

Environmental Board Minutes, May 14th, 2014

Meeting Called to order at 7:06pm

Members Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, William Beck, Catherine Niessink, Christin DeJong, David Mayfield, Spencer Welling, Tim Winslow, Director of Transportation & Utilities Christopher Barnes

Excused Members: Genevieve Sertic, Martha Dahlinger, Jamie McCarthy

Catherine made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Spencer. Minutes are approved.

Invasive Plant Pulls

Very little second-year garlic mustard has been seen in certain parts of the area. But there has been a good deal of first-year garlic mustard.

Last Saturday, May 10th, a group of us pulled Asian Bittersweet, Honeysuckle, and Barberry at West Lake Nature Preserve. We made a fairly good dent on these species. There were eight of us total.

Next pull is on Saturday, May 24th from 9am to 12pm at Schrier Park. Ruth will try to check it out for Garlic Mustard for the pull.

The June 7th pull is at Eliason Reserve and Jamie and Christin will be leading that one.

Usually, the best strategy is to pull the second-year and older garlic mustard versus the first-year stuff. The first-year garlic mustard does not go to seed.

Fishing Fair

Martha and Catherine will be present. That is this coming Saturday, May 17th from 10am to 2pm. We will be talking to people about native plants, invasive species, and any other environmental issues people bringing forth. We will be passing out our Invasive Plant Guides as well. We will not be pulling anything at the Fishing Fair this year.

Greenathon went very well as Catherine and Martha talked to many interested people.

Controlled Burn at Consolidated Drain

Our burn was delayed this year and will not be done this year. There have been many controlled burns put off this year because of weather issues mainly the long winter and high winds. Our options are to burn this fall or next spring. If the season is short once again, we may bring in another group to do the burn. It is too late to do the burn now because everything is growing like crazy and it is also very wet and would be tough to get a fire going.

Eliason Reserve

Christin says Professor Binney Girdler is going to find a student to look at Buckthorn and maybe a few other invasive species on Eliason Reserve to determine what is there. The student may not be able to remove all of it but even cataloging what is there would be great.

Water Treatment Plant

Chris will look into this for the next meeting to see how things are progressing.

Lake Associations

Ruth will be making a presentation at the Austin Lake Riparian Association meeting that is coming up.

Recycling

It was a two-year extension of the last bid so the bid will go up for re-bid in the late fall and winter. Then the City will look into doing something new such as single-stream recycling or extending it to commercial places and apartment complexes.

Purple Loosestrife

Tim will have the company bill the city and the lake associations will reimburse the city that way. We are getting 12 releases this year total counting the two each from the West Lake and Austin Lake associations.

Goals/Objectives

At this moment, we are not sure what our goals/objectives will be for the coming year yet. One of our goals is to do an environmental assessment for the City of Portage.

The City of Portage will be hiring a student intern for the summer to look into the potential sources of contamination with regard to the City's water supply. This

student could present this report to the environmental board to discuss at a meeting.

Eagle Scout Project

A local boy scout is interested in doing an eagle scout project at one of the city parks. Ruth and Tim met with him last night and discussed some ideas regarding mapping of invasive species, building a sign to help identify garlic mustard pull, or even building recycling bins for the city parks.

Announcements

Ruth will host a potluck at the July meeting.

Wild Ones has some native plant sales and exchanges coming up in the next week or so.

Bill brings up reaching out to local garden clubs to see if any of their members would like to help with pulls and other things.

May 29th there is a joint meeting of the drain commissioners here in at the City of Portage city council chambers. The topic is elevated water levels at Sugarloaf, Gourdneck, West, Austin, and Long lakes area. Sugarloaf Lake and the channel that connects it to Austin Lake is two feet above where it should be. So, the meeting is about figuring out the cause of this. The people who live along that drain corridor will be invited.

David listened to a garlic mustard webinar. They are testing beetles to see if they possibly could be a biocontrol for these. It is years off unfortunately at the moment. There was a theory explained on the webinar that after 40 years of a garlic mustard infestation nothing will grow back including garlic mustard and native species. You can shovel it out an inch down and also possibly industrially compost it above 130 degrees. Herbicides are great for pre-fruit applicators but not post-fruit.

Tim will need help with the Purple Loosestrife releases since there will be so many this year.

Ruth is inviting folks over to see her woodland garden this coming Saturday.

Bill makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Spencer. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04pm

/s/ Tim Winslow