



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Nat'l Resources Conservation Board

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 19, 2021

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call - Chair Perkins, Boardmembers Filipi, Genet, McKinley, Panning, Rafferty, Trippler, Truchon.

Absent - Boardmember Vedi.

Others Present: Recreation Manager Nate Monahan, Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom, and Adjunct Members Drew Brown.

Present: 8 - Vice Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Chair Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Panning, Trippler, and Filipi

Absent: 1 - Vedi

3. Approval of Minutes

3.-1

Approval of the August 17, 2021 NRCB Minutes

Attachments: [08-17-21 nrcb](#)

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Panning to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2021 Board Meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Approve of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

5. New Business

Mr. Monahan welcomed Megan Hedstrom to the city of Blaine noting she would serve as the city's new stormwater coordinator.

5.-1

Recommendation of a proposal from WSB & Associates for Professional Engineering and Design Services for a Pavilion and Restroom at Blaine Wetland Sanctuary

Attachments: [BWS Pavilion Restroom - WSB Proposal](#)

Mr. Monahan stated the Parks and Recreation Department requested proposals for professional engineering and design services for construction of a pavilion and restroom facility at Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. The city received proposals from two local firms, WSB & Associates and SRF. Initially for 2021, \$50,000 was budgeted in the Open Space CIP for this piece of the project and was slated to start in late 2021. Some changes to the scope of the project increased the funding needed for engineering and design work. Changes to the scope included bringing water and sanitary sewer utilities to the site, updating the site's wetland delineation, and obtaining necessary permits from Rice Creek Watershed District.

Mr. Monahan explained staff has determined that extending water and sanitary sewer connections from Lexington Athletic Complex, would be the most cost effective means to obtain utilities for the site. The project has been identified in the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Master Plan and is budgeted in the Open Space CIP. After review of the proposals, staff recommends the selection of WSB & Associates for professional engineering and design services for the project. In addition, staff is asking for a 10% contingency to bring the total project budget to \$121,550.

Boardmember McKinley asked if Rice Creek was aware of this project. Mr. Monahan reported staff has made Rice Creek aware of this project and the permits that would be necessary in order to move this project forward.

Boardmember Truchon questioned if the board would be able to work with the design people on this project. Mr. Monahan

commented staff would get the site ready to go and next month the group would begin talking about recommendations and elements that should be included in the pavilion. He indicated parking would have to be further considered by the board. He commented further on the cost to pedestrian bridge over Lexington Avenue.

Boardmember Genet questioned what the timeline would be for this project. Mr. Monahan explained WSB would be assisting staff in rolling out a timeline for this project.

Boardmember Filipi asked what the 10% contingency would cover. Mr. Monahan stated this would cover costs that may above the contract amount.

Boardmember Truchon indicated she would not like to see additional parking spaces spilling into the wetland. She stated this was not a viable solution. She noted there was plenty of parking across the street that could be used by BWS visitors.

Boardmember Genet explained she saw people crossing Lexington Avenue every day, whether it be bikers, runners, children, adults, grandparents or parents with strollers.

Chair Perkins questioned if the city had an opportunity to expand the drilling to make a tunnel under the roadway for pedestrians. Mr. Monahan reported the tunnel was even more expensive than a pedestrian bridge.

Boardmember Genet noted there were several properties in this area and the city may want to consider purchasing this land for additional parking.

Boardmember Panning concurred this would be a viable option, even if only a portion of the land was purchased for parking. Mr. Monahan stated another option would be the lift station on the BWS side of Lexington Avenue, noting parking was available on this property.

Boardmember Trippler asked if the city wanted to tighten the timeline for this project. Mr. Monahan explained this was a complicated site and staff was hoping to move this project forward in 2022. He reported working with watersheds and the necessary permits takes time.

Boardmember Trippler suggested some sort of clause be written

into the contract to allow the city to terminate its relationship with WSB if the project were not progressing.

Boardmember Panning questioned if the widening of Lexington Avenue would impact the parking and trail at the BWS. Mr. Monahan stated Lexington Avenue would have three lanes in each direction at some point in the future and noted the current center ditch would be used for the additional lanes so there would be no impact to the trail or parking for the BWS.

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember McKinley, to recommend to the city council the proposal from WSB & Associates for professional engineering and design services for a pavilion and restroom at Blaine Wetland Sanctuary and a 10% contingency for a total budget of \$121,550.

Motion carried unanimously.

5.-2

Wetland Credit Sale Update

Ms. Hedstrom stated on July 27, 2021, the city received 12.744 wetland credits for the Site 7 wetland bank. These credits are awarded to the city when the monitoring of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary proves that we have met pre-determined vegetation standards in the wetland area. This brings the total credits restored to date on the Site 7 bank to 39.735 out of a potential 81 credits.

Ms. Hedstrom reported the city had quite a few potential buyers interested in purchasing the credits from the city. Based on feedback from the NCRB and the City Council, the city set the price on these credits moving forward as \$2.50/SF, or \$108,900 per credit. This will be reviewed over the winter as other banks come online for comparison, it may be feasible to raise this price even higher in the future. At the October 4th council meeting 5 purchase agreements were approved, 2 more purchase agreements are scheduled for approval at the 10/18 council meeting, and a final purchase agreement is on the council agenda at the 11/1 meeting. Projects include industrial buildings in Lino Lakes, Hugo, and Dayton, housing developments in Blaine (Lexington Waters), Ramsey, Victoria, and Maple Grove, and a street project in Delano.

