

**DRAFT**  
**Saint Anthony Park Community Council**  
**Environment Committee**  
**Zoom meeting minutes, April 27, 2022**

**Present:** Michael Russelle (co-chair); Karlyn Eckman; Corey Butler; Lisa Habeck; Ryan Murphy; Kathryn Murray; Manu Junemann; Stephen Massey; Patricia Ohmans; Kerry Morgan (arrived at 8 p.m.)

Members present introduced themselves.

Land Acknowledgment: **Lisa read the Land Acknowledgment.**

Patricia agreed to take meeting minutes until Kerry arrived.

**Trees along Cleveland Ave:**

- *Michael:* Pink rings have been put on 52-54 trees, presumably for removal for the Cleveland Avenue rebuilding. Committee members argued for as narrow a street as possible and for the preservation of as many trees as possible, however there was push back from neighbors who wanted to retain parking. In addition, the committee argued for a bike lane making the roadway wider, necessitating tree removals. The county has decided to take this path in construction. There have been a lot of opportunities for public input, including a special transportation committee meeting, the community council flyer houses along the route and there was an article in the Bugle. Replanted trees should be cared for with good soil and consistent watering.
- *Katherine:* Does the committee want to send a letter? Would go to the executive committee and might be paired with transportation committee action.
- *Patricia:* Moved that the SAPCC send a letter to the county board, acknowledging that there have been ample opportunities for input and that residents along Cleveland had opposed the SAPCC council recommendation for a narrower road, but asking for good quality soil when trees are replanted, healthy trees as replacements and preservation of as many trees as possible. Corey seconded. Passed unanimously.
- Ryan and Karlyn can help write the letter, Katherine will send a draft to them.

**March Minutes** were reviewed and approved with one correction: Aaron Hinz is a committee member, not a visitor. Corey moved approval, 6 for, 1 abstention.

**CRWD rain garden maintenance grant:**

- Put together by Stephen Massey and Val to maintain rain gardens along Raymond Avenue. 50-50 match is required, but most of that can come from volunteer hours (valued at \$25/hour.)

- Michael urged members to keep track of hours that they expend on volunteer time in order to offset the match but also because it is useful to the SAPCC in general.
- Rennie and Michael will head up implementation of the rain garden maintenance grant. First step is to trim the red osier dogwood that are in one of the beds.

#### **SAP Community fundraiser:**

- The SAP executive committee is asking for ideas of items or services that committees could donate to an auction that will be held this fall. Funds raised will support the council's operations.
- For example, Michael has an infrared camera that can be used to conduct home energy audits which he is going to donate. Food, musical events, consultations on landscaping.
- Manu would donate weeding hours.
- Michael suggested U Soil Lab might donate a few soil tests.
- Patricia suggested a guest membership to the Bell Museum. Participants are encouraged to think of ideas.

#### **Rethinking I-94: Michael**

- Michael explained that this is an idea promoted by Streets MN to fill the chasm created by 1-94, replacing it with a two-lane boulevard, bicycle paths, park areas, economic and housing development from Hiawatha in Minneapolis to downtown St Paul. This has been done on a smaller scale in Rochester. Economic boon and has increased the air quality in areas where this has been done. Argument is that traffic evaporates when you take out the lanes for it.
- What is the cost of breaking up the aggregate? What is the energy cost of breaking up and moving all the fill? Don't know, but the energy cost might take 20-40 years to balance out.
- What environmental benefits would the committee be interested in seeing? For example, wetlands added in, burying of lead-contaminated soil. On the other side, what kinds of environmental concerns should be considered, like drainage, trying to restore old waterways, avoiding bringing in contaminated soil, encapsulating polluted segments with clay soil. How to control contamination from cadmium and chromium.
- Social impacts should be considered, such as the possibility of gentrification, which could be avoided through affordable housing requirements.
- Manu asked why not a less drastic approach, and Patricia echoed that question.
- If the Twin Cities Boulevard decreases traffic, where does it go? To freeways around the city; might take longer; people find other ways to go
- Stephen suggested that architecture could be used to fill in the freeway trench; provided quick drawing
- Suggestion that Our Streets come and give presentation about the plan; already done for Transportation Committee; there is more information on their website: [twincitiesboulevard.org](http://twincitiesboulevard.org)
- MnDOT planning process began 2018, concern is that they will not be open to imaginative ideas like the Twin Cities Boulevard; offer MnDOT feedback, so email them

### **Storm Drain Stenciling Project: Kerry**

- Kerry proposed hosting a storm drain stenciling project to increase community awareness of keeping contaminants out of drains and to encourage more people to adopt a drain through the Adopt-a-Drain program
- Kerry and Rennie would spearhead this as it was one of the 2022 Water, Air, and Soil objectives that they adopted
- Friends of the Mississippi River can facilitate the project or loan the materials for stenciling; Kerry has emailed them
- Saturday, June 11 has been proposed as a potential date for the activity as the SAPCC Transportation Committee is going to host an event associated with the new mural at Territorial and Carleton.
- Karlyn shared that Nancy Dilts and her daughter stenciled most of the drains in SAP some years ago, the MWMO might have been involved; should reach out to Nancy to find out how they organized it, might have been done with high school and junior high students
- Lisa Habeck, willing to help organize, participate if on a Saturday afternoon; along with Manu and her daughter!

