

## **Environmental Board Minutes, November 8, 2017**

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm.

Members Present: Chair William Beck, Martha Dahlinger, William Strong, Deirdre Courtney, Brian Harrison (new member), Jerry Kroehn, Assistant City Engineer Jamie Harmon, and Secretary Tim Winslow.

Excused Members: Dave Solberg, Student Advisory Member Owen Gwyn

Guests: None.

### **New Members**

Bill introduced our newest member Brian Harrison. Brian was born and raised in Kalamazoo. He lived in Nebraska for two years and just recently moved back to the area last January. He currently works for Perrigo and has for some time.

All the present members of the board introduced themselves.

Kathy has resigned to focus on other volunteer efforts and we have lost contact with Michael Sergeant and will need to replace him.

Bill also gave a brief history of what the Board has worked on over the past few years and what we are working on as of right now.

Deirdre made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Bill. Motion passes.

### **Goal Setting**

Assisting the city with the Land Management Plan in an advisory role is one of our goals for the coming 2017-18 year. Additionally, we will also be helping the city with resident education on the land management plan as well.

Martha brings up that groups in the past have worked on land management plans for the City of Portage. Martha is wondering how we will fit into this plan and its process exactly. Bill brings up that we've been invited to participate in the plan as a resource. Our exact role will be up to us.

Jerry asked if we were going to be able to see the capital improvement plans that the Parks Department was looking into for the next fiscal year. Jerry wonders if we could see that list of possible projects they were considering. Bill mentions that it was never intended for us to see that list.

Kathleen brought up possibly conducting some activities next year in the parks regarding invasive species, nature hikes, etc. that the board could do in the parks. The Parks Department would need to know of such activities soon though in order to adequately plan for them.

Brian brings up encouraging more composting within the city limits and possibly in the schools. We could help the schools setup a composting program and maybe also look into a composting program for individuals as well. Brian brings up San Francisco as an example of a municipality that has a program in place.

Brian also brings up helping with electronics recycling as well since old televisions, computers, etc. are very hard to get rid of and recycle in general. Kalamazoo County does have a program in place and the City of Portage does work with them on this topic as well.

Jerry asked about if we are giving up on getting articles in the Portager. Bill brings up that we are not giving up on the Portager, but we have experienced difficulty getting articles in it. Bill asked if we could get a byline in the Portager every month possibly and didn't receive a response. Jamie brought up that Mary Beth would like her to edit the articles and be more involved in the decision-making regarding the Portager articles.

Martha brought up the natural shoreline as a goal and thought a perfect spot for one would be between the docks at Lakeview Park.

Jerry brought up making a new recommendation regarding deer and their population numbers again and seeing if city council would fund our new recommendation. Jerry brought up that Portage was fourth in the state for cities and townships with the most deer-vehicle accidents in 2016 with 163 accidents. He believes we should take a new look at this issue.

Tim brought up possibly creating some guidelines for lake and stream management that our citizens and lake associations could follow.

Brian brought up working on encouraging the City to develop some resources to incentivize businesses to make environmental decisions in terms of their construction of new buildings or recycling, etc.

Jerry brought up working on restoring our trees within the city limits. We have lost a number of Ash trees to the Emerald Ash Borer for example and we also know Oak Wilt might be present as well in the City. Jamie states that she knows the City does the minimum it needs to retain its "Tree City" status.

The goals that we brought up were: natural shoreline by Martha, a new recommendation regarding deer by Jerry, putting together some land/stream management guidelines by Tim, helping incentivize businesses to make environmental decisions by Brian, and tree restoration by Jerry. We combined the natural shoreline and land/stream management guidelines into one goal. Each member gets two votes they can put on whatever topic they choose. The two topics

that we chose as a board was lake/stream management guidelines/natural shorelines and incentivizing businesses to make environmental decisions as another.

Martha made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tim. Motion passes. The meeting is adjourned.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:16pm.

/s/ Tim Winslow