

City of Portage Environmental Board
Agenda for the Meeting on January 11, 2023
Minutes Recorded by: Jason Beasley

Members present: Jerry Kroehn (JK), David Lancaster (DL), Joe Chamberlin (JC), Lauren Thompkins (LT), Pat McGinnis (PM; City Manager), Jason Beasley (JB), Thomas Schaffer (TS), Loren Kimeldorf (LK), Jaime Harmon (JH)

7:03 p.m. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

- City Manager Pat McGinnis provided introduction

7:05 p.m. Meeting begins

7:05 p.m. Public Comment

- No members of the public present to speak.

7:05 p.m. Approve September and December 2022 Meeting Minutes

- JC motion to approve September minutes – seconded, motion passed

7:05 p.m. Arbor Day

- JH talked to Kathleen about tree planting, seems to be moving forward. An entire green week will be more difficult in 2023 given park schedules.
 - Kathleen advised forming a committee to work on this, wanting to see ideas or a vision of the “Green Week” and would like to see something as early September to get into the next year schedule.
 - Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) numbers are significantly down, will be hard for them to perform events. Talks to do something smaller scale than the Green-A-Thon in the spring. YAC would like to partner with Environmental Board on this.
 - Discussions of a recycling event. Promote city hall event. Donations of saplings (~200 to give away)
- JC: Is Farmers market still planning to start the last week of April?
 - JH: No. Green-A-Thon and Farmers Market coordination will not continue.
- JC: Suggests reaching out to climax solar or others to give presentation to inform people of rooftop solar. Waiting to hear back about an event at the library with the Seed Bank. Third idea to promote a Portage Creek cleanup.
- LT: How many people are appropriate for a committee?
 - JH: Committees three to four typical.
- JH: Discussion including educational topics that week (content) not necessarily events.
- JC: Can we use the website to feature different topics on the website? Or list all major topics.
 - JH: Yes.
- LT: Discussion on Citizens Science interest using or promoting apps.

- LK – Broached tree planting concept and location in Celery Flats.
 - JH: Kathleen indicated landscaping/tree planting planned for Celery Flats. May not be that exact area.
- TS: Questions on difficulty of planting at bird-friendly trees/sites. If in a trafficked area, questions the ability to add a plaque or information stand describing the tree and site.
 - JK: There are approved tree species that can be planted. Restricted list. How much money is set aside for trees this year?
 - PM: Uncertain for street tree replacement – but perhaps as high as 70% mortality in this environment. Need to work with Public Works to ensure no interference with lawn activities.
 - JH: Discussion on planning and landscaping requirements to maintain tree city status. (200 trees per year)
 - JC: Discussion on updates or penalties for developers for removing old trees (tree ordinance)?
 - JH: Has not been picked back up yet. Educational component of this program was lacking and needs improvement before being picked back up.
 - Motion (JC): To allocate time to recommend a new tree ordinance to the city and add this to the agenda for next month. Seconded by LT
 - Discussion: None
 - Passed unanimously.
- 2024 Green Week Committee of 4: LT, JK, DL, JC

7:29: Motion to approve December minutes (motion for approving minutes earlier in meeting was only for September). Seconded LT.

- Discussion:
 - JK Concerned with language of city not accepting deer culling. Discussion ensues on the wording reflective of the consensus of the group.
 - JK: Questions regarding deer stance and deer count updates?
 - JH: Clarification on prior helicopter deer count and non-renewed funding of some projects post-Covid.
 - Jerry: Asking for deer count. Concerns with costs of deer hazards.
- Approved with 7 aye votes (Abstain: JK)

7:36 p.m. Portage Master Plan

- JH: Sent link to Master Plan
- PM: Distributed business cards with QR code to take survey. Comments due February 15th. Attend meetings coming soon to participate.
 - **JH: Each person to take survey before meeting next month. And if anything is missing and feedback needs to be sent to the board.**
 - JC: Questions updating next month agenda to discuss master plan
 - Motion by LK “ To allocate 10 minutes to discuss master plan.” Seconded by TC. Vote approved 6:0. (2 abstains).

- PM: Master Plan is updated every 5 years.
- TC: How does local grid power plan tie in with the master plan. Discussion follows.

7:43 p.m. Local Grid Power Generation

- TS: How do we go about this. How do we know the feasibility?
- LT: Discussion on types of education and incentives is Portage able to offer to residents for renewable energy?
 - PM: Originated when city hall needed a new roof. Lots of internal electrification. Talked to schools.
 - JC: Discussion about federal funding for solar/electrification. The city won't support solar for roof projects. And the furnace engineer recommended propane.
 - PM: Role of environmental board is to generate education. Send to JH.
 - LK: Discussion on social medial and city Instagram account. Trend is away from facebook but linkedin is active.
- Further discussion on goals, wants, investments for city.
- JC/LT/TS: discussion on how to get businesses interested/attracted.
 - PM: Reiterates the role of property rights.
- LK – Can the city convey useful information to the board to combat questions about say, removing trees, but – we reconfigured things to park underground and save some trees.

8:08 p.m. Board Member Discussion

- JH: Email sent out for garlic mustard pull contest. It's on a Friday. May miss people at work. Must attend training and education to win contest. Saturday morning, April 29 (10 AM – 12PM) could be added for those who can't attend on a Friday afternoon. Need to ensure we have appropriate representative support.
- JK: Any progress on getting minors with an OK to pull garlic mustard?
 - JH: Minor waivers are only required if board does organized pulls, which it is currently not scheduled to do this spring.

8:27 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

- DL motion. Seconded JB. Passed 7:0