



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Nat'l Resources Conservation Board

This meeting will be a hybrid of Zoom and in-person. The Mayor has signed a declaration allowing members of the commission, staff, and the public to attend the meeting remotely via Zoom as has been done during the COVID-19 pandemic. The council chambers will have limited seating, with audience chairs being set up at least six feet apart. There will be an overflow area where the meeting can be watched in the Cloverleaf Farms Room, also with chairs set up at least six feet apart. Please note that all visitors to city hall are required to wear a face mask while inside the building.

Public comment options prior to the meeting must be received by noon on Tuesday, October 20. Email comments to: nmonahan@BlaineMN.gov or phone 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/91336310162>

Ways to watch if not commenting on an agenda item: [BlaineMN.gov/Video](https://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, July 21, 2020

7:00 PM Council Chambers and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, city meetings will also be held as virtual meetings

1. Call To Order

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

2. Roll Call

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

Present: 11 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

3. Approval of Minutes

3.-1

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 24, 2020 NRCB MINUTES

Attachments: [03-24-20 nrcb](#)

Boardmember McKinley requested a change to the minutes under Item 5A, in the fifth paragraph stating the sign at the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary will have a new logo that matches the other signs in the community. She requested additional language be added to state the sign will be placed at the entrance to the BWS.

Boardmember Truchon stated under Item 5B, Boardmember McKinley's motion included the fact that the shelter would move forward with the exception of receiving money from a donor to go back to a building concept.

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Panning to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2020 Board Meeting as amended.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 11 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

5. New Business

5.-1

RECOMMENDATION TO AMEND THE 2020 - 2024 OPEN SPACE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Attachments: [JULY 2020 Open Space CIP](#)

Mr. Monahan stated a panel of City Staff 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 a number of amendments to the 2020 component of the CIP. Staff is seeking the NRCB's recommendation to bring the amendments forward to the City Council for approval and formal adoption into the Amended 2020-24 CIP. In total, revenue has increase by \$121,511 to \$1,407,911, while recommended expenditures have dropped by \$780,000 for 2020. A summary of the recommendations was reviewed with the Board in further detail and staff recommended approval of the 2020-2024 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan.

Boardmember McKinley questioned how much revenue the City made in wetland credits in 2020. Mr. Monahan reported the City had an increase in revenue of \$121,511 from wetland credit sales.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Panning, to advise the City Council approve the amended 2020-2024 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 10-0-1 (Tripper abstained).

Aye: 10 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Vedi, Panning, and Syed

Abstain: 1 - Tripper

5.-2

BWS BRANCH 3 AND SITE 7 TRAIL PERMITTING

Attachments: [4 2020 Blaine Branch 3 Trail Crossing Concept 3 CCES April 20 2020](#)
[CCES Branch3 Trail Alignment Concept Cost Estimates April 14 2020](#)

Ms. Haug stated the City of Blaine EDA completed the wetland banking permitting process for Branch 3 in 2012, which did not include any trails through the wetland bank. In 2014, the city completed the BWS Master Plan that included a trail system throughout the entire site.

Ms. Haug commented in order for the extension of the trails in the BWS the wetland permits for both Branch 3 and Site 7 will need to be amended to include the impacts from the additional proposed trails. The BWS subcommittee reviewed the trail options and are in favor of the Alignment 1 (Central) option. The subcommittee is also in favor of Alignment 2 (West) option as an alternative. However, the regulatory agencies will determine which option is best for the site.

Ms. Haug reported this trail extension will create a loss of credits for the EDA in Branch 3. Staff has had internal discussions with EDA staff and they are supportive of the trail extension through the Branch 3 site. Staff

discussed a swap of credits from Site 7 to Branch 3 to make up for the loss of credits created by the additional proposed trail.

Ms. Haug stated because CCES completed the original permitting process for both Branch 3 and Site 7 staff has requested a quote for the completion of the amended permits to allow trails to extend throughout both wetland banks. The estimated cost is not to exceed \$25,000. This amendment to the wetland banking permits is a very lengthy process. There is urgency to complete this amendment because once all credits are sold it removes the ability to amend original permits.

