

Environment Committee Minutes – Wednesday August 25, 2021, v3

In attendance via Zoom: Michael Russelle (Co-Chair), Betty Wheeler, Stephen Mastey (Co-Chair), Rennie Gaither, Lisa Habeck, Karlyn Eckman, and Manu Junemann

Secretary: Karlyn Eckman

Minutes for the July meeting were read, some corrections made, and approved. Agenda for the current meeting was reviewed and approved. Motion to approve moved by Eckman and seconded by Rennie.

It was noted that Ben Bauer has resigned from the Environment Committee, and that Steve Ray has moved out of District 12

New Park

Saint Paul Parks and Rec requested that members of the SAPCC not communicate with Liz Hixson except through Kathryn Murray and Michael Russelle. We should funnel our communication through Kathryn.

There was discussion on SPPR's request for qualifications of artists working at the Highland Bridge. Gaither thought that we should put the idea out to a larger group of arts organizations (e.g. Forecast and Public Art Saint Paul). Gaither will contact them. Habeck will contact retired UMN arts professor Joyce Lyon. Eckman will contact the Minnesota Museum of Art, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the Bockley Gallery, all of whom feature Native Minnesota artists.

Eckman noted that another possibility might be soliciting artists to do installations on utility boxes at the park. This has been done in Southeast Minneapolis (SECIA) and Stillwater (Power of the St. Croix) where Karlyn was a participating artist. Cost to wrap a box with a vinyl image runs approximately \$500/box. Boxes can also be prepped and painted on directly.

An idea was proposed to develop a public art piece based upon the star map described by Jim Rock. This could be done through weaving, sculpture, walkways, or other means.

It was agreed to send information as we get it to Michael Russelle within the next two weeks (by September 8). We should not wait until the next EC meeting to discuss.

100 Trees Initiative (Gaither)

No news or update. The committee discussed the Frogtown Greenway website, which has a map with species planted.

We also discussed tree issues at Charles and Territorial. 25-30 trees will be planted on the boulevard with the City Forester's approval (Zak Jorgenson). Plantings will need watering and follow-up. There is apparently no way to force the developer to maintain them because the site plan has been closed out. There may be a post-occupancy inspection. There was discussion about Dominion and other developers doing the minimum to plant and care for trees called for in their site plans. Eckman noted that it is standard practice in forestry to have a multi-year plan for inspection, maintenance, sanitation cuts, replanting, and harvest. There seems to be no such planning in Saint Paul. After discussion, it was agreed to draft a resolution from SAPCC to Dominion reminding them of their obligation to maintain trees on their property, in line with the

City tree plan. Eckman, Wheeler, and Mastey to draft resolution for committee members to review and approve. The draft will be submitted to the Board for approval.

Gaither also proposed that Kathryn Murray contact other district councils to put forward a unified district-level voice to SPPW. Mastey, Eckman, Wheeler, and Gaither will work on this.

Kasota Ponds

The prairie area south of the East Pond has been completely cleared of vegetation, apparently in an effort to eliminate people living there. There is still a homeless camp on the Union Pacific property. The camp is not visible due to robust regrowth of buckthorn.

It is not known what happened with the last development proposal for a truck parking lot, which appears to have been quietly withdrawn. It was noted that a new developer has put forward a site plan for a housing development at the Koch site. It was discussed that the site has no sewer, water, or electrical connections and is a polluted super-fund site. There would likely need to be substantial remediation and clean-up if it is used for residential housing.

PK Properties has apparently not been in contact with Kathryn Murray about chloride training offered by MPCA and Fortin Consulting. If PK has not responded, the appropriate state agency should be contacted about chloride loading in the ponds.

A question arose about setback distance from the pond edges. Mastey suggested that it was 30-35 feet or greater, depending on how the ponds are classified. The Kasota Pond complex are DNR-designed wetlands #62-259. Gaither will contact the Ramsey Conservation District to check.

Saint Anthony Park Foundation proposals

Proposals for up to \$3500 are due September 15. At least five ideas were floated, with the committee prioritizing three:

- Shoreline stabilization or buckthorn removal at Kasota Ponds;
- Construction and placement of Chimney swift towers; and
- Funding for artists at the new park.

Three draft proposals will be prepared by Mastey, Eckman, and Wheeler, and will be sent to Kathryn Murray to complete and submit on behalf of SAPCC.

Other business

It was noted that Xcel Energy is doing utility pole inspections and has exposed soil/fill material around poles on Raymond Avenue that was placed by contractors when Raymond was redone. The soil is of very poor quality and contains crushed concrete, as has been noted before.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm. Next meeting will be on Wednesday September 22 2021.