

## **Environmental Board Minutes, March 11, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 7:07pm

Members Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, Vice-Chair Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, Christin DeJong, David Mayfield, Judy Graham in place of Director of Transportation and Utilities Christopher Barnes, Tim Winslow

Excused Members: Jamie McCarthy, Spencer Welling

Members Absent: Student Advisory Board member Henry Zhou

Martha recommends a change to “and their opinions” under Announcements.

Catherine makes a motion to pass the minutes, seconded by Martha. Motion passes.

### **Goals and Objectives**

These are due to city council by April 15<sup>th</sup>. We do have the next meeting to work on these. Christin brings up the goals surrounding Eliason Reserve. We are thinking that we might eliminate this goal and just quietly work in the background on this.

Judy mentions that Adam Herringa is the new Parks and Recreation Director. Rod Russell will still handle parks maintenance. Ruth, Tim, and Martha will meet with Rod Russell at some point about parks maintenance. We might meet with Adam as well.

We should also work on expanding the single-stream recycling goal.

Tim mentions potentially pursuing another major goal after single-stream recycling. David mentions that there will still be an educational component to pursue and also expanding the recycling at the schools. Ruth brings up also expanding recycling into the parks as well. So, we may not want to do this.

### **Single-Stream Recycling Presentation**

We wanted to make a very simple presentation to city council regarding our recommendation for single-stream recycling. We are pushing single-stream recycling as a natural move to make since the City of Portage is a natural place to move.

Where do we want to take our trash? Landfill or market? China is not accepting as much United States trash/recycleables anymore. The basic question is where do we want to put it.

We live in a fast-paced society. Michigan/Portage is lagging behind the nation and Great Lakes in recycling rates. If we're going to do something, we should do it correctly. Do we recycle to do good or just feel good?

Why should we do single-stream recycling? It is easier, no separation is required, the instructions will be on the container itself, there will be increased participation, and it will be available to the entire city. There is also a reduced environmental impact. Pickup would be bi-weekly and the trash volume would be reduced. Our infrastructure is crumbling as well in terms of roads, streets, etc. The governor is very interested in increasing recycling rates in the State of Michigan and has provided some resources to this goal. We do need a critical mass though of recycleables. There are some concerns with aesthetics with

the larger containers, there will be some investment needed to purchase containers, and some people will still throw trash into the recycling bins.

There is momentum across the State of Michigan. Kent County, Holland, Ann Arbor, and Kalamazoo Township have all implemented single-stream recycling. The City of Kalamazoo is also considering single-stream recycling as well.

Thus, our recommendation is for the City of Portage to push this more and not just put bids out for it.

We've made a couple small changes to the resolution regarding semantics. Catherine makes a motion to approve the resolution as amended. Seconded by David. The motion passes unanimously.

The City of Portage has put out a bid for curbside recycling on its website. We may also meet with the City Manager about single-stream recycling in the future as well.

Tentatively we are scheduled to be at the Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. The meeting starts at 7:30pm.

### **Deer Predation**

Tim wrote up a brief article for the Portager regarding this issue. Christin mentions that maybe the article should be a bit sexier. Martha thinks that maybe instead of asking people for feedback we also look at accident reports to see if more car/deer accidents are being reported or not. Bill brings up educating the public about the situation and then receiving feedback from the public. Bill thinks we can put this information in the header of the survey and then have a few questions about it that allow people to provide feedback.

Bill will work on the survey that will be posted to the city's website. Mary Beth Black, the assistant to the City Manager, would be the person to contact on the city's site regarding the survey.

### **Invasive Plants**

We have tentatively scheduled pulls for Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> weather permitting. The pulls will be from 9am to 12pm. We are proposing the first one be at West Lake Nature Preserve and the second one to be at Schrier Park. We are thinking of posting the signs soon so that people know of the upcoming pulls. Allegra Printing can do this. So can Jason's signs. We would like six signs or so. Bill will ask Allegra about this possibility.

We also would like to publicize these in the Portager with a brief article as well. We will try to get this in the April Portager as well.

Jamie will contact the high schools and Western Michigan University to our pulls and will also try to setup a special time for students to help us pull. Ruth will send out an email to her list regarding the pulls as well. Ruth will also contact the master gardener groups regarding the pulls. Tim will contact the Boy Scouts about the pulls.

The Phragmites prescribed burn looks like it will take place in the next month or so. The company doing the pull has been in good contact with Portage Fire Department regarding the burn and they will be present at the burn as well. The local businesses will be notified when the burn takes place.

### **Parks Board**

Ruth is in contact with the new chair. She will try to attend the meeting for next month for the Parks Board. Ruth will try to get them to send out emails regarding our pulls to the Friends of the Parks groups.

### **County Parks Public Input Session**

Martha attended the sessions where they were asking for input. The county wants to make sure that parks are available to all. When they locate new parks, they want to make sure they are located near neighborhoods that do not have them. The county parks are interested in keeping invasive plants out and potentially planting native plants. Martha suggested having more signage at the parks regarding nature potentially.

### **Fishing Fair**

We've been asked to attend the fishing fair again this year. The fishing fair is on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Ramona Park. This will be the same day as one of our pulls. Martha will work on putting something together for the Fishing Fair and potentially the Greenathon as well.

### **Lawncare Advertisers Mosquito Control**

Martha brings up whether the board should consider looking into mosquito control as a future issue potentially.

### **Announcements**

Tim gave a purple loosestrife update. He is still trying to get some groups to buy some beetles.

Bill mentions potentially moving to quarterly board meetings and instead having smaller groups work on issues throughout the other time.

Ruth located the road from Oosterhout to Eliason Reserve.

A motion to adjourn was made by David, seconded by Tim. Meeting adjourned at 8:31pm

/s/ Tim Winslow