Ms. Hedstrom explained in total to date, the open space fund has received payment for 18.6264 wetland credits for a total of \$1,835,523.62. As of 10/18, an additional 17.4441 credits have been signed into purchase agreements, and an additional 3.5 acres, if approved, will be signed into purchase agreements 11/1. This totals a future projected payment amount \$2,280,812.49, which brings the total amount projected to be paid into the open

space fund by wetland credit sales from the Site 7 wetland bank to \$4,116,336.11.

Ms. Hedstrom stated moving forward, the city will continue to monitor and make improvements to the Site 7 wetland bank. We are on track to meet Interim 1 Vegetation Performance standards in the wet meadow in 2022 which would trigger the release of another 5.2725 credits. Then, once invasive species have been managed in this area and the city can meet the Interim 2 Vegetation goals another 15.8175 credits would be released. This would likely be in 2023 or 2024.

Boardmember Truchon asked what the potential value of the Pioneer Park wetland bank would be for the open space fund. Ms. Hedstrom explained she has not had a chance to look into this. She noted the tree removal would be the first step in the restoration of this wetland.

Boardmember Filipi thanked staff for the detailed report.

Boardmember Genet requested staff provide the Board with an update on the restoration work that has been done at the BWS at Branch 3 and Site 7. Mr. Hedstrom indicated she would be meeting with Jason Husveth and could provide the Board with an update at a future meeting.

Boardmember Truchon requested staff provide the Board with further information regarding the financials on the Pioneer Park wetland project.

5.-3

Open Space Project Updates

Attachments: [Wetland Sanctuary Monument](#)
[Pioneer Park Tree Survey Data](#)
[Pioneer Park Tree Survey Key](#)
[Trail Distance Map for Pioneer Park](#)

Mr. Monahan provided the board with an update on the following projects:

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Entrance Sign

The monument sign will be constructed in November and staff is just finalizing a few design details. It was noted the sign would be lit on both sides.

Boardmember Trippler asked why the sign was not being lit by solar power. Mr. Monahan reported the site had power and the consultants recommended electric powered lights be used versus

solar powered lights.

Boardmember Genet questioned if "City of Blaine" should be added to the BWS sign. Mr. Monahan commented on the city's branding efforts noting the city was being branded by the logo.

Boardmember Truchon stated she would like the city to reconsider the name on the sign and that the site be named Blaine Wetland Sanctuary instead of just Wetland Sanctuary.

Boardmember McKinley reported this change may require the city to spend more on the sign.

Boardmember Panning understood this may be the case, but anticipated it would be cheaper to add Blaine at this time versus after the fact.

Mr. Monahan explained he would bring this recommendation to the city council.

Sunrise Ponds Trail

City Staff is still waiting for final permitting from Coon Creek Watershed District which meant this project would be delayed until spring 2022.

Boardmember Truchon recommended staff send a notice to the surrounding residents to make them aware the trail was coming. Mr. Monahan reported a mailing could be sent to the residents in this area.

Pioneer Park Tree Management

City Staff is exploring the option of a tree management project at Pioneer Park. The tree project would look at removal of trees on the west side of Pioneer Park that would include dead and diseased trees, ash trees, and certain invasive trees. Additionally, the project would look at including removal of dead and diseased trees along with ash trees on both sides of trail system (thirty feet on each side) throughout the Pioneer Park. A tree survey has been done on the western portion of the park and Public Works staff is looking to mark the trees along the trail system within Pioneer Park. Staff will look to have extensive public engagement with information to the surrounding neighborhoods including mailings and an open house.

Boardmember McKinley asked if this park has buckthorn. Ms. Hedstrom explained this area has a small amount of buckthorn.

Jason Husveth indicated he had a hand in collecting the tree survey data for Pioneer Park. He noted the tree survey focused on trees that were six inches in diameter or greater. He explained buckthorn was typically less than six inches and all of it would have to be removed. He estimated all of the ash trees that would have to be removed were 50 to 60 years old.

Boardmember Trippler questioned what was causing the destruction of the ash trees. Mr. Husveth reported EAB was destroying the ash trees within Pioneer Park and throughout the city.

Boardmember Truchon asked if there was a plan to come back and have all of the buckthorn removed from Pioneer Park. Mr. Husveth reported staff would have to make this determination.

Boardmember Trippler recommended the city chip the dead and diseased trees in order for them to be used throughout the community. Mr. Monahan explained the city did have some wood chip trails where this material could be used.

The Board thanked Mr. Husveth for his assistance with the tree mapping.

Boardmember Genet requested an update from staff on the frequency of meetings.

Boardmember Truchon agreed stating she has been disappointed with the lack of continuity due to the gaps between meetings. She hoped that the Board would be able to begin holding regular meetings going forward.

Boardmember Genet asked if staff had an update on where the city was at in terms of maintenance and the next stage for the BWS. Ms. Hedstrom reported she was still getting on board at this time and would have an update for the Board on this topic in November.

AJ Genet introduced himself to the Board and noted he was in attendance to get ideas for his Eagle Scout project. He discussed the goals of an Eagle project with the Board and noted he had a year and a half to complete this project. The Board provided Mr. Genet with several ideas on potential projects.

MOVED by Boardmember Panning, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to recommend to the city council move forward with a monument sign that states

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

Motion carried 6-1 (Boardmember McKinley opposed).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:18PM.