

Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting 10-26-2020

Location: Tele-meeting (Zoom)

Committee Members Present:

Steve Sass
Andrew Tucker
Andy Schnabel
Ally Pudlo
Alicia Pellegrino

Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA, Rum Village Park Supervisor and EAC Liaison
Hannah Teshka – VPA, Naturalist
Patrick Sherman – VPA, Project Manager

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

Discussion:

Old Business –

35th Street Wetland Presentation to the Park Board – Andrew Tucker

- Andrew Tucker presented to the Board of Park Commissioners on October 19, 2020. He gave an update regarding the progress made at 35th Street Wetland (from December 2017 to Present).
- Patrick Sherman-
 - Funds for the 35th Street Wetland have been identified.
 - Next step will be to hire a consultant.
 - Potential construction start date is 2021.
 - Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant was identified to help with funding (300,000 is the minimum matching grant).
 - EAC will be consulted after a schematic design of the park is put together.

Natural Resource Management Plan –Steve Sass

- The Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) September 21, 2020 draft is currently being shopped around to stakeholders by Matthew Moyers for edits and suggestions.
- Stakeholders include departments like Forestry, Office of Sustainability, Public Works, Engineering, and other city departments that would have some investment in the NRMP.
- This NRMP draft will be voted on at the December Park Board meeting.
- EAC will review the edits/suggestions from the stakeholders, add photos, and update the map. This work will be completed through the EAC Google Drive before the December Park Board meeting.
- The current version of the NRMP (9-21-2020 draft) is hosted on Steve Sass's website. EAC recommends it be placed onto the EAC Google Drive for easy access.

New Business –

Ponader and Veteran's Memorial Park – Garry Harrington

Ponader:

- As a consequence of the bioswale being mowed again, Garry Harrington placed 75 stakes around the bioswale as markers, so Facilities and Grounds (F&G) does not mow the bioswale.
- The deepest areas of the bioswale have the most diverse plants which is why it most likely was not mowed each time.
- EAC would like to set up a plant rescue before construction starts on the Douglas Road project. There are a few plants that can be relocated to other areas of the park or moved to the bioswale at Howard Park. F&G will be requested to help with this.
- Long term plan will be to have a series of site-specific signs around the bioswale for education and to act as markers for “no mow zones.”

Veteran’s Memorial:

- As a consequence of the natural vegetation that was mowed in the middle of the summer, this area was staked off as well, from the west end of the boat launch all the way to the underside of the bridge.
- The ISUB Sustainability and Honors Departments have been working with Andy Force (VPA Horticulturist) to do some native plantings along this stretch.

Frederickson Park:

- Frederickson Park sits on top of an old landfill which has a clay cap. The park must be mowed once a year to remove the trees that could break through the cap.
- There are limitations on what can be installed (signs, stakes, etc.) within this park.
- Potential to have an educational sign installed near the parking lot or one that does not penetrate the ground.
- There is a need to educate the surrounding community about the park’s prairie which could include some signage about the history of the property and why the park looks the way it does.
- In addition to educational signage, EAC discussed the idea of creating some educational brochures for the surrounding neighbors. Also, the potential to program the park or have events.
- Dumping of grass clippings has been stopped.
- F&G mowed part of the prairie already this year and will mow the rest of the park in late November or early March.

Pinhook Tree Trail – Patrick Sherman, Hannah Teshka and Steve Sass

- Plans are moving forward to create a Tree Walk Program at Pinhook Park. Steve Sass, Hannah Teshka, and Patrick Sherman will be working with the VPA graphic designers on the project for sign design, website design, brochures, etc.
- This project will potentially be completed Spring 2021.
- There are 28 different species of trees that are currently at the park or will be installed (this fall or early spring) for the first round of the tree walk signage. Signage will happen in phases with the potential to have up to 100 different trees on this walk.
- There are opportunities for members of the community to sponsor a tree.

EAC Application Update – Garry Harrington

- Garry Harrington is requesting that current EAC members email him if they plan to remain on the committee through 2021.
- EAC meeting dates for 2021 are up on the VPA Website under the Get Involved tab.

- 3 applications have been received as of October 26, 2020.
- 2021 applications are due on Friday, October 30, 2020.

VPA and City Updates – Patrick Sherman

- Seitz Park construction bid will go out this fall. Notre Dame is set to finish the hydroelectric dam in spring of 2021.
- Plantings around Pinhook Park are almost finished.
- Gov. Joe Kernan Park's wall has been repaired in a few spots. This project should be finished in December 2020 including a new railing being installed.

Miscellaneous –

- Timelines in the NRMP are placeholders that will hopefully be flushed out by the stakeholders during their review of the plan.
- EAC would like to do property visits for the sensitive park properties highlighted in the NRMP.
- Motion by Andrew Tucker to retract sending the letter to the Board of Park Commissioners expressing EAC's concerns regarding the proposed elimination of staff at Rum Village Nature Center, seconded by Andy Schnabel. Motion passes with 5 - 1's 0 - Opposed.

Next meeting is December 7, 2020 at 8:30 am.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:13 am by Steve Sass.

Minutes submitted by Hannah Teshka.

Minutes approved 12/8/2020

APPROVED