



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Nat'l Resources Conservation Board

The Mayor has signed a declaration allowing members of the council, staff, and the public to attend meetings remotely via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public comment options prior to the meeting must be received by 4:30 PM on Tuesday, January 19. Email comments to: nmonahan@blainemn.gov or 763-785-6151.

Zoom is for members of the public who want to comment remotely during the meeting on an agenda item. Join Zoom Webinar at <https://blainemn.zoom.us/j/91691931453>

Ways to watch if not commenting on an agenda item: BlaineMN.gov/Video or North Metro TV on Comcast, Apple TV, or Roku

Questions? Email - Communications@BlaineMN.gov

The Natural Resource Conservation Board is an advisory body to the City Council. The Board is charged with recommending acquisition of lands for open space and developing a Natural Resource Plan which includes environmental policy and guidelines for the maintenance and preservation of Blaine's existing and future open spaces and trail corridors. One of the Board's functions is to hold public meetings and make recommendations to the City Council. For each item, the Board will receive reports prepared by City staff, provide the opportunity for public response, conduct Board discussions and make recommendations. The City Council, however, makes all final decisions on these matters.

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this hybrid meeting was held both virtually and in person.

2. Roll Call

Others Present: Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug, Recreation Manager Nate Monahan, and Adjunct Member Drew Brown.

Present: 9 - Villella, Rafferty, Perkins, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

Absent: 2 - Chair McKinley, and Truchon

3. Approval of Minutes**3.-1****APPROVAL OF THE JULY 21, 2020 NRCB MINUTES**

Attachments: [07-21-20 nrcb](#)

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Genet to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020 Board Meeting as presented.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Rafferty, Perkins, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by Boardmember Villella, seconded by Boardmember Rafferty to approve the October 20, 2020 Board Agenda.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

5. New Business**5.-1****ASH TREE REMOVAL AT THE BLAINE WETLAND
SANCTUARY**

Attachments: [BWS Ash Tree Removal](#)

Ms. Haug stated the City of Blaine has experienced a significant amount of diseased ash trees caused by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The BWS is one of the areas that is experiencing a high number of diseased ash trees. Unfortunately, all ash trees at the BWS are diseased or dead. Due to the difficulty of getting heavy equipment out to the uplands of the BWS, staff has requested a quote from three contractors; Precision Land and Tree (PLT), Minnesota Native Landscaping (MNL) and Reliable Tree Service, Inc. The funding source for this project would come from the Open Space Capital Improvement Fund.

Ms. Haug reported removing dead and diseased trees from the entire site in conjunction with the southern restoration this winter will provide cost savings to the city. The contractor will already be at the site with the equipment to remove the trees. Not removing the trees could create safety

issues with the use of trails and would require city staff to remove the trees. Leaving the trees could make the prescribed burns more difficult at the site because they can become a fire hazard.

Boardmember Rafferty asked if this was a budgeted expense. Ms. Haug explained the tree removal was a budgeted item for the maintenance of the BWS.

Boardmember Villella questioned how long it would take to remove the trees. Ms. Haug reported this would be weather dependent. She anticipated the work would take one to two weeks to complete.

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Villella, to advise the City Council enter into a contract with PLT to remove all ash trees throughout the BWS.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Rafferty, Perkins, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

5.-2

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF POWER POINT FOR JOINT MEETING WITH THE CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Monahan reviewed an updated Power Point presentation that would be used for a joint meeting with the City Council which was tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 7. He explained this meeting was previously scheduled for April. The charge of the NRCB was reviewed and it was noted the NRCB was established in 2001. The City of Blaine Open Space map was reviewed with the Board.

Ms. Haug commented on the Main Street Wetland Mitigation Bank, noting the City still had to hold neighborhood meetings and address the boundary lines. She provided further comment on the wetland sales that occurred in 2020. It was estimated the City would bring in \$750,000 in 2021.

