



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, May 17, 2022

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Roll Call - Boardmembers Filipi, Panning, Rafferty and Truchon.

Absent - Boardmember Genet, McKinley, Vedi and Chair Perkins.

Others Present: Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger, Recreation Manager Nate Monahan, Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom, and Adjunct Member Isabel Hobot.

Present: 5 - Rafferty, Truchon, Panning, Trippler, and Filipi

Absent: 4 - Vice Chair McKinley, Chair Perkins, Genet, and Vedi

3. Approval of Minutes

3.-1 Approval of the February 15, 2022 NRCB Minutes

Attachments: [02-15-22 NRCB](#)

No action was taken on the minutes.

4. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

6. New Business**6.-1****Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Pavilion, Restroom, and Parking Lot Expansion Project Update & Discussion**

Mr. Krieger provided the board an update on the current planning, design, and scope of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary pavilion, restroom and parking lot expansion project.

Tim McIlwain, HCM Architects, commented on the high level concepts for this project. He discussed the location of the pavilion, how it was oriented noting it would be lead people from the parking lot into the wetland complex. He stated the pavilion would be made out of natural building materials and described how the restrooms would be a separate facility. The capacity of the shelter was further discussed along with the updated renderings for the pavilion, restroom facilities, and the changes that were made to the parking lot in order to increase capacity.

Mr. Krieger reviewed the cost estimate for the pavilion and asked for comments or questions.

Boardmember Panning discussed how the Board had wanted the pavilion to be used for education. She stated she was surprised by the pavilion design because it appeared to be made for picnics, family reunions or bonfires instead of education. She indicated she did not support the proposed plans because they were not focused on educational programming. Mr. Monahan reported he was a camp director for years and he believed the proposed pavilion with restrooms could be used for education.

Boardmember Filipi asked if the restroom facility could be connected to the shelter on the Lexington Avenue side to assist with reducing costs and providing a wind break. Mr. Krieger explained the back side of the property had Connexus transformers underground.

Boardmember Filipi questioned if the angle of the roof would impact the wetland. Mr. McIlwain discussed how the rain would be collected from the roof and would be directed to a stormwater basin.

Boardmember Rafferty inquired what the height of the pavilion would be. Mr. McIlwain stated the pavilion would be 8 feet on the short end and 12 feet on the high end.

Boardmember Panning asked if solar panels could be incorporated into this project. Mr. McIlwain indicated the orientation of the building would not work for solar panels. IN addition, the restroom facility would have to be adjusted in order to support the mechanics for solar panels. He estimated solar panels would be an additional \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Boardmember Truchon asked what Mr. McIlwain was charged with for designing this project. Mr. McIlwain explained last November he was given a budget amount and capacity for the pavilion. He indicated staff wanted as much covered space as possible.

Boardmember Truchon thanked Mr. McIlwain for designing a beautiful pavilion space. She stated the goal for this pavilion has always been using this space as a teaching or educational center. She did not recall the board ever discussing this space being used as a rental for family reunions or other events. She believed this was a quiet space that should be used for contemplating nature and for teaching children. She was surprised the space did not have storage and stated she would have liked to have seen sides on the shelter. She expressed frustration with the fact staff and the consultants were not hearing the needs and wants of the board. She stated she was not in favor of spending money on the proposed plans, because they did not meet the educational center goals she had for this space.

Mr. Krieger explained he attended the meeting where this project was presented to the city council. The three options that were presented included a nature center, a pavilion with a restroom or a pavilion with no restrooms. He reported the council voted on a pavilion with restrooms. He stated this was where the starting point came from.

Boardmember Truchon indicated the committee never heard the word pavilion in any serious way, which has led to a big misunderstanding with this project. She wished that the communication gap could be bridged and that a learning center could be considered. She reported wetland credit sales generate a great deal of money and these funds are to be used on the

wetland sanctuary.

