

Environmental Board Minutes, September 13th, 2017

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm.

Members Present: Dave Solberg, Jerry Kroehn, Kathy Fiebig, Deirdre Nieves, Secretary/Acting Chair Tim Winslow.

Excused Members: Chair William Beck, Vice-Chair Michael Sergeant, Martha Dahlinger, Bill Strong, Student Advisory Member Owen Gwyn, Assistant City Engineer Jamie Harmon.

Guests: Kathleen Hoyle, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation, Senior Services, City of Portage; Sarah Reding, Kalamazoo Nature Center; Joe Wilhelme, Recreation Program Manager, City of Portage

Kathy made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by David. Motion approved.

Kathleen Hoyle, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation, & Senior Services

Update on Request for Proposal regarding development of a Land Management Plan for City of Portage Parks/Public Lands, Kathleen Hoyle, Director Parks, Recreation, & Senior Services

Kathleen is providing an update on the Land Management Plan. They did send out the RFP and the Kalamazoo Nature Center was selected as the vendor. KNC is partnering with Biologic on the project. This year the plan is to prioritize the top five natural areas and to do an inventory of those five parks along with eradication efforts by next July 2018. Then they plan to do all the parks over time as well.

The Environmental Board is going to form two working groups to help with this effort over the next year. A group to help the city with the implementation and execution of the plan and another educational group to help educate the city on the plan and provide a list of experts.

The hope is by October to have some of this information very soon so it can go into the CIP. The plan will outline what each park has in terms of invasives, what can be done to eradicate and control these species, how much this will cost, who can help eradicate/control these invasives, what other threats, exist, etc. The plan will also discuss what will happen if they choose to do nothing for these parks.

Eliason phase 2 will also tie into this project a little bit since it will be occurring at the same time.

The City is thinking about how the environmental board will fit into the plan. They will definitely want the Environmental Board's support for the plan when they present it to City Council.

We have only gotten two out of six of our monthly articles published in The Portager so we do not think this will be a great way to educate the citizens on the land management plan. We will have to think about how we can help the City educate citizens about land management plan.

Kathy brings up that educating the citizens about the land management plan is probably beyond the board's scope based on our mission and also is probably not something the board is completely effective with doing.

The final draft report is due June 29th, 2018 and the final report goes to the city on July 13, 2018.

The Board may be able to help KNC with doing the surveys of the parks over the next eight months or so. KNC will mainly be working on surveying the parks over the next eight months and then developing the plan next Summer. The Board may know some people that know these parks very well who can help them with this effort.

The City, KNC, and the Board will have to communicate well over the next year on this plan. The Board can definitely help with advocating for the plan and helping explain why this plan is important and why it will be worth the resources in the end. The Board can help develop a list of experts that the City can rely on for part of this project as well.

The KNC will be using data from the Barry, Calhoun, and Kalamazoo (BCK) Cisma and Midwest Invasive Species Network (MISIN) as well to help complete their surveys.

Selection of Environmental Board members for Participation on Project Teams

We decided we will decide at our next meeting what project teams we need to help with this project if needed.

Kathy made a motion to adjourn, Dave seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.

/s/ Tim Winslow