

## **August 14<sup>th</sup> Minutes**

Meeting called to order 7:05pm

Members present: Ruth Caputo, Martha Dahlinger, Christopher Barnes, Martin Sepanik, William Beck, Catherine Niessink, Christin DeJong, Luis Henriquez, Spencer Welling, Tim Winslow, and Genevieve Sertic.

Other People Present: David Mayfield

New student member from the Student Government Advisory Board: Genevieve (Zhawn-vee-Ev) Sertic.

June Minutes: One additional container purchased by the Austin Lake Association was also released by the environmental board.

Motion by Catherine, seconded by Marty. Approved

### **Luis's Environmental Report to the City**

Highlights: More comprehensive than waste management in the end. Potable water usage is fairly constant all year. Storm sewer system is separated from city sewer system. Consolidated drain has its own section on the efforts the city took to reduce the amount of sediment put into Portage Creek. The board would like to put the report up on the website. Bill suggested possibly updating the report yearly as well.

Jim Pearson would like the environmental board to look into the issue of trying to limit how many trash haulers service a given neighborhood. Chris will send around a report done many years ago regarding this issue that was done by the city. The board has decided to wait until the city council formally sends them this issue to be discussed.

### **Spraying Chemicals Near Surface Waters**

Ruth recently thought about this issue in light of the Phragmites present near the consolidated drain by the Sonic Drive-In. The city's practice is not to spray any type of chemical near surface water. Ruth discovered that there are no licensed sprayers in Kalamazoo County. The city is not limited to hiring within the county. As part of the city's SWPDES permit, the city has agreed not to spray any chemicals near surface water. The city can amend this permit if it explains exactly what it is spraying, when it is spraying, etc. Ruth and Martha are working on the pros and cons on this issue.

Ruth's Pros: State of Michigan's recommendation is that you aren't going to beat Phragmites unless you pour some money into the issue or spraying some type of herbicide. One approved herbicide is Imazapyr. State of Illinois's recommendation is

the same. Other states don't recommend anything. There will be some environmental damage to surrounding plants. There are some efforts into looking for a biocontrol by Cornell University but won't be happening anytime soon.

Martha's Cons: It will take time and resources to develop a schedule to spray the herbicide and it will be difficult to find a time when spraying the herbicide could be done in an efficient manner. Ideal conditions are when it is wet in the morning and there is sun. We'd have to do multiple applications of the herbicide as a one-time application would most effectively not work by itself. Herbicides will only be effective for a few years. We'd have to do more applications in the future more than likely. Most "experts" agree that before you use a herbicide all other options such as mechanical removal, burning, etc. should be used. The EPA/FIFRA allows for the producers of the herbicides to be the testers and only requires the testers to test the effects of the main active ingredient for up to 90 days and not the additives and not for longer than 90 days. The UK and Australia require more extensive testing. Most nature conservancies in the United States do not use herbicides. Some studies are showing that some herbicide's chemicals/ingredients may be linked to health problems.

Bill's point is that by using a herbicide on a few stands of Phragmites may not upset the ecological balance too much and that it's really a decision of balance. If we don't act now, it may get out of hand.

Christin makes the point that herbicides are a practical tool used by many groups to restore ecosystems.

Ruth makes the point that Phragmites has spread extensively along Lake Michigan and the surrounding counties.

Spencer would rather take a short-term action now rather than wait until it is too late.

Tim makes the point that Bishop's Bog is very close to where the Phragmites currently is and doing something now is better because who knows when it gets into the Bishop's Bog.

The board would like to look into the process to alter the SWPDES permit so that we can spray next year.

The board moves for the city to look into amending the SWPDES permit so that the city can apply a herbicide to invasive plants, such as Phragmites, located near surface waters. Catherine moved, seconded by Bill. Approved with Martha abstaining.

### **Ruth's Letter to Landowners Concerning Invasive Species**

Chris suggested using city letterhead and having him sign the letter but having Ruth be the contact person. We'd also attach the State of Michigan's sheet on Phragmites so they know of potential plans the landowner can use to control the species.

Ruth will send the suggestions on the letter to Chris and Chris will work on the wordsmithing.

### **PLS Report**

Marty went out to the treated areas yesterday. The plants are struggling but there are still many plants out there. There has been extensive cutting of Purple Loosestrife near Lakeview Park, which is possibly hurting our effort with the beetles there. There is Purple Loosestrife in the West Lake Nature Preserve very close to Bishop's Bog.

### **Planting at Water Treatment Plant**

Ruth, Martha, and Catherine have been visiting the planting often and removing the invasive plants that have been attempting to enter that area. Martha believes we need a better plan to monitor and maintain that area so that more invasive plants do not enter that area. Thistle has been a major problem for example. Native Connections doesn't seem too interested further maintenance of that area. Martha will look into what work needs to be done for that area.

### **Announcements**

Michigan Botanical Site field trip coming up somewhere. Audobon has good field trips as well.

Luis will be resigning from the board sometime soon due to his move to Kalamazoo. He thanks everyone for serving on the board with him. He will be missed.

October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the planning commission will be looking for more input into the comprehensive plan.

Genevieve mentions that she would be willing to share invasive plant pulls with the Student Advisory Committee and her National Honor Society regarding possible future invasive species pulls.

Marty's last meeting. Thanks everyone for a very rewarding, volunteer experience over his last ten years on the board. Ruth thanks Marty for his service over the last ten years.

Ruth has a DVD on good lawncare practices if anyone is interested.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm. Spencer moves, seconded by Tim.

Minutes Taken By: /s/ Tim Winslow