

DRAFT

**SAPCC Environment Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 28, 2022
Hybrid meeting via Zoom and in person at Berry Place, St. Anthony Park**

In attendance: Michael Russelle (co-chair), Rennie Gaither (co-chair), Karlyn Eckman, Patricia Ohmans, Kerry Morgan, Val Cervenka

Regrets: Lizzy Logas-Lindstrom, Lisa Habeck, Manu Junemann, Ryan Murphy, Corey Butler

Visitors: Mike Lukes (commissioner for Mississippi Watershed Management Organization), Caroline Gaither

Meeting called to order at 6:45 p.m. after time for conversation and potluck

Land acknowledgment - No one volunteered

November minutes – Michael moved, Rennie moved, approved with no abstentions.

New business – 2023 Environment Committee Goals

- Patricia:
 - How do we use these goals to make decisions?
 - Do we prioritize or let committee members decide, based on their interests, what is taken on?
- Michael:
 - Things get done by the people who have the time, energy, and motivation to get them done
 - Traditional things: Kasota Ponds clean-up, city-wide clean-up, attending neighborhood fairs, etc.
 - Opportunities to apply for money/grant opportunities can determine what gets adopted
- Rennie:
 - We take on advocacy opportunities, as for the Cleveland trees

What the committee is willing to take on for 2023:

CC1. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases through lower energy use.

CC1.2 – Set goals for and promote energy-efficient, healthy, and comfortable buildings - Michael, others

- There is big push with Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), opportunity for cities to demand that buildings be built as net zero
- Help people who do not have the means to retrofit their homes, to make them higher efficiency, provisions for grants or
- We should read through the IRA and see what is in there and try to encourage the city and county and private builders to make use of those funds; work with government agencies

- Need to advocate for global climate change initiatives and equity
- Land Use Committee’s “Design Guidelines” include some of this

CC1.3 – Set goals for and encourage net-zero energy development and renovation - Michael, others

- Advocate for improved state building standards

CC1.4 –Reduce waste generation – Michael, others

CC2. Increase the use of locally sourced, renewable energy.

CC2.2. Promote and support installation of renewable-energy production systems – Michael, Patricia, others

- Advocate for government IRA funds to be used to achieve these goals; talk to Russ Stark
- Host an alternative energy discussion, co-sponsored with Frogtown, at Rondo Library or elsewhere; answer questions, bring together companies that sell heat pumps

CC3. Mitigate and strengthen infrastructure resilience to severe weather. (see Equity Framework)

CC3.3. Preserve existing trees and tree canopies in public and private spaces and develop plans for and facilitate tree planting – Michael, Corey, and others

- Phase 3 of 100 Trees Initiative; help water Phase 1 and 2 trees; need better more green space, infiltrations, storm management; concern about power outages in summer; get to know you neighbors, provide shelter

CC4. Increase resilience through preparedness and stronger social bonds and networks.

(see also Equity Framework)

Karlyn would like to work on identifying individuals in the neighborhood who are very isolated, check on those people; offer support like daily checks or snow shoveling

Patricia: Does St. Anthony Park Seniors do outreach?

Karlyn: St. Anthony Park Seniors mostly does things on Zoom or online; some residents are really disabled or only have a land line, they are left out of this program; her own neighbor only has a land line, very vulnerable adult; not part of the Block Nurse Program (it has gone away); used to have block captains; we need to identify these folks

Parks and Recreation Objectives and Strategies

PR2. Seek ways to develop more public green space. (see also Equity Framework)

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

- now named Westgate Park, 1.5-acre park at the corner of Sharon Ave SE and Emerald Street SE.
- encourage more tree planting; they need to plant herbaceous species; seek funds if necessary

PR3. Support current and promote non-traditional use of public green space. (see also Equity Framework)

PR3.4. Advocate for increasing the availability of park space for neighborhood food production and pollinator habitat.

- Will do that with the new park; Park does not do much with food, that would require a point person

PR4. Enhance the urban forest while protecting sites for solar energy production.