Boardmember Truchon questioned how the City can make the public aware of the restrictions that have been placed on the City by other governing/permitting agencies. Ms. Haug stated staff has been discussing this internally and the best way would be to continue dialogues with the community. She suggested this item be brought to a workshop where the permitting requirements can be discussed for the wetland banks. She indicated the City has always had a desire to have a trail through the BWS.

Boardmember Genet asked if all three alignments would be pursued. Ms. Haug reviewed the proposed trails noting Alignment 1 was preferred but if the regulatory agencies did not support this option, Alignment 2 would be pursued. She explained Alignment 3 would be the final option because it was the most costly.

Boardmember Genet inquired what the timeline was for this project. Ms. Haug indicated staff was uncertain of the project timeline given the number of agencies staff would have to work with in order to complete this project.

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Villella, to advise the City Council enter into a contract with CCES not to exceed \$25,000 to complete the amended wetland banking permits for both Branch 3 and Site 7 to allow for trail extensions with Alignment 1 (Central) being the preferred location.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 11 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, VEDI, Panning, Syed, and Tripper

5.-3

Main Street Wetland Bank Update (Pioneer Park)

Ms. Haug stated the city and Critical Connections Ecological Services (CCES) met with the regulatory agencies; Coon Creek Watershed District (CCWD), Anoka Conservation District (ACD), MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) on June 25, 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the status of the

Wetland Mitigation Proposal (Prospectus) or concept plan for the Main Street Wetland Bank (Pioneer Park).

Ms. Haug reported an overview of the history of the project was discussed as well as the next steps for moving forward with the Mitigation Banking Instrument (MBI), which is the full application document. The overall consensus from the regulatory agencies is to continue moving forward with the project. It is viewed as a viable wetland bank for the area.

Ms. Haug indicated the regulatory agencies are still in the comment period for the Prospectus and plan to have comments ready the first part of August. Another update will be provided to the Board after the comments are received and if the comments are positive, a recommendation will be required to move forward with the MBI.

Ms. Haug explained part of the requirements for the project are to have groundwater data. Six monitoring wells have been installed on the site with the cooperation of the CCWD and ACD. A tree inventory has also been completed to determine the number of trees, type of trees and health of trees. This information will be helpful when speaking with the public about the restoration work. Two potential trail/boardwalk options have also been added to the plan along the west side of the project. It is easier to include the trails from the start of the project rather than later. Next steps include a virtual drone inspection with the ACOE and receiving comments from the regulatory agencies.

Boardmember Villella asked if this wetland was to just west of the entrance to Pioneer Park. Ms. Haug reported this was the case.

5.-4

NRCB UPDATE

Ms. Haug provided the Board with update on an upcoming buckthorn workshop which was slated for Saturday, August 22nd.

Mr. Monahan discussed the BWS Interpretive Signs. He reported staff was able to obtain a grant from the Rice Creek Watershed District and these funds would be used to create Virtual STEM Videos with Heidi Farris at Green Hearts at the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. He hoped these videos would be available on the City's website by the end of July.

Ms. Haug described the work being completed by staff to take water samples and maintain parks. She commented on the awareness efforts staff was undertaking to educate the public on the survival of threatened and endangered species in the Anoka sand plain.

Chair Perkins requested the information from the upcoming buckthorn workshop be made available to the general public. Ms. Haug stated she would look into this.

Mr. Monahan reported the City sold another tenth of an acre in wetland credits.

Jason Husveth commented he was invited to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum to give a webinar presentation on the preservation of rare plants in the sand plain. He explained this presentation was recorded and a link would be available if the City of Blaine would like to make this online resource available to the public.

Boardmember Truchon thanked Mr. Husveth for making this resource available to the City of Blaine.

Chair Perkins recommended the Board discuss this matter at its next meeting. He thanked Mr. Husveth for bringing this information forward to the Board.

Boardmember Truchon requested the Board discuss the safety of pedestrians crossing from the ballfields to the BWS with the County at a future meeting.

Boardmember McKinley thanked Ms. Haug and Mr. Monahan for all of their efforts on behalf of the NRCB.

Adjournment

MOVED by Boardmember McKinley, seconded by Boardmember Truchon to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

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

Aye: 11 - Villella, Chair McKinley, Rafferty, Perkins, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, VEDI, Panning, Syed, and Tripper