

Portage Environmental Board Meeting Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, Vice-Chair Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, William Beck, David Mayfield, Christin DeJong, Jamie McCarthy, Spencer Welling , Judy Graham (for City of Portage Trans & Utilities Department Director Christopher Barnes), Tim Winslow(7:50 pm)

Absent: None

Meeting call to order - 7:05 pm

Motion to approve minutes: Catherine, seconded Martha, motion passes.

Old Business

Deer Article

Christin emailed the board a revised version of the deer article on behalf of the board. Christin will work on survey monkey to set up the questions she emailed us in an online survey format; Christin will coordinate with Judy to provide a website link to the survey on the EB page on the City's website. Keep the article as last written by Christin.

Fishing Fair Report

Martha and Catherine had the rain barrel and about 20 feet of table for multiple displays (native shorelines, invasive species tips and invasive pulls, medication disposal, planned gardens). They had more than 40 people stop by the booth. The board discussed the possibility of having an activity for kids so that they would be part of the punch card. It would require more than two volunteers to manage an activity.

Invasive Plant Activities

Our final invasive plant pull was held May 16 at Schrier Park with 9 volunteers. They started on the west side of the park where the garlic mustard is starting to spread from the heavily infested area on the east side of the park. Ray Waurio gave us a list of Stryker, Portage Rotary Club, available to volunteer for invasive species removal. Bill will contact the groups on behalf of the EB to determine their interest level. Ruth will work next year on getting this contact information sooner. We might have another opportunity through Volunteer Kalamazoo to get youth involved in our activities if we hear from them earlier in the spring next year. We could wait until next year to contact these people to volunteer at our regular pulls, but we need to

keep them busy or they will find other volunteer opportunities. Martha asked if it's time to approach City Council to hire an environmental staff person.

Ruth has not yet met with Ray Waurio and Rod Russell, but she will sit down with all three in the near future.

We will need to have EB members inspect and monitor the Phragmites after the burn near Sonic; as you see locations of Phragmites EB members should contact Ruth. Several members have seen it around retail properties and on city owned properties/trails. Bill commented that we need to be taking high-resolution photos of invasives to provide detail and information to the public. Bill took a video of Ruth during the beetle release regarding both beetles and garlic mustard.

Other Old Business

Martha distributed the maintenance plan for the native plant installation at the water treatment plan. Martha would like to know if the maintenance is in the transportation budget, and if not we need to discuss with the City. Ruth suggests we contact Chris Barnes to determine what is available in the budget. Martha, Catherine and Ruth will set up a meeting with Chris between 6/22-27.

Single Stream Recycling

Bill and Tim met regarding education on the single stream recycling change over. They will be meeting with Best Way on Monday (6/15) morning to get their materials and video. The contract has not yet been signed, but EB members will work with them in advance of contract. Wednesday (6/17) Bill is meeting with Public Media Network to help us with a video advertising the new recycling system. The group would like to meet with school administrators to start the conversation about our educational goals for this fall when single stream recycling begins.

New Business

Martha sent an email on 6/3 asking about educational goals. We could perhaps work on this via email over the summer to explore the different ideas. For instance, Martha wants to visit all of the parks this summer to determine what display boards are out there and what messaging we can provide to advance our education goals. David pointed out that we voted on single stream recycling as our educational goal for the year. Board members agreed we made good progress on the goal this year and have had good results. Spencer cautioned again bringing too many ideas to City Council too often.

Board Member Comments

Judy said they are adding a liner to the culvert at West Fork Portage Creek where it crosses Oakland Drive north of I-94.

The City is ready to launch the SAW grant project to evaluate the stormwater retention basins throughout the City this summer.

Public comments – none

Meeting adjourned - 8:15 pm

No July EB meeting; next meeting will be second Wednesday in August

/s/ Jamie McCarthy