

Environmental Board
February 12, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm

Members Present: Ruth Caputo, Martha Dahlinger, William Beck, Catherine Niessink, Christin DeJong, David Mayfield, Jamie McCarthy, Genevieve Sertic, Tim Winslow, Judy Graham for Christopher Barnes.

Invasive Species Brochure

Dave provided copies of a tri-fold brochure he put together on invasive plants. It focused on garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, and phragmites. Members are invited to provide photos. Comments should be sent to Dave and Martha.

Martha moves to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Catherine. Motion passes.

Weed Ordinance

Tim drafted a weed ordinance amendment that would simply amend the definition of weeds to include invasive species.

Martha has seen more thorough copies of weed ordinances that allow for the growing of native plants as well that would not be considered weeds.

The board will continue looking this topic.

Goals and Objectives

Bill used his past expertise to better organize the board's goals in a manner that allows the board to pursue its goals in a more efficient, timely manner and also may result in the elimination of some goals that are not attainable.

Bill tried to take a look at the bigger picture for the board and tried to determine where the board is now and where do we want it to be in the future.

Need to look at your resources and rank them and see if you have enough resources to be able to complete all of your goals. We also need to look at our threats and risks that may hinder and obstruct your ability to meet your goals.

Strategic planning is a very important tool that the board/city needs to use in order to accomplish its goals and reach its desired outcomes.

Bill's objective was to get the board to consider these issues when planning our annual goals that will be presented to city council.

Invasive Species Subgroup

Discussed how we were going to advertise more and who would contact what groups and organizations that we could use to better help pull invasive species. We basically tried to determine what our advertising strategy would be. We also decided to cancel our first invasive species pull in March due to the fact there will probably still be snow on the ground. There is an April Portager we would like to have an article in and Ruth is working on getting us on the volunteer website for the City of Portage. We are currently planning on March 29th for the first pull.

The March 29th pull will be for 9am to 12pm. The first pull will be at Schrier Park with the following pulls at Eliason Reserve and then West Lake Nature Preserve.

Bill brings up the "why?" component that sometimes we forget is how do we show people how invasive species affect people's yards, landscaping, etc.

Goals and Objectives Part Deux

Two things: we need to have a list of goals for the city and we also need to keep Bill's strategic planning in mind to help us determine what our goals should be.

Eliason Reserve: Need to figure out exactly what we mean by "restore." What can the board really do? The Parks board is seeking a \$200k grant to help with the infrastructure of the park.

We should think about having our own "space" so that all of our materials are in a central location. Space could be physical or virtual.

Should we consider doing the threat assessment as part of our goals. It is generally agreed that this should be a goal we add.

For now, we will keep working on the weed ordinance but not keep it as a stated goal.

Dave brings up "using the retention basins" as a goal and wonders what we meant exactly. It related to Portage's SAW grant application but we are unsure what the status is with that grant.

Right now many of our "goals" are really "activities" in that there are no outcomes stated in what we actually want to achieve.

In the next two weeks, we need to advertise the invasive species pulls, notify our groups that we think will help, and also “goalify” our activities.

Possibly use “SMART” criteria to help create our goals.

Genevieve will make an announcement at her National Honor Society meeting in March regarding the first invasive species pull on March 29th.

Announcements

Wild Ones on Wednesday, February 26th at 7pm has Andrew Bacon, Stewardship Coordinator for the Michigan Nature Association who will give a talk on how they plan to protect Michigan’s rare and endangered species, imperiled natural communities, and unique geological features. He will highlight current efforts at protecting and managing prairie and savanna communities and remnants, coastal plain marshes, and forest blocks.

The Audobon Society of Kalamazoo is having a talk at their monthly meeting on Monday, February 24th about A Look at Michigan Snakes at the People’s Church on 10th Street on Kalamazoo, MI. The talk begins at 7pm.

Thursday, February 13th at Western Michigan University. Alfred Meyer of the Physicians for Social Responsibility is speaking and is giving a talk on “Nuclear Power: What You Need to Know About Price, Pollution, and Proliferation.” The talk is at 7pm at Sangren Hall in Room 1910.

Lean and Green Michigan is Michigan’s Property Assessed Clean Energy Initiative (PACE). This initiative helps commercial, industrial, and multi-family owners finance energy projects. Lean and Green Michigan website has information about this initiative. The program basically allows single-family and multi-family dwellings to finance their clean energy projects over a long period of time by having the county assess them for this.

David says the City of Portage could possibly take advantage RETAP as a resource to help the city do some things. Businesses have to have less than 500 employees in order to use this service but institutions of any size are eligible.

Motion to adjourn made by Martha. Seconded by Jamie. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm

/s/ Tim Winslow