

DRAFT MINUTES

Saint Anthony Park Community Council Environment Committee

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

Hybrid meeting, via Zoom and Berry Place Apartments, St. Anthony Park

Present: Corey Butler, Val Cervenka, Rennie Gaither (co-chair), Michael Russelle (co-chair), Kerry Morgan, Lisa Habeck, Karlyn Eckman, Manu Junemann

Visitor: Mike Lukes (MWMO Commissioner representing St. Paul)

Regrets: Lizzy Logas-Lindstrom, Patricia Ohmans, Aaron Hinz, Ryan Murphy

Called to order: 6:06 p.m.

Land acknowledgment – Rennie

Approve September minutes (attached): motion to approve, approved with no abstentions; Karlyn brought up the Betty Wheeler event had not occurred yet.

Raymond rain gardens - Kerry and Michael

- Four maintenance days, late Sept. and early Oct., were very successful
- 17 volunteers provided 53 hours of work, 11 volunteers were not associated with the SAPCC
- Raymond/Bayless site we cut back shrub roses, weeded thistle, cut down sweet flag and blue iris, removed trash
- Raymond/Ellis site we cut out dead dogwood, cut back shrub roses, weeded thistle and nettle, removed trash
- Matt Wildenauer, local landscape designer, took away debris; he will be planting small wildflowers and adding mulch along a path to the basin to aid in maintenance
- Kerry has instigated a monthly maintenance/cleanup day, the third Sunday of the month from 1 to 3 p.m.; at the Oct. 18 clean up there were three of us who finished cutting out and weeding; at Nov. 20 meet-up we will load remaining debris, pick up trash, rake leaves out of storm drains
- Raymond/Ellis site is not functioning; collects stormwater, it should infiltrate over 48 hours, but it drains out too quickly
- Michael brought up issue with Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD); he plans to meet up with Rachel Funke, maintenance coordinator, in person at the Ellis garden.
- Hope CRWD will consider a major redo; Environment Committee can write grant, depend on CRWD for design and engineering
- Matt W. is not interested, not certified to do engineering, he would take out 6 in. of soil, replace with compost and mulch, with more plants that are adaptable to site, would cost \$10-20K
- Both rain gardens were built with CRWD by a contractor, not sure who the contract group was
- Not sure of the soil composition

Westgate Park update – Michael

- Michael gave update on behalf of David Ronzani, landscape architect from St. Paul Parks & Rec
- Sign has been installed
- Footings for play structure in place waiting for structure, which has been delayed
- Hope the grand opening can happen
- No need updates on public art; Michael finds this disturbing as Betty Wheeler created a long list of potential Native Artists who could be invited to produce artwork for the site
- One-year warranty on plants
- 2-year maintenance of bee lawn and prairie garden and woodland setting, low maintenance grass
- Park has rails as a nod to the Ox-Cart Trail, hope the sign references this
- Rennie described area, lots of Somali families
- Michael has seen couple walking around park on Saturday mornings
- Mike has observed girls biking around, baby stroller, saw man watering plants
- Corey suggested another soccer park—Joy of the People green is always busy
- Michael highlighted the fact that our neighborhood used to have four parks, now we have 5 green spaces, good to get 1.6 acres of green space since it can directly affect the heat; temps always highest in the most industrial area, so this will help improve quality of life

Chimney Swift tower – Karlyn

- Bill and Karlyn put in rebar and made multiple trips to Cemstone to ask for leftover cement, nothing ever happened; extra cement is just dumped out and then goes to Bolander site; frustrating as all efforts have been in vain
- Not worth waiting on Cemstone; proposed to buy cement and get it on their calendar, hope that it can happen tomorrow (Thursday) or Friday
- Best to do it when it is warmer and drier
- Location: at the townhome association at end of East Long Ave, near turnaround and parking lot
- Only need yard and a half of cement

100 Trees Project - Kerry

- Kerry volunteered for about an hour at the Oct. 8 CEZ tree planting
- Was a good group of volunteers—approx. 40+ people of all ages; evidence that there are a lot of neighbors interested in helping out
- Involved taking loading the trees (in containers) and mulch onto trucks, then drove to Transfer Blvd where the volunteers removed old trees, dug new holes for new trees, added mulch and water
- Concerned that the Wednesday watering days have been suspended; it is still warm and there were volunteers signed up; not sure why they did not continue
- Concerned about the survival rate of these trees
- Karlyn suggested that we request a tree survival survey be done, need to know how many have survived, should be 70-75% survival rate
- Should we propose getting CEZ a tree advisor to ensure better success?
- Encourage CEZ to have a waitlist for other people wanting to assist with the watering
- Michael will follow up

