

DRAFT
Saint Anthony Park Community Council
Environment Committee
Zoom meeting minutes, January 19, 2022

Present: Bill Anderson (Board Member), Corey Butler (Board Member), Rennie Gaither, Stephen Massey (co-chair), Michael Russelle (co-chair; Board Member), Lisa Habeck, Kerry Morgan, Lizzy Logas-Lindstrom, Manu Junemann

Visitors: Jennifer Victor-Larsen (chair, District 10 Environmental Committee), Starke Mueller (Board Member)

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. – Michael (co-chair)

Land acknowledgment – Lisa Habeck

Selection of secretary – Kerry Morgan

Introductions

Approval of minutes from last December 2021 meeting as edited – approved with one abstention by Corey Butler as he was not at the prior meeting.

Acknowledgment of Betty Wheeler’s contributions and resignation

- Michael read statement of appreciation by committee member Karlyn Eckman:
With Betty Wheeler stepping down from the committee, it is important to acknowledge her deep professional knowledge, dedication to environmental causes, and willingness to contribute countless hours to the work of this committee. Betty has taken a leadership role on many initiatives, proposals and projects over the years and the past two decades. She also served as the MWMO Commissioner representing the City of Saint Paul, where her background in hydrology and geology was critical. Her departure leaves a huge gap, and I extend my personal thanks to Betty for her many, many contributions.
- Michael: Betty was instrumental in numerous projects over many years, including the naming of the new park in South Saint Anthony Park and researching Native artists; was an expert notetaker for the committee over many years; she continues to serve on the SAPCC Transportation Committee.
- Rennie: Betty was remarkable in her ability to ask good questions, diligent; she was the one who saw him photographing trees and invited him to be on the Environmental Committee!

Guest presenter: Jennifer Victor-Larson, Chair, District 10 Environment Committee

- Sharing ideas and looking for ways to collaborate with SAPCC Environmental Committee.
- Como Park is in their district; much of their activity centers on the park.
- They have an “adopt a parcel” stewardship program, ranges from trash pick-up to reporting issues.
- Tree track and guide was established by a resident and is continued by his daughter; way for the public to learn about the trees in the park.
- Gardening community is large; host a community garden.
- Water quality-focused activities: litter pick-up and curbside clean-up.
- Lawns to Legumes program, next grant is due in 2 weeks, trying to get funding for a demonstration neighborhood garden.
- District 10 receives a Partnership Grant from Capitol Region Watershed each year
- Interested in rain barrel program but was too expensive this year.

- Invite speaker at their monthly meeting, environment-related. Ex: MN 350, Teachers-union solar project (they paraphrased SAPCC Environment Committee's letter).
- "Emergence Festival" that Transition Town did was inspiration for upcoming summer event:
- Sponsoring Eco Fair on August 13, 2022 – inviting people and organizations to get involved, booth, activity, volunteering, reaching out to companies that align with these values that could sponsor this event.
- Donate Good Stuff (nonprofit that works to find the best home for donations; Jennifer is the founder and exec director of this non-profit).
- EC worked to make suggestion of new signage around Como Park, people can get lost; the proposal went to Parks and it is sitting with them; the EC hopes they implement it.

Other questions and comments from SAPCC Environment Committee members:

Stephen:

- Were people from the Como area on the CRWD Board? Might be helpful to have an advocate on this particular Board.
- What is the relationship of the District 10 CC with the St. Paul Park system in terms of budget?
- He suggested that the District 10 Environment Committee track the Parks & Rec budget for Como Park; worried they will see a reduction in funding; committee could try and save the budget if they pay attention.

Rennie:

- How many people serve on the District 10 Environmental committee?
 - Jennifer: Three official board members are assigned to the committee and regulars, who are not required to be there.
- Wanted to know more about the rain barrel program.
 - Jennifer: Rain barrel program where you can get discounted rain barrels; need to do educational seminar, have done in the past and has been popular; last year there was a shortage of resin, so now the cost is high – have to order 60+ barrels and is more of a logistical nightmare; like to educate about rain catching; perhaps find other ways to get catch system and teach others how to use.
 - Michael: Transition Town and Environmental Committee hosted a rain barrel program in the past; have to be careful because the roof might not be conducive to healthy water collection (no copper, no asbestos, etc), and need to be established safely as the barrels can be quite heavy.
- Garden worm count?
 - Jennifer: thinks the count is part of the Como Woodland classroom, woods south of Como Avenue, concern about jumping worms. The U of M is tracking this.

