

Environmental Board Minutes, October 11, 2017

Meeting called to order at 7pm.

Members Present: Chair William Beck, Dave Solberg, Martha Dahlinger, William Strong, Kathy Fiebig, Deirdre Courtney, Student Advisory Member Owen Gwyn, Assistant City Engineer Jamie Harmon, and Secretary Tim Winslow.

Excused Members: Vice-Chair Michael Sergeant, Jerry Kroehn.

Guests: None.

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

Land Management Plan Committees

Bill clarified that the board is going to help support the city with its education of the citizens regarding the land management plan but will not do so on its own.

Bill makes the point that our actions have already caused the city to undergo an effort with regard to the land management plan. If we hadn't brought up the issue, the city may not have done anything regarding the issue. Now it's our job to push this issue to the next level.

Martha brings up some communication issues she had with something that her and Deirdre were working on regarding mapping of the City of Portage. She found out later that the Planning Commission had already done a lot of this work with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan update. Bill brings up that we will have to remain in good communication with the City of Portage regarding the land management plan and other issues.

Martha brings up that the City of Portage should have someone on staff with an environmental background. Bill brings up that this can be part of our support and recommendation to the City of Portage regarding the land management plan.

Dave brings up that the City of Kalamazoo has members of their boards actually attend meetings of other boards and serve as liaisons between the two boards. That could be something that the environmental board does as well.

Jamie also says that the City is coordinating more between the departments as well.

For the future, we are probably not going to try and get more articles published in the Portager since they aren't consistently publishing Kathy's articles. We've decided not to move forward with the Portager anymore.

The City of Portage has asked that the environmental board help with supporting the land management plan. Part of this is doing a survey of invasive species of the parks within the City of Portage. We would like the city to consider this issue on a citywide level though. Another part of the plan is to help with resident education. Right now the land management plan effort is city-run, but we would like to make it more resident-driven. We can also help recruit allied organizations to help with this effort or help with expert identification regarding these issues.

Kathy brings up that why not just ask the Kalamazoo Nature Center for a list of experts to help them identify where these invasive species are within the parks and who would know best where these issues exist. Bill brings up that Parks Director Kathleen Hoyle has asked us specifically to help with expert identification. Dave brings up the point that the City is probably expecting the KNC to help with expert identification as well as the environmental board too.

Bill makes the point that we can take these committees as far as needed/desired.

Tim brings up that maybe one committee can help with the land management plan support and also resident education support and another committee can start a new project or goal for the board.

The Land Management Plan Development Support team will be Deirdre, Bill, and Tim. The Resident Education Support team will be Owen, Dave, and Martha. Bill will help out with each team as needed. Kathleen will probably attend a lot of the team meetings as well.

The Kalamazoo Nature Center will probably be providing updates and drafts of the plan as they go.

The City is also hoping that although the land management plan only includes the parks for now, but it might include the entire city in the future. The City will also be hosting public meetings in the future and will hope that the environmental board will help encourage people to attend these meetings.

November Agenda

We want to discuss potential future long-term goals at our next meeting and decide what our next goal should be after the land management plan support.

Announcements

Bill will look to get some help regarding Google Drive and using it more to collaborate as a group.

Martha brought up that the Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs plugged up her exhaust fan and cost her an electrician's bill today. This is a relatively new invasive animal species in Michigan.

Dave made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Martha. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.

/s/ Tim Winslow