

Environmental Board Minutes, August 19, 2015

Meeting called to order at 7pm

Members Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, Catherine Niessink, Christin DeJong, David Mayfield, Tim Winslow, Director of Transportation and Utilities Christopher Barnes

Excused Members: Vice-Chair Martha Dahlinger, Jamie McCarthy, Spencer Welling, William Beck.

Catherine made a move to approve the minutes as amended from June, seconded by Christin. Motion passes.

Single-Stream Recycling

Last week's public meeting on the change in curbside recycling went very well. There was some public members there. Tim has talked with Sarah Baker from Portage Public schools about getting something put in their newsletter and also attending football games and also putting up a display in certain school cafeterias. Everyone has gotten their single-stream recycling postcard in the mail. We are also putting out another article in the Portager in October. The video about single-stream recycling is also finished and up on the city's website. It can be found here: <http://mediacenter.portagemi.gov/Video/15/72/543>.

Water Treatment Plant

The signs are up. Chris is working on getting a maintenance contract regarding maintenance of the native planting there. Ruth has noticed a lot of people stopping by the signs and reading them. Chris has as well. Chris will work with Martha on the mowing schedule.

Deer Article

Christin went through the results. Mainly Tuesday/Thursday garbage pickup sections were having problems. Most people had negative feelings towards the deer. Most people who responded see deer daily and quite a few of them at a time. Most people who responded do think that something may need to be done. They point out that some of their neighbors are feeding the deer so this is part of the problem. Christin will continue to monitor the results and will probably work on a follow-up article at some point. A few jurisdictions have had to do something about their deer problem in the past. Chronic wasting disease also has been confirmed to be in Michigan as well.

Invasive Plants Activities

Ruth sent out a list of projects we can have groups help us with. The list includes helping map invasive species, adopting a park to clear invasive plants, make presentations on recycling in the schools, helping further establish recycling in the parks, and supporting the schools with their recycling efforts. Ruth has been going around Portage mapping Purple Loosestrife. Tim appreciates this. We will continue trying to map Purple Loosestrife and Phragmites as we see it within Portage city limits.

Portage 2025

The Portage 2025 renewal event is October 3, 2015. The original Portage 2025 process started 2007 with 133 Portage residents, City Council, and staff. There were many workgroups as part of this process. One of the workgroups was Environment and Natural Resources. This event is going to help update the plan. The city is encouraging the public to attend this event. The website is here: <http://www.portagemi.gov/Departments/City-Manager/2025VisioningProject.aspx>.

Chris is going to send out the goals under the Environment and Natural Resources and get the thoughts from the environmental board. There were many goals under this section. These are as follows:

- Pursue regional cooperation
- Multi-modal transportation system that minimizes traffic congestion and maximizes air quality.
- Multiple opportunities for recycling for the entire community (industrial, commercial, residential).
- Sustainable groundwater vision to protect drinking water quality and quantity.
- Expand the network of environmental education resources.
- Protect the environment including flora, fauna, water and especially Portage Creek and Bishop's Bog.
- Avoid overbuilding and loss of natural habitat and open spaces through reuse of residential and commercial sites and open space development.

- Provide measures and incentives for man-made pollution control in cooperation with the entire community.
- Provide recreational opportunities for all including creation and maintenance of high-quality parks and trails.
- Develop the Westnedge area parking lots as the site of an urban village served by a fixed-route trolley and walkable hub design.

Announcements

Ruth has gotten some feedback regarding Eliason Reserve from the city regarding why there are a lot of downed trees that are not being removed. This is because of Black Oak blight. These trees cannot be removed until there is a hard freeze. The main trail will be paved with asphalt and the trail has to be a certain width due to ADA restrictions. Chris will invite Mike Graham, the City of Portage's forester to an environmental board meeting.

The Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is hosting a meeting on August 28th regarding Urban Stormwater Management in Kalamazoo. This event is an all-day event that starts at 9:30am at Western Michigan University. The event's website is here:
http://www.miswcs.org/Local_Events.html

David makes a motion to adjourn at 8:11pm, seconded by Tim. Motion passes.

/s/ Tim Winslow