Kerry:

- Wanted more information about the "adopt a parcel" trash clean-up around Como Park.
 - Jennifer: It is organized through Parks and Rec; District 10 Environment Committee created a map, so anyone can sign up for a year commitment to clean area up once a month; report problems like graffiti or fallen trees or safety issues; Trish Whirle is the Parks and Rec Contact for the Como Park Steward program and we could contact her for more information.

Lizzy:

- Where can we find more info about the Eco Fair? (Lizzy is the recycling coordinator for the St. Paul campus.) Might be good opportunity to collaborate.
 - Jennifer: There is a committee being formed, and if someone is interested in getting involved, let Jennifer know. Would love to have a "fix-it" committee and a "swap meet."
- Did they use rain barrels available through the Recycling Center?

- Jennifer: yes

Jennifer:

District 10 EC meets second Tuesday of the month; it is their regular meeting time. Would love to have someone from our committee visit their committee and to connect.

We could possibly have a speaker series that is collaborative.

Adoption of 2022 Goals

Michael: Long list! It includes everything from the committee's 10-year plan.

He sent it out, asked if anyone want to work on particular sections.

Most years we have some goals we cannot do for various reasons (i.e., Covid, other issues and opportunities arise, etc.)

Select and finalize goals for 2022 - please refer to the attachments on his email from January 11
Our staff need to share with the City; these goals provide the overall emphasis for the upcoming year.

These are the goals that have EC interest:

Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases through lower energy use

CC1.3 Set goals for and encourage net-zero energy development

- Michael

CC1.4 Reduce waste generation

- Michael, Lizzy

CC1.5 Increase composting

- Lizzy, Lisa

Mitigate and strengthen infrastructure resilience

CC3.3 Preserve existing trees and tree canopies – committed to this one

- Michael, Corey, Rennie – Phase 2

Increase resilience through preparedness

CC4.1 Provide emergency preparedness training and develop a cadre of Community Emergency Response Teams

- Bill – working on organizing a training; he was involved in the topic with the city of Minneapolis with FEMA, training states and large area; how do we help prepare for catastrophic events like tornadoes, natural disasters, localized flooding, winds, pandemic, food shortages; one way of doing it is a “Community Emergency Response Team” or CERT training through FEMA, gives us a level of skill and knowledge they would not have; residents would not really know what to do in these circumstances; disaster psychology training; done annually in Ramsey County, several Wednesday evenings in Arden Hills, 3 hours an evening for 9 weeks; become a disaster pro; registration upcoming; FREE! It would cost you several thousand dollars. Encourage people to attend and share with networks. Individual topics are really useful, what you should know more about. Only 17 seats are still available. Information on Ramsey County website is [here](#).
- Rennie is in!

CC4.2 Publicize list to what to include in home emergency kits

- Bill

CC4.3 Provide written recommendations about how to respond to an emergency

- Bill

CC4.4 Work with City and neighborhood to designate local shelters, meeting points, and evacuation plans

- Bill: Need to consider our location. SAPCC is right in the middle of the cities. Need to think about evacuation, hazardous materials, need to stay in your house vs .

Parks and Recreation Objectives and Strategies

PR2 Seek ways for more public space

PR2.3 Work with City to develop and maintain the new park at the Weyerhaeuser site.

- Committee

PR3 Support current and promote non-traditional use of green space

PR3.4 Advocate for increasing the availability of park space for neighborhood food program.

- Bill – they created a garden at Cromwell

PR4 Enhance urban forest

PR4.3 Promote tree planting

- Committee with CEZ

PR4.4 Distribute list of tree species

- Committee with CEZ intern
- Corey Butler

PR5 Develop sustainable approaches to multi-use boulevards and right-of-way spaces

PR5.1 Obtain funds to maintain raingardens in boulevards and parks (i.e., work with Capitol Watershed Budget – they need to pay to have it maintained; remove silt, improve the drainage, etc.)

- Kerry

PR5.2 Develop a volunteer service corps to maintain rain garden

- Kerry (perhaps an Adopt-a-Drain model with schools and businesses?)

