

Environmental Board Minutes

March 14, 2012

Call to order – 7:01pm

Members Present: Bill Beck, Ruth Caputo, Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, Marty Sepanik, Spencer Welling, Tim Winslow, Sarah Perry, Chris Barnes

Excused Absences: none

Resignations: Sam Garceau had to resign. The board expressed their regret, and hopes that Sam will be able to rejoin when he is able.

Minutes: February minutes were approved.

Fishing Fair: Tracy Dillon, a park ranger with the City of Portage, was present to give information on the Fishing Fair. Tracy has organized the Fishing Fair for the last 2 years. It's held at Ramona Park every spring; we have been there before to talk about purple loosestrife. It was agreed we would participate. Ruth will fill out the form. Martha agreed to look over material provided by Tracy and put together information on garlic mustard to go along with the information we already have about purple loosestrife. Bill suggested we market the pull in a way that relates to the public personally or economically. Since we were already scheduled to have a garlic mustard pull that day, we decided to add that as one of the events for the Fair. EB members volunteered to be at the table with the presentation materials, to pull garlic mustard with volunteers, and to coordinate. Volunteers would be recruited but must be 14 years old to participate without an adult. Chris will arrange for the needed materials (including a waiver that needs to be signed by all volunteers) to be available. Martha offered to check for garlic mustard before the Fair.

Date: Saturday May 19th, 10 am – 1pm

Old Business

Next year's goals and objectives – The Board has to finalize the goals and objectives for 2012-2013 for proposal to the City Council by April 15. Martha expressed that she will look at the goals again to determine if there were possibilities where the EB's Goals and the City Council's Goal's might work in a more defined supportive manner. Ruth will draft the semiannual report on progress for our current goals within 2 weeks and get it out for comment. This report is also due by April 15. These need to be finalized at our next meeting.

Purple loosestrife – The cost of beetles and rearing them in cages has gone up considerably. Marty proposed that we buy first generation beetles from Integrated Weed Control and distribute them, starting at the location near Sonic Drive-In on Romance road. The beetles would come in containers and they would be released simply by letting the beetles go. \$500 would allow for beetle release at multiple locations. 200-300 beetles were released at Upjohn Pond and the KNC felt that the PLS was controlled in that area. The Board supported Marty's proposal that beetles be purchased and then released. Marty's request for additional funds from the City will be submitted, even though it will be difficult to get the additional funding in the current economic climate. If the additional funding is approved, that money would not be available until July 1st. There is a possibility that we could talk to the Austin Lake

Association for more funding. West Lake has the most financial resources but Austin Lake has the most PLS. Other fundraising activities will not be pursued at this time.

Green-A-thon – Sarah reported that the Green-A-Thon planning is going along smoothly. The EB will be there. The EB will have an emphasis on rain gardens at the event, with the rain garden presented at the Home Expo. Catherine gave Sarah a go green challenge. Tim, Marty, Spencer, and Martha tentatively volunteered to cover one of the 2-hour shifts at the event.

Tucker Webb, a member of the Park Board who is helping coordinate activities with the EB, suggested that a garlic mustard challenge be held at the Green-A-Thon. Ruth will follow up.

Date: April 28th, 12 pm – 4 pm.

Water treatment plant landscaping – Martha invited Paul Olexia, K College emeritis professor of biology to look at the area surrounding the treatment plant. They concluded that the plants behind and east of the facility are doing well and those plants will begin to take off in their 3rd year. In the front, the trees are not native or well suited to a southern flood plain forest. If the berms were not there, other floodplain plants could be planted and be successful because of the water table height. Martha handed out a list of plants that will be successful in that area. The EB has \$6000 to build a natural landscape in front of the water treatment plant that is low maintenance, low carbon footprint, and presents a more pleasant view. A subcommittee has been formed to work on this project. The committee is composed of Martha (Chair), Bill, Catherine, and Chris. The main purpose of this landscaping project is to establish more appropriate vegetation, make the building attractive, and minimize the visual impact of the building. It could also be useful in educating the public about native landscapes.

Garlic mustard pull – EB needs to recruit volunteers for the pull on April 21. Sarah will talk to the the Environmental club at PCHS and some volunteers from a class at WMU. Ruth will contact PNHS and see if their Environmental Club will volunteer. Community access channel notice will be coordinated by Catherine. Martha, Chris, Catherine, Sarah, Tim, Spencer, and Ruth volunteered for the pull. Supplies including the release forms will be provided by Chris.

Invasive species awareness – A ½ hour segment could be produced by Public Media Network that would have information regarding invasive species. Ashley Barrens is who the EB needs to contact. Tim, Ruth, Chris and Martha are interested in helping with this project. Chris will start making arrangements to further this process.

The EB had no additional changes to recommend for the form Catherine put together to report PLS sitings.

Adjourn – 8:45 pm.