

Environmental Board Meeting Minutes
August 10th, 2016

Call to order at 8pm.

Members Present: Acting Chair Martha Dahlinger, William Beck, Mike Sergeant, Catherine Niessink, David Mayfield, Jerry Kroehn, Jamie McCarthy, Jamie Harmon, Assistant City of Portage Engineer.

Excused Members: Chair Ruth Caputo, Secretary Tim Winslow.

Approval of June minutes

Moved -William Beck

seconded - Jerry Kroehn

Old Business

- Deer – updates, plans
 - Proposal to City Council - No discussion, since we are awaiting action on the proposal
 - Presentation to City Council on August 23 - Ruth - wants some of us to come - will present a power point
 - What should we be working on now? Nothing until council discusses the proposal
- Input on priorities from City administration - William Beck - He is working on a strategic look at issues
- Discussion with Larry Schaffer-- strategic look at overall planning process. 2 hour meet with department heads. Rod Russell, Chris Barnes, Vicki Georgeau's helper and Deputy City Manager Robert Boulis. The discussion centered on- How do we project the image of the city. and the dept. head's perspective on projects, using the S.W.O.T. process. The group developed a list of categories of threats to the city, using post it notes to keep comments short and to the point. The comments included threats to infrastructure - failures, etc., economic threats, - environment costs of something, neighborhood quality, poorly managed development, vehicular impacts, both city vehicles and public, waste and material management, lakes and streams, loss of natural places. The group then ranked and came up with an impact score. Will have to add 2 elements - impact to environment - likelihood, and timing - factor in to find focus. This is only the city administration view - needs more from Environmental bd., city persons, etc. Once you have priorities - Who can assume responsibility - who is the best entity - personal, city, business. Then can get action plan. City council needs input also - Will get strategic view - how much will it cost, what are the ramifications - what is the next step - they need to ruminate - encouraged to bring it up in their meetings. Should the environmental bd. do this same S.W.O.T.? Two areas of divergence - economic impact, and loss of natural

space. Discussion: could Bill take us through the process. - need time. and can't rush it. Need to clarify - This is the threat - and this is the impact. -Not just threat, but what does it mean to the environment/the rest of his list. How can it be measured and quantified? For strategic analysis, we need to know all the pieces - not just plants, but the whole environment of Portage. Once process is started we can add issues as they come up. The board will do our work and then take it to the public. Create a common language. Next step would be to do the S.W.O.T. with Environmental Board. Next meeting, we should possibly do an introduction to the process, and then do the process at the meeting after that. Members of the board should give the issue some thought before you come so we can Brainstorming\.

Bill will send a copy of his post-it-notes. Note: The meeting with department heads only explored the threats.

- Updates on work with Parks on invasive plants/native plantings: Nothing has been done. Mike will call a meeting for control of invasive plants. Jamie Harmon was sending something to him - he did not get - Jamie will resend. There are 3 working groups. Mike's group is on the city wide control of selected invasive plants - mainly Phragmites, and Japanese Knotweed. The group had figured that Purple Loosestrife was under control - but it is still a problem. Mike is in a video about invasive plants from public access - which they have published. He will send link. DEQ has some email tutorials about how to avoid spreading invasive species. - Martha will send link.
- Other old business: Jerry: has there been an update on single bin recycling-how is it going? Company has not sent anything since the first report. where they exceeded their expectations by about 40%. Martha thinks we need more encouragement to avoid people putting large sheets of cardboard, etc. in garbage. Bill: Just need to encourage people. People are getting better at it. Martha: about resident survey - Larry Schaffer will add deer questions to his residential survey. Ruth worked on Martha's questions - and Ruth will send it out to us all. Jamie Harmon had question about mowing the lawn in front of Water Treatment plant - the native plants. Consensus was that mowing the planting will spread Canada Thistle - the pulling last year and this year is making a difference. Martha thinks mowing will not help. The burning needs to be done early. No mowing since we are beyond the timing for the mowing.

New Business

- Attendance at August 24 BCK Cisma meeting (6:30 – 8pm, KNC) - This is an meeting on invasive species and Ruth is going. The Cisma group only wanted people with background - Mike will go.
- August 28th Ruth will go to Parkview Hills, and talk about deer, Ryan from the Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC) will be at the meeting to help.
- City's tree program - Jerry - asked questions about the city's trees. Jamie Harmon answered: we have a forester on staff, named Mike Graham. He is in Portage one day a week under Parks Department. He is always looking for places to plant trees. There is a list of tree species acceptable within public right-of-way. Board wanted to know if we can we get a list of tree choices, etc., and

Jamie will check on this. Question: Should we have a meeting in fall with arborist - if we do that - have a list of questions for him. What areas are we interested in that we could ask him about? Question arose about planting all the same trees in same area and Jamie said Portage has been trying not to put all same type trees in one area.

- Nest meeting: - Sept. 14 - re: possible speakers - The board is interested in Ryan Koziatek from the Kalamazoo Nature Center and his management group for 3 counties (CISMA) regarding invasive species.

Board member comments

Public comments - David - depending on result of recycling next, we should start thinking about taking single stream further, improving content, less paper, and so forth. Bill Said we should involve business community and schools. Michelle McNatt's offer of input about deer issue: Ruth will call Michelle and tell her we are not ready for how to deal with issues - still researching. Jerry is looking at garlic mustard and he is looking at viability of dried seeds. Jerry also asked about Monarchs and growing them. None of the board has seen many of them. Probably because of the impact of storms in Mexico and also other storms coming up.

Meeting was adjourned around 8:30pm.

/s/ Catherine Niessink