

Minutes of the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting on May 9, 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
Hannah Teshka – VPA, Pinhook Center Manager
Evelyn Bauman – Director, Office of Sustainability
Amy Roush – Development Director, VPA
John Martinez – Director of Facilities and Grounds, VPA

I. Call to Order - Steve Sass 8:38am

II. Approval of Minutes

Amy Gillan moved to approve the minutes of the March 28th, 2022 meeting. Andy Schnabel seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Old Business

A. Seitz Park Update

Matthew Moyers filling in for John Martinez reviewed all updates regarding Seitz Park including discussion on trees with Brent Thompson. Brent will get a summary from John and Patrick to then email our group regarding what is occurring at the park. Andy Schnabel brought up whether alternative plants were recommended like discussed before. Steve Sass overviewed the complexity of these recommendations as well as the number of plants to be listed. Steve also reminded on the recommendations in the NRMP as well. Charlene Rountree brought up suggestions including resilient and low-maintenance plants in effort to reduce the list of suggested natives for the benefit of park ground crew.

B. Urban Tree Canopy Intern Program

Amy Roush gave information regarding the intern program being sponsored by a donor. There have been 11 applicants. Amy proceeded to outline how the program will be ordered, outlined, and what interns will be accomplishing. She also explained what the donor is hoping to achieve with contributions to trees to plant in South Bend as well as expansion to additional nurseries for trees within South Bend in the future.

C. Invasive Plant Species Brochure

Charlene Rountree updated on the brochure creation, organization, and distribution. Ally Pudlo and Amy Gillan were part of the discussion on how this has finally been compiled. Charlene discussed the details of how she will proceed to distribute to the plant carrying locations in South Bend that she will explain the meaning of the handouts for. Steve Sass mentioned that Tippecanoe County has reached out to

perform something similar to what our EAC group is performing here. Comments on how such regulation performed on a state level would make enforcement easier were made.

IV. New Business

A. Proposed Changes to Chapter 19 of the Municipal Code

Andy Schnabel shared his screen to be able to review the modifications being proposed to Chapter 19 of the municipal code. Brent Thompson explained his detailed thoughts and recommendations to each modified area of this legislature. Both Andy and Brent opened up for comments and ideas from the rest of the EAC. Steve Sass commented on how the EAC and the Tree Advisory Committee should be one and the same. Both Steve and Andrew Tucker commented on how the proposed changes have provided more definition to terms and the legal departments prudence on ensuring the ordinance's readability for accurate legal reasons. Matthew Moyer, Charlene Rountree, and Ally Pudlo all discussed how having ample time for the EAC to finalize recommendations that would then be forwarded to the PARC Committee of South Bend's Common Council. Estimated time to accomplish this over email was deemed around 4 weeks.

V. VPA and City Updates

Matthew Moyers updated on how there are two large federal grants that are going to be used for specific redesign of parks projects in South Bend. They are administered by the National Park Service overall, but more directly through local levels such as the Indiana DNR. Matt talked about how it would be nice to have the EAC provide an advisory role in these projects in the near future, most likely next year.

Evie Bauman updated on how her office has been piloting a program involving solar energy and energy efficiency promotion. Many organizations in the South Bend city area are choosing to be part of the program. Evie also mentioned upcoming initiatives in South Bend such as electric charging stations in downtown parking garages.

VI. Miscellaneous

A. Glaciation Tour of St. Joseph County

Garry Harrington brought up how the NRMP provides guidance on what to teach with education efforts in locations such as the Rum Village Nature Center. More outreach is occurring post Covid. Part of this involves groups of children and adults being invited to the glaciation tour involving a bus ride around the county.

B. River Windows

Steve Sass and Garry Harrington brought up the special session that occurred and the resolutions that could be had regarding concerns over River Windows. Matthew Moyers has set up a tour to review Plaza Park's river windows.

Next meeting: June 27th, 2022 at 8:30am still by Teams.

Action items for follow-up:

- Brent Thompson to get an update from John Martinez concerning Seitz Park.
- Charlene Rountree to update on the distribution completions of the Invasive Species flyer.
- Chapter 19 Municipal Code proposed changes to have EAC responses sent back timely over email.

Meeting adjourned at 10:12am.

APPROVED

Minutes approved June 27, 2022