

## **Environmental Board Minutes November 12, 2014**

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

Members Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, Vice-Chair Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, William Beck, Christin DeJong, David Mayfield, Jamie McCarthy, Spencer Welling, Tim Winslow, and Whitney Briggs for Christopher Barnes, Director of Transportation & Utilities.

Excused Members: None

Henry Zou, our student advisory committee member, introduced himself to the board. The board also went around introducing themselves.

The Minutes were amended to reflect under comprehensive plan "tie into to-go places in downtown Kalamazoo" and under three years for maintenance of native plantings as well.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended made by Bill and seconded by Catherine. Motion passes.

### **Prescribed Burn**

The burn has been delayed until the Spring due to weather concerns and concerns from the new Fire Marshall, Derek Henson. His concerns are two-fold: he'd like to move the burn until the spring due to smoke dispersal concerns, and he'd like all people monitoring the burn to be trained as Basic Wildland FireFighters. His concerns have raised the price of the burn about \$500. The Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative is having a webinar series on Phragmites and how to handle it. These can be listened to on the following website: <http://greatlakesphragmites.net/webinars-presentations/>.

### **Semi-Annual Report to City Council Update**

We're reviewing the letter that was sent to City Council and the Mayor in April 2014 with regard to our goals for the upcoming year.

Invasives Planning: we have established programs for controlling selected invasive plants, we have done Purple Loosestrife beetle releases at more locations and with more beetles this year, we have not yet conducted garlic mustard mapping at one city park, we have increased our volunteer base, and we have facilitated/scheduled burning of the Phragmites in the Consolidated Drain area.

Eliason Reserve: Christin and Ruth have met with Bill Deming regarding doing a baseline plant species survey and finding some funding sources regarding this goal. The board has looked for potential grants to fund this survey but the city has not qualified for any thus far.

Single-Stream Recycling: We reviewed the city's last curbside recycling bid and identified good things to keep, areas to change, and areas where we needed more information. We're hoping to have vendors at our next meeting regarding this topic.

Water Treatment: Have discussed options with Chris to maintain this area.

Environmental Concerns: As a board, we discussed the comprehensive plan in depth and potential environmental issues we saw with the plan or that were mentioned in the plan.

Education: David put together a pamphlet on the three main invasive plants that we have been using to educate local citizens regarding invasive species. We've also attended the Fish Fair and Greenathon and educated the public regarding these species. Martha may work more with the City of Portage and the parks boards regarding their bulletin boards with an interest in helping them maintain those boards.

Bill brings up that we need to establish more goals, timelines, etc in order to be seen as a more competent, professional board.

## **Single-Stream Recycling Update**

Group update: The group met a couple weeks ago and wants to eradicate the disincentives to doing this in order to encourage single-stream recycling as being an option. Single-stream recycling would allow for residents to put all their recycleables (plastics #1-#7, paper, metal, glass, etc.) into one bin and not have to sort it. Thus, our plan is to have at our next meeting vendors come in to discuss what they could do regarding single-stream recycling and what options they'd propose. The city's goal is to recycle more and the vendors' goal is to get the city's business so we want work together so that the deal is mutually beneficial in order to make it happen.

## **Old Business**

### **Volunteers**

No one went on our website to sign up using our volunteer form on the Volunteer Kalamazoo site this year for volunteering in the city parks to pull

invasive species. And thus, the form did not help expand our volunteer basis really. There are now increased requirements and paperwork needed to still be listed on this site so we're thinking of taking the form down from the Volunteer Kalamazoo site. Our own site worked rather well though for getting volunteers.

### **Friends of the Parks**

There is a Friends of Ramona Park group already in existence. We are thinking of reaching out to this group to help educate them regarding invasive species and other issues regarding that park. We are thinking we need to reach out to this group through the Parks Board as we have no way of contacting them otherwise.

### **New Business**

#### **STRIPS**

Catherine listened to a webinar regarding Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairies (STRIPS) and there were beneficial uses to do this with regard to biodiversity, water quality, nutrient and carbon cycling. There have also been benefits with regard to providing pollinator habitat in agricultural areas. Christin wondered if this could be expanded to urban areas potentially.

#### **MISN (Midwest Invasive Species Network)**

Dave points out a new app that can be used to map invasive species by just taking a picture of a species and sending it using this app. This might be something we can use to map some species at a local park.

Spencer makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dave. Motion passes.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:18pm

/s/ Tim Winslow