### **Westgate Park update: Michael**

- Official park name on Emerald is Westgate Park
- Work has begun putting in storm water collection areas; large amount of soil
- Dedication will be in Sept. Oct. or Nov.; Bill Anderson is working on planning the party with the Equity Committee

### **Chimney Swift tower update: Karlyn**

- Bill Delanis and Aaron Hampton (sp?) are working on this
- Bill worked on design, he will be back May 12 and will complete them in 2 days
- Will install them in mid-May at Hampton Townhouses
- Concern about future removal as it needs a big concrete base, still unsure what to deal with that, who removes it or puts a new tower in?
- Chimney Swifts are not yet here in MN, they need bugs to eat!
- We need to write up a press release, take photos, grant includes pairs of binoculars to assist with observation of the swifts.

### **Progress on grant applications: Michael presented in Bill's absence**

- Good Neighbor fund application has gone in
- One to revegetate Raymond Bridge at Robbins, it was done with grant money 20 years ago (also did the north side, where park is)
- Robbins problem with drug dealing and speeding, hope to bring a sense that it is taken care of, not forgotten

- Working on ice cream social, each committee will have a table and display. What do we want to develop? Will happen in July or August

#### **Update about stormwater control on unimproved alleys: Patricia**

- Unimproved alley along Buford, Patricia wants to see if they can fund it with help of CRWR
- Larger concern: What to do about unpaved alleys?
- Patricia contacted Matt Loth and Ian McRoberts who wanted to experiment with permeable pavers in their alleyways (*see Feb. 2022 minutes for more info*)
- Patricia wrote a letter to the councilmember, has not heard back from her or her staff
- *Michael*: Another unimproved alley off of Buford, toward Cleveland, between Hythe and Raymond, goes into a T that goes East/West, very steep, sediment flows out
- Is paving a good idea? You want absorption of storm water; put in permeable pavers that hold sediment; needs good subbase, 3 ft.
- *Stephen*: He would do an infiltration system; no manhole at Patricia's street, tricky thing, anyone who touches the alley, watershed pays for ½, but everyone else has to pay money or take on the assessment, hard to get everyone to spend good chunk on money, everyone has to be able to pay or someone has to take on the financial burden
- EC could do a "Green Alleys" initiative to make it larger than just neighbors, make it a Community Council thing; bring in examples of other cities; goal would be to have one alley a year
- Should we do something official? Would need someone to champion the project, pull together some graphics
- Next steps: Research how Chicago got it done; check out records of unimproved alleys; find out if other districts in St. Paul have been working on this topic

#### **100 Trees Initiative: Ben provided feedback in special email**

- Bailey will give trees, spring planting
- Davey landscaping will plant them
- CEZ wants to capture rainwater from the roof of their new building on University (old Sunrise Bank), so moving the gravel beds there
- Signed onto the Port Authority letter
- Recruiting volunteers to water trees, last year's and this year's

#### **Other business: Michael**

##### **Potential for a tour at West Rock**

- Who wants to reach out to Mike Gunderson and invite members of the EC Committee?
- Manu will reach out to him, find out how many people are allowed at one time; what days/times will work
- People have complained about it in the past (Manu was one of the complainers)
- Mike G. helped with Kasota Ponds Clean-up
- Michael has gone before and found the tour useful

- Write up a story for the Bugle, take photos, educate rest of us about the plant, be prepared, make them recognizable to Mike, concern about smells, create a relationship and communication; also invite people who live in south St. Anthony Park and have experienced the bad odor
- Manu will reach out to someone in the Lofts, everyone on the list, if they want to be included

**Upcoming event to attend:**

[Robin Wall Kimmerer in conversation with Diane Wilson](#), May 17 in person (\$12), Online streaming until May 31

**Betty Wheeler celebration:**

- Meet at Urban Growler, need to find a date!
- Michael reported that she is doing well, very busy

**Volunteer hours:**

- When working on rain gardens, let Michael know
- When doing volunteer work done for the council; let Michael and Kathryn know; this includes the meeting time
- Helps us document with the city and donor money that is going towards this

Adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Next meeting: May 25, 7pm via Zoom

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kerry Morgan and Patricia Ohmans