Mr. Monahan explained staff hoped plans for the BWS monument entrance sign would be addressed next year. The proposed trails through the BWS were reviewed. He noted the seven interpretive signs were in place and the City appreciated the efforts of the Anoka Ramsey college students that assisted with this project. It was noted the southern portion of the BWS wetland restoration should be completed this winter, weather pending. The pros and cons of the proposed nature center were further reviewed, along with estimated expenses.

Boardmember Theisen encouraged staff to consider pursuing electric vehicle grants in order to make this charging stations available at the future

nature shelter. He anticipated the individuals visiting the nature center would make use of the charging stations.

Boardmember Rafferty questioned how many of the City's parks had plumbed restroom facilities. Mr. Monahan reported flushable toilets were available at Town Square Park, Lake Side Commons Park, and Aquatore Park. He discussed how the City was purchasing a new security program that would allow rental folks access to park shelters during their scheduled time.

Boardmember Vedi asked if staff was seeking direction on which direction to proceed with in terms of a shelter versus a nature center.

Chair Perkins commented the Board had recommended a shelter with flushable toilets at this time, unless funding became available for a full nature center. Mr. Monahan explained the recommendation from the NRCB could be brought to the Council at the joint meeting.

Boardmember Vedi supported the shelter having full bathrooms if funding but if funding is available a nature center should be constructed.

MOVED by Boardmember Vedi, seconded by Boardmember Panning, to recommend the City Council consider constructing a shelter at the BWS with full bathrooms.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Rafferty, Perkins, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

5.-3

RECOMMENDATION OF THE 2021 - 2025 OPEN SPACE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Attachments: [2021 - 2025 Open Space CIP](#)

Mr. Monahan reviewed the 2021 to 2025 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan with the Board. He stated staff members including the City Manager, Finance Director, Public Works Director and Parks and Recreation staff have reviewed the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the City's Open Space Fund and is recommending the 2021 components of the CIP. Staff reviewed the CIP in further detail with the Board and explained staff is seeking the NRCB's recommendation to bring this forward to the City Council for approval and formal adoption into the 2021-25 CIP.

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Genet, to advise the City Council to approve the 2021-2025 Open Space Capital

Improvement Plan.**A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.****Aye:** 9 - Villella, Rafferty, Perkins, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper**5.-4****NRCB UPDATES**

Ms. Haug stated work is being planned and restoration efforts will continue at the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS) this fall and winter. The proposed work will take place in the southern and northern portion. All work is weather dependent and subject to change. Check BlaineMN.gov/BWSRestoration for the latest updates.

Southern Portion of BWS update - This restoration work is funded through a grant received by Great River Greening through the MN Outdoor Heritage Fund.

- The Southern Portion work is to complete the restoration of the site that was started last winter.
- Precision Land and Tree (PLT) is scheduled to mow an access road off of 109th Ave and place mulch down in same location as last year- (late October/early November)
- PLT will finish tree removals of invasive, non-native, and dead trees per the approved plan once the ground is frozen and weather conditions allow - (November - March)
- Work service crews will continue buckthorn and other invasive plant species removals in areas previously identified for ~~only~~ invasive removals once ground is frozen and weather conditions allow - (November - March)

Northern Portion of BWS update - This restoration work is funded through the City's open space fund.

- Crew and chipper are lined up to chip and remove the brush on the east side of the island with the asphalt path. Work will start October 21 if weather allows.
- This work does not require closing of the entire trail, just the eastern leg of the loop on that island.
- Work will include cutting burn breaks along the boardwalk and clearing vegetation growing into the boardwalk in the weeks to come.
- Burn breaks involve mowing a path that contain the fire within its boundaries.
- If a burn can be accomplished this fall, notice will be provided to the community through social media and to those who have signed up to receive notifications about the BWS.
- If a burn cannot be accomplished, the area will be set up with breaks for a spring burn.
- A partial fall burn and the rest in the spring, is another likely scenario.

This work is required maintenance to meet the wetland bank permit requirements.

Adjournment

MOVED by Boardmember Villella, seconded by Boardmember Rafferty to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Villella, Rafferty, Perkins, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper