St Anthony Park Community Council

Environment Committee meeting

27 February 2019 at Nico’s on Como

Present: Lisa Habeck, Stephen Mastey, Michael Russelle, Betty Wheeler, Tim Wulling, Steve Yetter. Minutes by Betty, transcribed and summarized by Michael

**News and updates**

Transition Town – All St Anthony Park is writing a proposal to the SAP Community Foundation to provide support for community groups to meet at CoCreatz.

Karlyn Eckman reported by email that she contacted Janna Caywood, with CRWD, to request that she explain the leaf cleanup program in the Como Park neighborhood, but has not heard from her yet.

**New business**

Heather Humbert, a Board member who would like to serve on this committee, cannot meet on Wednesday evenings. We discussed other options and tentatively agreed to poll other members about meeting on the third Tuesday of each month.

We need to report accomplishments on the Council’s 2018 Community Engagement grant with the City:

*Air quality*: We held the community meeting to learn results of the MPCA air quality monitoring. SPNN recorded the session. Betty will ask whether they have aired it. Regarding concerns over wood smoke pollution, Michael asked a couple of U of MN faculty about the frequency of temperature inversions in the area, but has not received a reply.

*Tree preservation plan*: Stephen showed the map of 12% slopes to Zach (City Forestry), because there are several areas steeper than this on the land sold by Luther Seminary for development. The developers have reported that they are inventorying trees for age and condition so they can make informed decisions about building placement. In part because of our involvement, some trees were saved from removal during the Como Ave rebuild last year, including the large elm near the Library.

*Rainwater treatment*: Public Works apparently uses an outdated rainfall rate (5.99”) in their modeling for stormwater. Atlas 14 estimates the 24-hour, 100-year rate to be 7.44”, 24% larger than the old estimate. This is shortsighted and causes difficulties for contractors who use the new estimates to have their plans approved by the City. We added a goal for 2019 to encourage the City to use Atlas 14 estimated. Stephen offered to draft a letter to that effect. Steve Yetter moved and Tim seconded our approval. ***Passed unanimously***.

Erosion of unimproved alleys appears to have increased, but they may offer locations for improved infiltration. As part of our plan to develop a map of the neighborhood showing minor watersheds and potential surface flooding problems, we will identify alleys that might be used for subsurface stormwater infiltration.

Stephen has proposed daylighting of a stormwater pipe at Joy of the People to allow some sediment to drop out and plants to remove nitrogen, phosphorus, and some pollutants. The project is in the queue at CRWD, but there is resistance from Parks and Rec.

*Raingarden maintenanc*e: Complaints from a few landowners along Raymond Avenue heard in late 2017 and early 2018. We have been trying to address issues with trash accumulation and weeds. Lisa and her daughter will focus on trash removal. A maintenance crew will remove weeds and trim dead stems from roses. Scouts can help with mulching.

**Sustainable To-Go containers**

We agreed to support the current draft ordinance, and the Board approved. A letter was submitted to City Council. Members were encouraged to attend the March 6 City Council meeting and to reiterate our position, if necessary. Michael mentioned that Minnesota rules allow people to bring their own containers for leftover food at restaurants. We should communicate this to the wider community.

**2019 Goals**

We decided to review the goals we proposed earlier, which were based on the 10-Year Plan, and consider adding: 1) lining up additional raingarden sites; 2) developing a model site for daylighting and treating storm water; 3) developing criteria and establishing a tree preservation district; 4) publishing the results of the air quality monitoring work in the Park Bugle. We also added our names to the goals. Michael will update these and send out for review (and to remind us of what we’ve agreed to work on!).

**Kasota Pond cleanup**

We earlier had agreed to set April 6 as the date of the cleanup, but the current snow cover and forecasts indicate that the area will not be accessible then. Funding for removal of buckthorn and other invasive plant species is available, but there is concern that the machine could pulverize trash in those areas, making it impossible to remove Styrofoam afterward.

It would be good to prioritize getting this first phase done, because a second grant is ready to implement, but must wait until the first is completed. The second grant supports removal of buckthorn and other invasives by hand around the West pond. We will attempt to get a small group together in early April to pick up trash in the areas to be mowed, so that plant removal can proceed before the main cleanup. Kathryn Murray reports that although Avalon students would be willing to help with the cleanup, their service week is not until the end of May.

**We decided to schedule the main cleanup on April 27.** Steve will coordinate and send out the task list soon. Betty will submit an announcement to the Park Bugle. Stephen may not me available for the cleanup, but offered to use his truck for hauling afterward. He reminded us that every MWMO grant requires an educational component, so we should explain to participants the reason and methods we are using to remove the invasives and replace them with natives. We need to document these efforts.

We had planned to drag dead trees onto the lake ice to provide basking logs for turtles, but Jake Janski, Minnesota Native Landscapes, says that the logs should be near the shore and partially submerged so the turtles can climb them. Stephen, Karlyn, and Jake plan a meeting to coordinate this activity.

**Potential tour**

Steve Ray asked for a tour of West Rock, the local paper recycling plant. The Environment Committee toured the plant a couple of decades ago. At that time, it was under different ownership. Michael will ask Kathryn Murray to request the tour. Perhaps we could open it up to the neighborhood. Potential fundraiser?