PR4.3. Promote tree planting on public and private property and provide property owners with relevant funding opportunities – Committee with CEZ (see CC3)

- Would be nice to organize so people can get trees on their own properties (as is done in the Frogtown neighborhood)

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

PR5.1. Obtain funds to support maintenance of rain gardens in boulevards and parks – Kerry and others

- ensure we meet the requirements for CRWD maintenance funds (i.e., \$2,000 matching grant) in 2023 and 2024

PR5.2. Develop a volunteer service corps to maintain rain gardens – Kerry and others

- Work with Jessica to set up regular maintenance days to engage schools and businesses, April to November of each year

PR7. Create a “rewilding plan” to promote and manage native animal and plant populations.

PR7.1. Provide education about which species we may want to support – Karlyn, Lisa, Michael, others

- Chimney Swift tower(s) Karlyn, Lisa, - design and install signs, hold at least one educational event
- Increase turtle basking surfaces in Kasota Ponds – Karlyn, Michael; hope to do this winter
- Educate the District about several desirable wildlife species (freshwater mussels and invertebrates, pollinators, songbirds, bats, salamanders, etc.) and how to support them – Manu, Karlyn, others?
- Karlyn would be willing to do tours of the Kasota Ponds
 - We should increase nesting for salamanders
 - Need binoculars by April, do outreach events; Michael will write to Kathryn about this
 - Need to double check that Bill has been reimbursed for his costs

Water, Soil, and Air Objectives and Strategies

WSA1. Reduce loss of storm water and melt water via runoff.

WSA1.7. Promote installation of rain gardens, surface and subsurface infiltration galleries, green roofs, curb cuts to divert water from street gutters, and development of retention ponds and streets for higher rainfall events. (see EBD2.2) – Kerry, Michael, others?

- Encourage applications to the CRWD Stewardship Grants.
- Patricia: Can the committee or district council apply to have a community forestry corps member who work on sustainability and climate change; that might beef up our needs; there is a rolling application; they just have to be supervised
- Michael: thinks that there will be a part-time person working with District 12 or maybe Como (District 10)
 - Kathryn and Jessica have asked if we would want someone

WSA2. Enhance water conservation and reuse in the neighborhood.

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

Michael: looked into this technology, it automates and reduces water use, but what you plant also matters; he does not have bandwidth to do this

WSA2.5. Educate the community about water conservation, including low-impact landscaping and the water requirements of food and drink choices. – Kerry, Lizzy (Plant recommendations); Corey (see PR4.4)

- Kerry recommends: <http://thewaterweeat.com>
- Michael suggests the Double Pyramid (examples for water, energy, CO2 separately, too): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIRroHMbrqU>
- Michael: there was an article about that in the Park Bugle a couple of years ago

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

WSA3.1. With the City and other partners, work to reduce application of environmentally harmful chemicals; work with neighboring areas to include our interconnected airshed and watersheds. (see also Equity Framework) – Karlyn, Committee

- PK Property Services issue
 - Karlyn: contractor excessively using chlorides; she spoke to the manager, asked to know if they have been certified by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); more info on MPCA website [here](#); also more resources on MWMO website [here](#)
- Michael: there is terrible overuse at the St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church
- Karlyn: have church only contract with companies that have been certified in road salt; a list of individuals and organizations is available on same MPCA website cited above
- There are handouts, posters, and brochures that provide guidance; they could be distributed to SAP businesses and organizations; see downloadable files on MWMO webpage [here](#)

WSA3.2. Design and promote approaches to reduce the inflow and concentrations of road salt in Kasota Ponds – Michael, Karlyn, and Committee to help conserve and protect Kasota Ponds complex and conduct annual cleanup

- DNR grant is due in 2-3 weeks – Michael, Karlyn to work on
- Michael has written to Tory at Landbridge three times, asking for a draft for ideas for what to do; Tory said that he would contact the land manager who is responsible for the piece of land
- Mike: MWMO planning grant is due in March—anyone going to work on this?
 - Michael: perhaps use the MWMO grant to ask for design funds for the DNR grant project?

