

Environmental Board Minutes, December 9, 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Members Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, Vice Chair Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, David Mayfield, William Beck, Jamie McCarthy, Jerry Kroehn, Mike Sargent, Director of Transportation & Utilities Christopher Barnes, Assistant City Engineer Jamie Harmon

Members Absent: Student Advisory Committee member Daniel Saba.

Martha makes a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mike. Motion passes.

Deer

Guests: Cara Terry and Mary Lou Petruccio of Sterling Oaks South off Bacon and Portage roads. They both have a lot of deer down in that area. They do not believe the the car/deer crash data is reflective of the population. They know some people do feed the deer and maybe Portage could pass a deer feeding ban at least.

Ann Arbor just recently culled their deer herd, which has caused some controversy there. Additionally, some municipalities have passed bans on feeding the deer. We are trying to further advertise our deer survey that is available online. Christin our former member has broached two ideas for expanding our survey to include better tracking of the deer and asking people what methods have they tried to discourage the deer from feeding on their property.

Jerry brought up the Indiana white paper on the Internet regarding methods to help deter from eating people's gardens and plants. It can be found here:

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/files/fw-UrbanDeerTechnicalGuide.pdf>

Catherine brought up electric fences that have been used to deter deer. Martha brings up fences where they can't see where they would land and George brings up fences where the top slants outwards. Mike mentions that blackberry bushes are a deterrent for deer as well.

Ruth brought up Christin's idea of having a group of people going around for a week and trying to determine the number of deer and where to determine exactly where the problem exists. The board thinks this is a good idea to better narrow the problem.

Whitetail Management Associates is a group that helps with deer management in Pennsylvania. There are other groups out there that we could seek professionally to help us research deer.

Bill brings up that the City of Portage is a natural place to move and that deer are going to live here no matter what and potentially "shop elsewhere." We need to determine the carrying capacity of deer in Portage and also determine if there are certain areas that are overpopulated.

Chris brings up when we reintroduce the deer survey in the Portager that we include some more tips regarding making sure you aren't feeding the deer. He'll edit the article that we currently already circulated.

Ruth will ask the Environmental Concerns Committee and see if they've heard anything regarding their deer. Maybe we can do a joint venture with other area municipalities regarding deer research to help share costs.

Ruth has a meeting with the City Manager Larry Shaffer to follow up on doing a deer survey.

Single-Stream Recycling

Bill brings up that the process is working and that we now want to get out our message regarding reducing trash. It's not just recycling but also reducing what you use, reusing what you can, and recycling more efficiently as well.

We don't have any data right now regarding single-stream recycling at the moment. We do want to contact Best Way soon though to see how the program is going. What are we doing well? What are we not doing well? We want to make sure we are recycling efficiently.

Early next year we plan to meet with the schools again regarding recycling to see how we can better help them recycle.

We need to make sure we keep publicizing single-stream recycling and getting our message out there. We also need to focus more on the problematic recycling materials such as plastics. Only eight percent of plastic is recycled at the moment. This is a problem.

The key to success to get recycling is to get it to become more economically viable. We need to make sure we are doing it efficiently to make this happen.

Martha brings up trying to get the apartment complexes to recycle more in that maybe we can help them build in spots for trash and recycling in the apartments. Bill and Tim will ask Best Way if they potentially have some smaller bins that we could share with the apartment complexes possibly.

Bill and Tim will work with the City of Portage regarding the display at Lakeview Park.

Jamie asks whether we plan to work with the parks department to get more recycling bins at parks and on the trails and that is the plan for the future for sure.

Volunteer Groups

Bill has scheduled one presentation for March and is working with the other groups to schedule a presentation what they can work on.

Bill will make sure these groups have the necessary resources to do the pulls on their own.

Invasives

The Invasive subcommittee will meet soon to set its goals for the upcoming year.

Mike, Martha, Ruth, and Tim met with Rod, Kendall, Chris, and Ray with the City of Portage regarding three things: a program to track, control, and treat invasives, a maintenance plan for the native plantings contained with the City of Portage, and a park-specific plan for each park and its goals for invasives. The three topics will be split into three subcommittees. The first subcommittee will include Mike, Martha, Tim, and John Milo. The second subcommittee will involve Ruth, Martha, Chris, and John Milo. Chris will head the third subcommittee with Tim and Martha.

Bill brings up that we really need a threat assessment in order to best allocate resources. The more we can compile information into a central database we'll see some patterns emerge and figure out how best to allocate resources.

Other Business

Jerry brings up the deterioration of our neighborhoods in general with people parked on lawns and whatnot. If you complain to code enforcement, they will do something about it, but otherwise the City of Portage doesn't do much about these issues.

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

/s/ Tim Winslow