

**MINUTES**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD, CITY OF PORTAGE**  
**DECEMBER 10, 2008**

**Meeting called to order** at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Denise Clegg

**Members Present:** Denise Clegg, Jason Howard, Martin Sepanik, Audrey Wierenga and Bruce Alden

**Members Excused:** Sara Wick and Daniel VanPeenan

**Not Excused:** Andrew Kreitz

**Staff Present:** Chris Barnes

**Information and Announcements:** **Marty** requested that the minutes of the November minutes be amended in the section **Board member comments** remove the first sentence and replace it with, “Denise suggested that the Lakeview Park display be changed in the spring to rain garden information. The board agreed.” **Bruce** made the motion that the minutes be approved as amended. **Audrey** seconded. Motion approved. **Audrey** informed the board that **Green Drinks** probably wasn’t going to take place this month. She also sent an email about the Grand Rapids Community Sustainability presentation on December 17<sup>th</sup>. **Marty** requested a formal thank you be recorded towards Chris Barnes and his staff for their work on **purple loosestrife** awareness. **Jason** inquired about possible alternatives the City of Portage could use instead of salting the roads. At 7:10 the Youth Advisory Committee arrives to brief us on their plans for the **Earth Day Celebration**. Various ideas were discussed. Denise suggested that the Environmental Board could assist by making contacts with possible vendors/non-profits that might want have displays at the event. **Audrey** made a motion to support them in this endeavor and **Marty** seconded.

**OLD BUSINESS**

7:28- Chris discussed the progress of updating the City’s website and sought input about helpful information that might be added. **Denise, Marty** and **Jason** all contributed ideas.

7:33- **Environmental Summary Act Report:** **Chris** informed the board that a bid on construction of the new water treatment plant has been accepted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

7:39- Marty explained to the board why the proposal of an Austin Lake aeration system may succeed, which part of Austin Lake will be affected and why it should be done. Chris reported that Homer Lake in Calhoun County is already doing this.

7:46- Denise inquired about the south county sewer line extension and its impact on the City of Portage’s 2025 objectives. Chris explained how it would work and who would be affected presently as well as in the future.

8:02- Denise spoke with a representative of the Planning Commission about wetland documentation and determination. Discussion ensued in attempt to answer these questions. It was determined that the environmental board would not take action. Bruce inquired about creating a “whistleblower” hotline; Chris said that it was in the works.

**Comments of citizens present:** None

**Comments of board members:** Chris passed out the city charter to board members. Denise announced that the new Portage community survey is out, that the environmental goals had not changed, and Jason agreed to summarize the findings. Audrey brought to the attention of the board a new recycling program being piloted in California, and a new solar panel incentive to homeowners in various locations to hook up to the main power grid. Chris announced that the City Council has enacted a zoning change to allow small scale wind powered turbines.

**Adjournment:** 8:22

**Next meeting Wednesday, January 14th, 7 p.m., City Hall. Scheduled secretary: Bruce Alden**

**Minutes recorded by Andrew Cone**