Raymond/Robbins grant proposal – Michael

- Good Neighbor Fund – This is UMN money to reduce complaints about noise from the University stadium
- Bill Anderson and Kathryn submitted a grant that was approved; grant said it would be done by end of this month, but Kathryn said it does not need to be done until June 2023
- In the past we have received \$ to do a planted medium along Raymond, 100 Trees Initiative, etc.
- Area at Raymond/Robbins was originally planted when “Sentenced to Service” team was around; this team planted trees and shrubs, no maintenance money; some trees are dead, now lots of buckthorn in it. Proposal is to remove unwanted vegetation, replant, add stone bollards to quiet street
- Billboard is allowed to stay, SAPCC wanted it removed
- Minimize the need for maintenance; perhaps take on as a two-year project; Mike Smith (co-scout master) did the maintenance of the rain gardens in the past
- Val: ask if Tim Chase at Murray Middle School might be willing to coordinate a class to help; would need to be sponsored
- Do we want to take this on or let Transportation Committee to do it? Pat Thompson is willing to take it on

ACTION: Corey made a motion to have the Transportation Committee handle this Robbins/Raymond replanting, Lisa seconded it.

Discussion:

- Val: how many projects are we supposed to take on?
- Michael: it is up to us, in alignment with our 10-year plan

Vote: Unanimous, the Transportation Committee can take it on

Kasota Ponds - Michael

- Hoping that Matt Wildenauer would be willing to work on a proposal for Kasota Ponds to establish vegetation on west and east edges for habitat and erosion control and to control buckthorn, but he declined
- Michael wrote to Landbridge Ecological, another local design group, to see if they were interested
- Located on University and Hampton; they have installed lots of native landscapes
- Interest in coming up with something that is sustainable buckthorn control, better habitat for turtles and other animals
- Michael and Karlyn have spent hours cutting buckthorn
- Karlyn: One positive thing is that the bullrush is expanding and there is sandbar willow also expanding its range, it can out compete the buckthorn; great that they seem to be thriving; good habitat for warblers
- Rennie: Is it possible to get grant from Audubon Society to assist with migrating birds?
- Karlyn: Good idea to look into saving more bird species, lots of warblers who nest there every year and migratory waterfowl; ponds are isolated with still functioning wetlands
- Michael: Looked into publication about buckthorn control, not very promising, hard to get rid of; need to get equipment, use chain saws, etc.
- Need replanting of established plants to help shade the buckthorn buds
- Mike: Letter of salting was shared with property owners around the ponds
- Karlyn: PK properties? Any response to letter that Kathryn sent out? Trainings are not over yet.

- Michael: Deadlines at MWMO are not until March; time is now to find someone with whom to work

What else should we be working on? - Reviewing the 2022 goals

- Rennie: he has been sending emails to see if there were people we could add to the committee; so doing more outreach is important
- Corey: lost a couple of people so would be nice to add another few
- Would be useful to create a spreadsheet of projects, keep track of that is getting done
- Karlyn: We need a GANT chart, timelines, helpful to use, very graphic, visual
- Michael: we need to present on our new goals to be settled in December and adopted in January
- Mike: would be good to bring some younger people on board; more diversity
- Good to have Aaron, Ryan, and Lizzy
- Manu's daughter is interested in the council
- Rennie: Basking logs, need the logs, weights, rope, and someone to transport logs, crew to move them into place
- Karlyn: She has chainsaw and could cut some trees at Kasota and slide them on the pond; lots of aspen and cottonwood, so not a problem to source the trees
- Rennie: need young labor! Hard on the backs
- Michael: need to do some surveying
- Rennie: other conservation of other species that we could support?
- Corey: if we improve the ponds we are improving it for many
- Karlyn: Do more nature walks, walking tours of the ponds, put the binoculars to work, did bio blitz with UMN faculty, lots of species at each of the ponds, species of interest that are rare; lots of things to preserve and protect
- Rennie: Can we involve the public to take a photo, identify it, have a database for; involve the public in this type of citizen science
- Karlyn: Margot Munson (retired aquatic entomologist) with identify dozens of species at the annual Kasota Ponds clean-up
- Michael: could put it on our website; identify species and attach names with
- Val: Is there any signage?
- Michael: Been a problem, even the No Dumping signs; cannot find a place far enough from the Right-of-Way, have to be along Kasota Avenue
- Karlyn: PK people do not like the signs
- Michael: It is a challenge as we have to work with different partners; difficult to work with MnDOT, difficult to work with the Railroad
- Karlyn: We could have an educational goal, get members of the public photographing species they are learning about, host a webpage, we could put better way to relay info about the ponds
- Val: She could submit something to Conservation Magazine, pull in historic value of the ponds, some of the animals, some of the animals, this is DNR property; they like that community involvement
- Karlyn: There is a big study already done about the site; she would be willing to help Val write the story
- Rennie: Ramsey County Historical Society might be interested as well; or write about [MNopedia](#) article; add educational content to some different platforms
- Mike: FYI, the Army Corps of Engineers is taking comments about removing Dam 1 from the Mississippi River

Adjourn at 8:03 p.m.

Next meeting: November 30, 6 to 8 pm, location TBD
