

Environmental Board Minutes for November 13, 2013

Meeting called to order at 7pm.

Members present: Kendra Gwin is here in Chris's place. Catherine, Martha, Ruth, Bill, Christin, Dave, Tim, Genevieve, Jamie.

Excused Absence: Spencer, Chris.

October minutes approved as amended by Catherine, seconded by Dave.
Approved unanimously.

SAW Grant

Guest speaker: Tim Drews with Abonmarche Consultants of Benton Harbor, MI

\$450 million total over quite a few years. \$97 million will be given out in 2014. Every city/township/drain commission will be applying for these grants.

SAW grant to look at City's infiltration basins. The basins must be city-owned or city-operated or otherwise must be funded 100% by the city. 10% of money will come up to city up to \$1 million of the grant. 85 total, 73 retention basins in Portage, MI owned or operated by city. Deadline is December 2nd. Can apply later but more than likely won't get any money. Look at what's there, any plans for these, the conditions of these, invasive species in the basins, whether natural or artificial basins are better, enough money used to support maintenance of basins. Come up with maintenance plan and capital improvement plan regarding these basins. \$200k grant-\$20k from city and \$180k from state through SAW grant.

First-time program and must complete plan within three years.

This will allow the city to get these basins into the system.

Catherine moves to support the grant application process, seconded by Martha.

City Council Update

Update to city council will be sent by Ruth to Chris so he can send to the city council.

Purple Loosestrife

Tim presented the Purple Loosestrife Report. The Kalamazoo Nature Center is rearing beetles that possibly the city can use. Tim will talk to the lake associations about purchasing beetles as well.

Deer Predation

Jamie spoke to Mark Mills with DNR, Wildlife Division about issue and they would be willing to have someone attend a meeting on this topic.

Most cities use sharpshooters and managed/planned hunts to cull down the population.

Jamie will look to get a speaker for the December meeting regarding this issue.

Phragmites Burn

Ruth and Bill met with Chris and the fire marshal regarding a controlled burn of the phragmites near the consolidated drain. Ruth and Bill probably proved the fire marshal that the board has thought the issue through with regard to doing the controlled burn. There are many issues surrounding the controlled burn with private property right there as well. Ruth also spoke with Ryan Koziatek with the Kalamazoo Nature Center regarding a controlled burn since he has done controlled burns before. He is not the primary person on this issue but thought that it would be possible and could even do it during the winter possibly. Chris thought the board should try to attend the December 3rd city council meeting asking for funds and approval to do this.

Goals and Objectives Update

Christin and Ruth talked with Bill Deming on obtaining grants to help with restoration of Eliason Nature Reserve. The parks department would be supportive of that process. Start with botanical survey and few acres-sized demonstration projects. Christin is working on contacting local universities/colleges with getting some experts to help us on this issue. Paul Olexia, Steve Keto, Tyler Bassett are a few potential people who could help.

7pm on Thursday, November 21st the Invasive Species subgroup will meet. Article may or may not be in Portager.

Environmental Board could attend Tree Lighting and share invasive species information. We'll think about this.

Ruth has put together a contact list for the lake associations. The lakes are Gourdneck, Sugarloaf, Hampton, Austin, and West. Sugarloaf and Hampton has no lake association.

Martha will work over the winter on a new sign for Lakeview Park.

We'll review our goals and objectives at the January meeting.

Announcements

Michigan Botanical Club, Southwest Michigan chapter, Monday, November 18th People's Church 6:30pm, "Plants in a Changing World: A Citizen Science Project on Plant Evolution"

Michigan Botanical Club Monday, December 2nd, people's Church 6:30pm, "Big Trees"

Audobon Society of Kalamazoo, People's Church, Birds in the Far North—Experiences on Prince Edward Island, Monday, November 25th, 7pm, People's Church.

Thursday, November 21st, at Western Michigan University through the Humanities Department. "News Judgment vs. Opinion: Do I Have an Agenda When I Write About Global Warming?"

Bill brought up looking into repurposing garlic mustard as a food source as an event the board could do with children, area restaurants, etc.

Dave has some ideas for new goals and objectives regarding recycling.

Tim encourages everyone to give their input on the Comprehensive Plan update through the website linked to on the city's page.

Motion to adjourn by Catherine, seconded by Christin.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm

/s/ Tim Winslow
Secretary