WSA3.6. Work with the City to achieve wide voluntary participation in the “Adopt-A-Drain” program (Adopt-A-Drain.org) – Kerry

WSA4. Identify and remediate sources of soil and air pollution. (see also Equity Framework)

WSA4.2. Conduct a neighborhood mapping project to identify areas of concern regarding soil contamination (e.g., boulevards and park land that may be used for food production) –

Michael does not have the time for this. It will require considerable grant funding to purchase the monitoring devices.

WSA4.8. Seek opportunities to monitor outdoor and indoor air quality – Lisa, Michael

- Michael: meters can only measure particulates, but you need a lot of them, \$200 each, might need 10 of them; lots of outdoor fireplace burning; could place them in particular locations around SAP

WSA4.9. Seek ways to reduce outdoor and indoor burning of wood and other materials that emit particulates and chemicals that adversely affect human health – Lisa, Michael

- Patricia: go to EPA – Environmental Justice Index, goes down to readings of air quality, heavy metals, exhaust, volatile compounds, etc.; she used it to chart air quality in Frogtown
- Michael: used with MPCA, Betty was able them to locate a monitor near the community garden, at Urban Growler, they are multi-element monitors, specify size of microns, but orgs do not use data unless it is over a long period of time; our concern from Kemstone; they go with census track incomes
- Karlyn: We are downwind from Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC) recycling facility; skip over downtown Mpls and start landing in SAP; HERC is aware of this, no one is monitoring it; no data from the deposition of HERC, along I-94 corridor; she will look over her notes; MPCA might have knowledge of this
- Michael: As it is a government-owned center, he thinks that HERC is already being monitored

WSA5. Improve aesthetics by reducing other environmental problems.

WSA5.1. Reduce litter and illegal dumping through advocacy, education, and engagement with local businesses and organizations. In particular, advocate for reductions in availability and use of plastic containers. – Kerry, others?

- Kerry: Host monthly cleanups around the neighborhood. Encourage schools, students, churches, scouts, etc. to participate in this stewardship.
- Patricia: Reduce plastic waste and litter – educate residents with checklist (check the Unity Church Unitarian website [here](#) for their Plastic Crisis Challenge info).

WSA5.7. Encourage use of quieter and less polluting landscape maintenance equipment than two-cycle lawnmowers, leaf-blowers, and similar equipment. – Kerry, Michael

- Kerry: Document noise levels when observed use outdoors, send fliers to companies, write up letter in Park Bugle about the harmful impact of gas-powered leaf blowers?
- Michael: MPCA no longer hosting share with companies to use rechargeable
- Karlyn: In South St. Anthony there is a continual hum, cannot find source of it, there are other cities with the problem, but it then stopped; no steam plume from Westrock
- Michael: Westrock is no longer doing cardboard recycling; lost 130 good jobs

Additional:

- Advocate for continuation of the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund (only guaranteed through December 31, 2024)
- Increase membership on the committee

Other goals to add on:

Karlyn: What is going on with Minnesota Chemical?

- Michael: Exeter is planning affordable housing on that site
- Karlyn: Need to monitor soil and water contamination there

Karlyn: Need to talk about long-term plan for the site north of Kasota Ave., it is a triangular area owned by the Koch Brothers, built on the Elm Street Ash dump

- We do not want pollution to be increased
- Truck parking lot was proposed, went to city council about this; did not want the polluted land to be disturbed, would ruin nesting habitat for turtles
- Advocate for Trust for Public Land to buy it? It is a tax liability!

Upcoming:

Community meetings about Cleveland Trees – SAP community is asking the county to redo the bike route

- Tuesday, January 24, 6 p.m. virtual
- Tuesday, February 7, 5-7:00 p.m., UMN St. Paul Campus, Student Center
- More info and links are available here: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/content/cleveland-avenue-reconstruction-open-houses>

The Committee thanked Rennie for his contributions to our work and for serving as co-chair.

Adjourned: 8:11 p.m.

Next meeting:

Wednesday, January 25, 6-8:00 p.m.

Meet at Zvago Senior Community (Michael's condo) or Corey's residence?

Could also try Bang or Nico's?