

Environmental Board Minutes, September 14th, 2016

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

Members Present: Chair Ruth Caputo, Vice Chair Martha Dahlinger, Catherine Niessink, Jamie McCarthy, David Mayfield, William Beck, Mike Sergeant, Jerry Kroehn, Secretary Tim Winslow, and Judy Graham in lieu of Transportation and Utilities Director Christopher Barnes.

Excused Members: No one.

Guests

Andrew Laws, BCK CISMA Strike Team

Bridget Bell, Kalamazoo County Conservation District Officer (IOE)

Michael's niece, Jessica is a student at KVCC and is just here to observe.

Tim will make a few amendments to the minutes. Mike makes a motion to approve the minutes as they will be amended, seconded by Jerry. Motion passes.

Andrew Laws, BCK CISMA

BCK CISMA consists of Barry, Calhoun, and Kalamazoo Counties. There are three Invasive Outreach Educators (IOE) for each county. Bridget is one of them. Her email address is invasivespecieskcd@gmail.com. She is currently part of Great Lakes Ecological Management (GLEM) with the Kalamazoo Nature Center and is moving to be the IOE. Andrew discusses the Invasion Curve. As time progresses, the cost of control and eradication increases. This year the strike team tried to find populations of invasives that could be eradicated and thought they did a fairly good job of that. There were 202 new MISIN hits, 5359 acres surveyed, and 97 acres treated. They surveyed some SWMLC properties, local parks, and even a few private properties. They also surveyed lakes and drove roads as well looking for invasive plant populations. The strike team developed procedures and protocols that will be adapted for the Citizen Science Survey Team and they developed Best Management Practices (BMPs) for several major invasive plant threats. They are working on putting together the Citizen Science Survey Team that will go out and evaluate properties and come back and report on what they found.

IOEs will provide educational opportunities and products to professional and public audiences. Sarah Nelson is the Barry County IOE. She was very active her first year. She put on a program with the QDMA regarding how invasive plants affect deer habitat management. The Calhoun County IOE has also done some outreach.

The inaugural Steering Committee meeting was on August 24, 2016 with 22 attendees. They began forming subcommittees. The next meeting is on November 2nd, 2016 from

6:30pm to 8pm. The Steering Committee developed an annual operating plan from the strategic management plan.

Their future efforts will be concentrated on continuing the organization of the Steering Committee, develop a strategic management plan, recruit and train members of the Citizen Science Survey Team, continue education and outreach, and continue to develop relations with other organizations, businesses, and private landowners.

Martha asks if anyone with the Steering Committee that would work with municipalities and Andrew says there is a subcommittee that will be directed towards that.

Andrew says the Portage Environmental Board can attend Steering Committee meetings, advise city council on future problems with invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, and Asian Longhorned Beetle, and be the local contact point regarding invasive plants. The board can help spread the word about the Citizen Science Survey Team and the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN). We can also keep reaching out to the Parks Department, Transportation & Utilities, and the Downtown Development Authority. Lastly, the board can continue to dispense information on invasive plants including identification and treatment.

Martha inquires if the Steering Committee or a subcommittee would develop some common language regarding the clearing of property and construction that helps spread some invasive species. Andrew says there will be an effort to make sure the road commissions and municipalities will be on the same page with regard to invasive plants. Jerry asks about which best management practices are already finalized. Andrew says there are four of them ready to go that the Kalamazoo Nature Center possesses. The four are Japanese Knotweed, Black Swallowwort, Phragmites, and Black Jetbead.

Results of Proposal to City Council

City Council basically agreed to fund the exclosures but have put off funding the aerial survey until we've figured out our priorities. This means the aerial survey will not occur this winter. The city council would also like to combine our deer survey with the citywide survey that is due to happen sometime in the next year or two. The citywide survey will need to be approved by City Council. The aerial survey would not happen until after the citywide survey is conducted.

Ruth attended the Parkwood Hills meeting regarding deer and found out that there are citizens there concerned about deer. They are also going to work with Western Michigan University on deer management at Asylum Lake.

Jerry brought up a list of questions from the Portage City Council regarding the funding request and asked if we should respond. The group decided not to respond for various reasons.

Connect Feature on Public Media Network

Be sure to check it out at this link (<http://www.publicmedianet.org/blog/connect-august-2016>) to see our own Mike Sergeant in action. Mike will work with the Public Media Network regarding more possible features regarding invasive plants.

Bill points out that this is a medium that the board should use more.

Environmental Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Exercise

Bill is leading a talk about how we should organize our priorities through a SWOT assessment. He is going to describe how the assessment will take place but he makes the point that we need to be thorough and to do this correctly. He mainly wants to do some brainstorming tonight and then come back to this at a later date to complete fully. Bill provides the guidelines for what we should put together regarding Post-It notes. Each Post-It note should be no fewer than 3 words and no more than 10 words. Each note must have the threat and impact in it. Must be in sentence form and only one topic on each Post-It note.

The team brainstorms some ideas that Bill then pastes onto our board.

Board Comments

Everyone should volunteer for Kanoe at the Kalamazoo and help with the river cleanup on October 1, 2016.

Tim will update the Purple Loosestrife Report next month probably.

This is Jamie's last meeting as her 3-year term is up and she will not be renewing her term. Thank you Jamie for all you have done for the board for the past three years.

David made a motion to adjourn, Tim seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

/s/ Tim Winslow