Boardmember Panning stated she and Nate spent a day visiting other picnic shelters within Anoka County that could be altered in order to serve as a pavilion for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. She explained the shelter at the Coon Rapids Dam was the most promising because it included restrooms and storage. She commented after this field trip she felt that staff understood the design parameters for the BWS shelter. She understood the city was tight with their money and she recommended that a new design be considered for the shelter.

Mr. Krieger questioned what type of building staff should pursue.

Boardmember Panning indicated the gold standard would be the Springbrook Nature Center, but she understood a corporate sponsor would be needed to construct a nature center. She explained the other option she board could support would be an educational center that was net zero.

Boardmember Rafferty stated he reviewed the minutes from October 2020 noting the board supported having some sort of educational structure versus having nothing.

Boardmember Filipi questioned if the footprint could be reduced in order to accommodate a building or structure that would meet the educational center needs. Mr. McIlwain stated this could be done. He commented further on a building he had completed for the city of St. Paul that was used as a warming house in the winter months and as an educational center in the summer. He indicated he could redo the plans based on the feedback he has received from the board this evening. He discussed how a structure would require meeting all state building code. He asked how many people he would like to be able to use the center at once.

Boardmember Truchon suggested the building be able to accommodate at least 60 children. She did not believe the parking lot had to be expanded.

Mr. Krieger discussed how there were a number of parks in the community that were under parked and suggested additional parking be considered at the wetland sanctuary. Boardmember Panning did not believe additional parking was necessary.

Boardmember Rafferty stated if a building was pursued this project may have to be delayed five to ten years in order for the city to have adequate funding.

Boardmember Truchon thanked Mr. McIlwain for all of his efforts on the pavilion plans and for hearing the concerns raised by the board.

6.-2

NRCB Updates

Attachments: [BWS - Trailheads and potential future trails](#)
 [BWS Programming](#)
 [Sunrise Ponds Trail](#)

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

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trails - Staff will be presenting the concept trail diagrams to Council at the June 6th Workshop. Staff hopes to send out a request for proposal for engineering design services this summer to begin the feasibility design of the trail system in fall of 2022. Funds are identified in 2023 Open Space CIP for construction of trails in the southern portion of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. The city has also received conditional approval for the necessary amendment to the Site 7 and Branch 3 Wetland Banks that would allow for the planned trail connections to be constructed. This approval is a crucial step in the planning process. Staff asked for feedback from the board on the proposed trails.

Boardmember Panning stated she would like to see the trail section at 109th completed.

Boardmember Truchon commented this would be a very good start for the BWS trails. She appreciated the fact staff was working to make residents aware of the location of future trails. She discussed how the proposed trails would be assets to the property owners living on the BWS trail system.

Mr. Krieger stated he would be going before the city council on June 6 to get approval to hire a consultant for these trails. He explained the concept plan for these trails have been put in the sales house for the adjacent neighborhood.

Boardmember Filipi recommended pedestrian safety be considered for those crossing Lexington Avenue to get to the BWS trails. Mr. Krieger explained this was a county road and

noted staff was working with Anoka County to find ways to protect pedestrians.

Board consensus was to direct staff to move forward with the proposed BWS trails.

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Summer Programming - Staff discussed the summer programming that would be offered at the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

Volunteer Events - The city wellness committee is focusing on volunteering and service as the monthly goals for May. Engineering has scheduled a milkweed planting event in the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary on May 11th and a garlic mustard removal event in Pioneer Park on May 13th, details were previously emailed to NRCB members. Additionally, trash removal will occur in some of the city's open spaces.

Wetland Credit Sales - Staff provided the board with information on the latest wetland credit sales.

Boardmember Truchon requested staff provide the board with an update on the Pioneer Wetland Bank at the next NRCB meeting.

Sunrise Ponds Trail - Staff had a kick-off meeting on May 11 to start construction of the Sunrise Ponds Trail. The trail will stop at the culvert until further development of the Lexington Waters has been completed, which will include installation of the culvert. Trail will then be completed next spring which will be coordinated with the development of the new Sunrise Pond Park.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35PM.