

Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting 9-14-2020

Location: Tele-meeting (Zoom)

Committee Members Present:

Steve Sass

Andrew Tucker

Andy Schnabel

Ally Pudlo

Lindsay Chadderton

Alicia Czarnecki

Jo Borrer

Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA, Rum Village Park Supervisor

Matthew Moyers – VPA, Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator

Brent Thompson – City of South Bend, Forester

Therese Dorau – City of South Bend, Office of Sustainability

Call to order – Steve Sass at 8:35 am.

Vote to approve the minutes from the August 3rd, 2020 EAC meeting.

The motion to approve the minutes was tabled, since the minutes were not yet available for review.

Discussion:

Old Business – Ponader Park Resolution – Steve Sass

- A list of concerns that the EAC had regarding the construction projects occurring at Ponader Park were passed on to appropriate parties in the city and county.
- At the Park Board meeting, approval for permanent and temporary changes were tabled until concerns of the EAC could be addressed.
- County and city personnel met regarding permanent and temporary right-of-way(s).
- The city will be getting substantially more money than what was originally offered. Now the cost for lift station reimbursement will be substantially higher.
- Mitigation credits are now going right to us. We are now essentially getting paid for these twice (from DNR and the county). Also, the county is giving us the amount of money that we were

asking them for, for the section of Ponader Park property needed for the Douglas Road widening project. Consequently, a second appraisal of the value of the parcel is needed.

- Now the federal government is paying for the lift station, not the county. The money for this cost is now going to us (the city).
- The county will not start construction until October plant rescue occurs.
- \$100,000 plus is potentially going to the 35th Street Wetlands Project.

Update on the 35th Street Wetland – Andrew Tucker

- Andrew will address the Park Board at their next meeting on October 19th. The property consists of 5 acres southwest of the Town & Country Shopping Center. The rationale will be given as to why this is a good location for a new city park.
- Andrew Tucker, Steve Sass, and Alicia Czarnecki serve on the 35th Street Wetland Sub-committee
- Alicia and Andrew will reach out to Public Works director Eric Horvath regarding his input on the 35th Street Wetland.
- Steve Sass pointed out that both Aaron Perri and the Park Board had very positive comments regarding the actions of the EAC where influence regarding Ponader Park is concerned. Mr. Perri stated that 20 years ago, those things that the county wanted to do regarding Ponader Park would have just happened, without objection.
- Andrew stated that we are laying out the challenges of the ecological aspects of the 35th Street Wetland – invasive species, trash, feral cats. Also, amenities like playgrounds are needed. The plans of the Notre Dame students may be helpful here.
- Andrew Schnabel suggested having a tour of the property sometime.
- Garry Harrington asked where the water was draining to? The ND student information, as well as hydrology maps would tell us this.
- Matthew Moyers said that this property could be used for educational purposes. Andrew Tucker pointed out that Nuner, McKinley, Tarkington, and St. Anthony schools are all in fairly close proximity.
- The information for the ND student project is accessible to the EAC members.
- Alicia stated that the plan for the layout of the 35th Street Wetland is still highly conceptual, with only 10% of the design being completed by the 4 ND teams.
- Steve Sass stated that the 35th Street Wetlands Project is being designed very strongly with ecological development in mind.

New Business – Natural Resource Management Plan – Steve Sass

- The NRMP is at 98% completion, thanks to the editing efforts of Andy Schnabel. The goal is to have it 100% completed by October 1st, so the stakeholders (Forestry, Public Works, Sustainability, Facilities and Grounds, the former Animal Control) could review it.
- Andy Schnabel was concerned that there were too many things that we were claiming to do in 2021. We don't want to put too much of an extra workload on VPA and Brent Thompson.
- Allison Pudlo asked about the need for more people to review it, and Steve said yes to this.
- Matthew – We can be less stringent on the timelines. We can have quarterly or yearly accomplishments.
- Steve - What are the EAC's priorities? When will they start on these?
- Matthew – Individual Park Resource Plans are a top priority. Have a Sensitive Park Properties Management Plan in place by the end of the year (2021).

- Steve says that this is a trail-blazing project that only Evansville has, but one that is not park-exclusive.
- Matthew says the plan is to give the stakeholders a month to review it, and then present it to the Park Board.

Howard Park Bioswale – Garry Harrington, Steve Sass, Andrew Schnabel

- Garry Harrington, Steve Sass, Andy Schnabel, Horticulturist Andy Force, and Howard Park Team Leader Kat met at Howard Park to review the Bioswale there.
- There were undesirable natives, as well as non-native plant species overtaking the Bioswale. It was decided that the swale would be cut in March of 2021, to help address this problem.
- Working with the F & G folks on this project went very smoothly. Kat went on to address specific invasive issues as recommended by Steve and Andy Schnabel.

VPA and City Updates – Patrick Sherman, John Martinez, Brent Thompson, and Matthew Moyers

- Nothing reported here.

Miscellaneous – As Warranted

- Steve Sass nominated Keller Park for a native plant gardening award, given annually by the Shirley Heinze Land Trust. For winning the award, Keller Park received a metal sign to be posted on premises.
- Jo Borrer informed everyone of the plan to move the Navarre Cabin out of Leeper Park, and on to the Center for History property.
- Andrew Tucker asked about an article in the Tribune regarding staff reduction in area centers, including Rum Village.
- Garry Harrington stated that the permanent Naturalist position held by Hannah Teshka would be reduced to a part-time position.
- The EAC members unanimously were in favor of Natural History and Environmental Education.

Next meeting is October 26th, 2020 at 8:30 am.

Motion to Adjourn by at 10:20 am by Steve Sass.

Minutes Approved 12/7/2020

APPROVED