

## **Minutes of the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting on October 24th, 2022**

### **Committee Members Present:**

Charlene Rountree  
Steve Sass  
Andy Schnabel  
Amy Gillan  
Andrew Tucker  
Lindsay Chadderton

### **Others Present:**

Garry Harrington — VPA, Rum Village Park Property Manager  
Matthew Moyers – VPA, Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator  
Brent Thompson — City Forester, VPA  
John Martinez – VPA, Director of Facilities and Grounds  
Evelyn Bauman – Director of Sustainability, City of South Bend

### **I. Call to Order - Steve Sass 8:32 am**

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Charlene Rountree moved to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2022 meeting. Amy Gillan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **III. Old Business**

#### **A. Tree Ordinance Update**

Andrew Schnabel did not have too much to update. He asked for any final objections, but otherwise informed that VPA Executive Director Aaron Perri is reviewing the documents. Matt Moyers confirmed this. Andrew Schnabel, Amy Gillan, and Brent Thompson reviewed the notes, prepared the document further, and answered as many questions regarding the ordinance. Brent and the subcommittee feel confident in the proposed code revisions they have compiled.

Andrew Tucker had questions on certain sections of the text prior to EAC approval. The Tree Ordinance subcommittee moved to approve the revised version of the ordinance for further consideration by the Common Council. The EAC voted unanimously to approve.

### **IV. New Business**

#### **A. Cohabitation and Plant Subcommittees**

Matt Moyers informed the EAC of VPA staff's desire to create two new EAC subcommittees: Wildlife Cohabitation and Plants. Matt reasoned that having subcommittees would speed up the process of communication between VPA and EAC.

Steve Sass questioned whether this would aid in expediency of any of these implementations. Lindsay Chadderton inquired as to whether subcommittees would be almost treated as exclusionary in comparison to the rest of the EAC. Matt Moyers reassured that would not be the case.

Steve Sass reasserted his stance that subcommittee addressment is not necessary. Charlene Rountree commented that six weeks of turnaround time is not that long as long as each meeting is productive in moving action items and implementation forward.

Ultimately, the EAC concluded that subcommittees are useful to address specific tasks, but it would be preferable for the whole EAC to be working actionably with the VPA. Andrew Schnabel suggested that for priorities, a faster response time can be requested to ensure that a faster turnaround occurs for VPA needs.

Matt again mentioned that the draft of The Wildlife Cohabitation plan is in the hands of VPA staff, and again asserted that the staff is trying to create something that they feel is more implementable.

#### B. New Plantings at Memorial Park

Andy Schnabel updated that the small grant provided by Indiana Native Plant Society to plant a wildflower garden on IUSB campus was denied by the IUSB administration. So, they are deciding to move off campus to Memorial Park. A couple of areas were identified for IUSB students to work with. This would most likely be an annual maintenance effort. Steve Sass suggested a formal written guideline be written to ensure that this wildflower garden be maintained correctly long-term.

### V. VPA and City Updates

#### A. 2023 Tree Planting Plan

John Martinez informed that the budget was approved for what was needed for park projects, as well as additional funds for contracted native riparian plantings added by VPA. Steve Sass reiterated proper maintenance needs and any needed contracted delegation of such.

Matt Moyers reminded that open applications for EAC positions for 2023 are available until December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Matt also informed about the national Gold Medal award won by the VPA with the National Parks and Recreation Association that forthcoming media announcements would occur. A big part was ecological stewardship of which the EAC has truly played a role in.

Evelyn Bauman invited the EAC to the EASSI showcase for the 18 non-profit programs participating this year with energy efficiency and solar projects in the upcoming weeks. The other event she invited everyone to was the community meeting on electrical vehicles (EV).

### VI. Miscellaneous

St. Joseph County Environmental Stewardship Meeting – Steve Sass and Garry Harrington discussed their participation in the county’s 20 year plan that focuses on a environmental and ecological task force.

Next meeting: December 5th, 2022 at 8:30am still by Teams.

Action items for follow-up:

- Considering adding new members and student members to the 2023 EAC. Applications can be submitted until December 2<sup>nd</sup>.
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Meeting adjourned at 9:37am.

Minutes approved 12/5/2022

**APPROVED**