

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD, CITY OF PORTAGE
JANUARY 14, 2009**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Denise Clegg.

Members present: Denise Clegg, Sara Wick, Daniel VanPeenen, Audrey Wierenga, Andrew Cone, and Bruce Alden.

Members Excused: Martin Sepanik, Jason Howard and Andrew Kreitz.

Staff Present: Chris Barnes.

Chairperson Denise Clegg announced that Andrew Kreitz (Student Board Member) has resigned his seat on the board.

The minutes of the December meeting were examined and discussed. The calendar date of the Youth Advisory Committee's Earth Day Celebration (2009) was at issue. A motion for approval of the minutes, as presented, was made by Audrey Wierenga. Motion was seconded by Andrew Cone. The board approved the minutes as presented.

Announcements from the Board: Audrey Wierenga reported that Green Drinks during 2009 will convene at Charlie Foster's on Water Street in Kalamazoo on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

There were no further announcements.

OLD BUSINESS

For the purpose of setting a framework to sustain relationships with the local business community, the Board discussed compiling a list of local businesses and organizations. Any local business, non-profit organization, or church with interest in environmental awareness could be listed. From the list, contacts could be cultivated for support and involvement in the upcoming Earth Day Celebration. Chris Barnes, City Engineer, volunteered to contact Sean McBride, Assistant City Manager, to share information and avoid potential conflicts.

Sara Wick provided an up-to-date overview of the joint program with the Portage District Library. The logistics of supporting the theme, local food, have been daunting. The date for the joint program is May 7, 6:30p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Chris Barnes would like copy to submit to *The Portager* by March 1.

Committee Participation Report: Audrey Wierenga has been attending the Kalamazoo Environmental Concerns Committee (KECC) regularly. Outdoor wood boilers (OWB) has been a steady issue. The KECC drafted a recommendation in December, which will go to the Kalamazoo City Commission. The Kalamazoo County Health Department plans to ask local units of government to enact restrictions on OWB's. The KECC recommendation is available on their website or through the Kalamazoo City Commission.

CITY STAFF REPORT

Chris Barnes explained the Environmental Summary Activity Report on the city's website will be updated soon. Holiday schedules had disrupted standard efficiencies. Chris did note that no new residential sewer permits were issued during the month of December. This was first, according to his memory and perhaps, an economic indicator. The construction bid for the Garden Lane Water Treatment Facility was awarded in December to a firm based in Jackson, MI.

Chris will contact Portage North High School International Baccalaureate Program and arrange a date for their presentation, Water Quality Experiments and Testing in Portage Creek.

NEW BUSINESS

Chris Barnes stated that 28 retention basins in the city will now be monitored more closely, with a tighter time-frame and documented. Water table elevation is a concern of all property owners. Specific neighborhoods have been adversely affected this past year. Also, a new program surveying water table elevation at city wells with a dropline will serve to note any impact on water quality, too.

The possibility of a garlic mustard pull during 2009 was discussed. Sara Wick stated that to see a change you need to pull in the same location for 3-5 years. Denise Clegg was concerned as to how far into Bishop's Bog garlic mustard may have spread. Chris Barnes offered that perhaps other alien species could be targeted while volunteers are at task. He said he would make contact with an authority on invasive species.

The appeals process for Naturalized Lawns was discussed. A proposal for approval was submitted during autumn. Chris said he would check on its status.

Audrey offered data regarding the use of LED holiday lighting and money saved in San Francisco. Discussion of savings and modifications to municipal and holiday lighting ensued. Denise will request several Portage electrical bills to compare/contrast.

Member's rotation of duty as Secretary for 2009 was introduced by Denise. Members volunteered for (or, were assigned) specific dates.

2/11: Audrey Weirenga	8/12: Jason Howard
3/11: Bruce Alden	9/9 : Andrew Cone
4/8 : Marty Sepanik	10/14: Prospective/New Member
5/13: Dan VanPeenen	11/11: Open
6/10: Sara Wick	12/9: Open

A motion to adjourn was made by Audrey Wierenga.
Motion was seconded by Andrew Cone.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. by Chairperson Denise Clegg.