Sub-Committee Projects

- Leads for Sub-committees:
 - Aquatic Resource Management – Lindsay Chadderton
 - Education – Ally Pudlo
 - Land Policies – Alicia Czarnecki
 - Management of Trees – Andy Schnabel
 - Vegetation Management – Andy Schnabel
 - Wildlife Management – Steve Sass
- Jim McLister at IUSB, contact for amphibian data.

Action Step for the EAC:

1. Get familiar with Google Hangouts.
2. NRMP Sub-committee work! Reminder: Final Topic of Concern drafts are due at the August EAC meeting.

Next meeting is May 11, 2020 at 8:30 am at Rum Village Nature Center. Garry Harrington will decide where the meeting will be held as we get closer to the meeting date.

Motion to Adjourn by at 9:57 am by Steve Sass.

Minutes Approved 5/11/2020

APPROVED