

## **Environmental Board Minutes, March 9, 2016**

Meeting Called to order at 7:00pm

Members Present: Vice Chair Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, Jamie McCarthy, Mike Sergeant, Jerry Kroehn, Bill Beck, David Mayfield, Tim Winslow, Assistant City Engineer Jamie Harmon

Excused Members: Chair Ruth Caputo, Student Advisory member Daniel Saba

Others Present: Christin DeJong (former member)

Catherine makes a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Bill. Motion passes.

### **Deer Presentation by Kalamazoo Christian High School Students**

Kalamazoo Christian High School Biology students from Mr. Steve Dyk's class gave a very good presentation on deer in Portage. The presentation covered some of the threats that deer pose to the public include what diseases they carry, car/deer accidents and also what benefits the deer provide as well. They also went over their deer track survey results which showed certain area of Portage being overpopulated with deer and other areas having a healthy population. They also provided some recommendations as to what the City of Portage could do with regard to deer.

#### Question and Answer

What/How many areas in Portage would be big enough to allow for hunting?  
There are some good spots in the southeast area of Portage but not as many in the northeast where one of the problem areas is located. There is some concern with allowing hunting on certain properties as people may start to hunt where they shouldn't.

Did the cities that have done hunting all have targets? Not all cities did have a target although Ann Arbor did. Portage would have to consider what their target should be.

Did the receptiveness of the community affect how successful a hunt was? Yes, the hunt seemed more successful in communities that were more receptive to hunting such as Jackson versus the uproar in Ann Arbor.

With regard to the recommendation on community hunting, was there any thought to backlash from parents with children? They haven't really discussed these recommendations with anyone yet so there was no concern yet regarding feedback from families and parents.

The class took a school day to drive around from 8am to 1:30pm to do the deer track survey. In roughly each sector, they drove about 30 miles each and approximately 250 miles overall. They mainly saw does and immature deer when doing the survey.

## **Deer Surveys**

There are three surveys out. The original survey has 290 responses and we can hopefully see all of them once we get straightened out with the City who has a SurveyMonkey account. Christin thinks that the biggest value from the survey results are the comments. There are many anti-deer comments in the survey results.

The deer tracker survey we put out there to get a better sense of where the deer are. We believe the Kalamazoo Christian class did a much better job of doing this than our deer tracker survey.

The third survey we are trying to gather methods for helping deter the deer and there are a few good ideas but most people just say that nothing works.

Christin asks what we want her to do exactly. First order of business is getting her access to all the survey results as she can only see the first hundred responses to the original survey at this moment.

We think it would be beneficial to pair the data from our survey with regard to where people lived to see if these people were in the same problem areas that the Kalamazoo Christian High School identified.

## **Greenathon**

The Greenathon is Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11am to 3pm. Tim needs to turn into the papers to make sure we have our spot reserved. Tim and Bill will work on having our recycling display at the Greenathon. The Wastewater Treatment Plant open house is also this day at the same time. Catherine will be at this event.

## **Wastewater Treatment Plant Open Houses**

Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Jerry, Ruth, Catherine, and Tim will be at one of those events representing the board.

### **Garlic Mustard Pulls**

These are tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, and we are trying to work with the Western group on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. If that will not work, then we may go with Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>. Of course, these will all depend on weather to some degree as well.

### **Fishing Fair**

This event will be Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The event is from 10am to 1pm. Setup will need to be complete by 9:30am. Jamie says she has some fish-friendly stuff she can provide to us to give to people. If anyone can volunteer for said event, they are to contact Ruth to let her know.

### **Working With Groups**

Bill made a presentation to the Portage Rotary last Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. He said there was quite a bit of interest and he made the connection with them that this is not only an aesthetic issue but also an economic one. There were 40 people there and at least 20 or so individuals that were interested in involving. Garlic Mustard is the main invasive species where volunteers can really help us and our point is you can do this on your own time or as a group. But they can also join us for our pulls if they so desire.

### **Goals**

Ruth sent out letter she sent to the Mayor and City Council regarding our goals. Martha read over the letter at our meeting and outlined that there were three major goals in the letter. Bill brings up that we need to define our goals better with an actual outcome or end result. Otherwise, this may make it more difficult for us to get the resources needed from the City of Portage to help us accomplish our goals. Martha mentions that she thinks our primary goal should be invasive species management seeing as there is grant money available to help us with invasive species management, and we've asked the City for money to help us with this goal. Bill really thinks that more definite goals will help us be much more effective in what we are doing. Mike mentions that if we remove "primary" from the letter then we are not prioritizing our goals and instead having those all be equal. We set a high standard for ourselves with getting the single-stream recycling program implemented last year.

Catherine makes a motion for Ruth to send the letter as it stands to city council. Seconded by Jamie. Motion passes 6-0.

### **Michigan Monarch Senate Bill**

There is a bill before the Senate to make the Black Swallowtail the official butterfly of Michigan and a separate bill to make the Monarch the state insect since Michigan does not have a state insect. Ilse Gebhard has asked that the board consider a motion to support this. Jamie asks if we can do resolutions and Chris has said that we can do this.

David makes a motion to not do anything on this. Seconded by Jerry. Motion passes.

### **Announcements**

Mike sent an update from Ruth regarding our invasives meeting last month with the City.

David makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tim. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

/s/ Tim Winslow