PR7 Create a “Rewilding plan”

PR7.1 Provide education about species we might want to support (i.e., Chimney Swift towers; SAP elementary school)

- Karlyn, Lisa

Water, Soil, Air

WSA1. Reduce loss of storm water and melt water

WSA1.7 Promote installation of rain gardens

- Kerry and Michael (encourage applications to the CRWD Stewardship Grants)

WSA2. Enhance water conservation and reuse in neighborhood

WSA2.2 Promote use of water-sensor technology for automated irrigation systems

- Michael

WSA2.5 Educate about water conservation, low-impact landscaping and water reuse

- Kerry, Corey, Michael, Lizzy

WSA3. Reduce input of contaminants to surface waters from Saint Anthony Park

WSA3.1 Reduce application of environmentally harmful chemicals, on public streets, lots, etc. (i.e., Work with PK Property Services; chloride is a contaminate that hurts aquatic plants, turtles, etc. MWMO has done studies on these ponds, these are high in our neighborhood. Talk with DNR to see if they will get involved.

- Committee’s ongoing work with PK Property Services issues

WSA3.2 Design and promote approaches to reduce the inflow and concentrations of road salt in Kasota Ponds

- Aaron (hope it will be a grad student project), Karlyn

WSA3.6 Work with city for more participation with Adopt-A-Drain

- Rennie, Kerry

WSA4. Identify and remediate sources of soil and air pollution

WSA4.2 Conduct neighborhood mapping project to identify areas of concern

(Can cost a lot of money, no cheap solutions; Lead soil testing done years ago, Michael has not seen data; Bill thinks that is was done by the U of M; High levels due to I-94 and 280. Invite MPCA to do a presentation would be useful. Potential soil contamination in the neighborhood.

New initiative to do mapping? Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) grant?)

- Bill and Michael

WSA4.4 Collect and distribute educational materials on how to build and maintain good soil health in yards and gardens.

- Rennie (Bill has a connection at the MN State Horticultural Society)

WSA4.8 Seek opportunities to monitor outdoor and indoor air quality.

(Need accurate 2.5 meters. Put out 10 or so around certain areas of the neighborhoods, track contamination from open burning; need data, use that to get funds from MPCA or NDA to convert open fireplaces to closed; need to encourage other options, evidence that kids are affected)

Bill suggested we be in contact with MPCA; South Saint Anthony Park rep (64A) is the majority whip in the House of Representatives, Kaohly Vang Her; with her help we might get a different response

- Lisa, Michael

WSA4.9. Seek ways to reduce outdoor and indoor burning of wood and other materials

- Lisa, Michael

WSA5 Improve aesthetics

WSA5.1 Reduce litter and illegal dumping through advocacy, education, engagement

- Kerry, Rennie (Michael suggested reaching out to Tim Chase, science teacher at Murray)

WSA5.7 Encourage use of quieter and less polluting landscaping equipment, convert to electric

There is money available from the MCPA to help companies do this

- Kerry and Michael (Michael has a sound meter; perhaps use it)

Additional:

Conserve and protect Kasota Ponds and conduct annual clean-up

- Committee

Advocate against development of the parcel at 1495 Kasota Ave to reduce spread of pollutants

(Was a dump site; See in aerial photos; It needs to be excavated to level of the wetland, 18-20 ft. needs to be put in a landfill or leave undisturbed.)

- Committee

Voted on adopting these 2022 goals - no objections or abstentions, so they are adopted.

Updates

Lizzy signed up for the Ramsey County Recycling Program to learn about their future plans; she is starting graduate school in Sustainable Management; not sure about her capacity.

Kerry starting Master Gardener program; hope to apply what she learns to different EC projects.

Corey to be member of the Environment committee. He is a SAPCC board member.

Manu: Continued concern about Dominion Flats management; responses to letter about the trash, vandalism, and mistreatment of residents? Michael suggested reaching out to Jessica Willman, SAPCC community organizer.

Opportunities

Karlyn sent email about applying for a grant through the [Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program](#). If anyone interested reach out to Karlyn, deadline is January 25!

[MWMO Board of Commissioners](#) - Saint Paul seat still vacant

A little piece of Mississippi Watershed comes into St. Anthony Park so our CC has responsibility for filling it.

Bill gave background as he was integral in its formation:

Very big job, 50 pages of things to look through, need to be informed, make decisions; getting on board is a multi-step process; Karlyn was one of the first board members, she was the conscience of that group; Betty also served on it; way to make an impact on the Mississippi River.

[Capitol Regional Watershed District - Community Advisory Committee](#)

Bill shared flier about the opportunity to get more involved in the Capitol Region Watershed District as part of the Community Advisory Committee; rain garden grants; environmental funding engines; need to get volunteers to be involved; great opportunities.

[Saint Paul Tree Advisory Panel](#) - open seats; you have power to recommend to the forestry program

SAPC Foundation meeting next week, Wed., January 26, 2022

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 23, 7pm, by Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kerry Morgan