



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, January 15, 2019

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Haug called the roll call.

Others Present: Rebecca Haug, Co-Liaison, Water Resource Manager.

Present: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

Absent: 1 - Perkins

3. Approval of Minutes

3.-1

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2018 NRCB MINUTES

Attachments: [December 18 NRCB Minutes](#)

Chair McKinley noted on page 2 paragraph 1 sentence 1 Ms. Hanson was reviewing her project at Lochness Park in detail for the Board.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Villella, to approve the December 18, 2018 Minutes as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

Approval of Agenda

Chair McKinley added two items at the end of the agenda under Communications.

MOVED by Boardmember Rafferty, seconded by Boardmember Theisen, to approve the agenda as revised.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the Board.

None.

5. New Business

5.-1

RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE 2019 GOALS

Ms. Haug reviewed the 2019 Goals and noted these were goals previously in addition to some new goals. The goals are:

- Continue to focus on plans for development of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS).
- Continue to utilize the Open Space Management Plan for guidance and setting priorities.
- Continue to explore ideas for enhancing public awareness & use of our open spaces and trails.
- Continue programming with Growing Green Hearts (GGH) & Wargo Nature Center at Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS).
- Begin Southern restoration work at the BWS.
- Partner with local businesses.
- Purchase and install entrance sign for BWS and interpretive signs.
- Open Space tour and Community Dialogue.
- Continue Pioneer Park Wetland Bank process.
- Sell credits in Site 7.
- Work with Anoka conservation District or others to collect seeds to be replanted in open spaces.
- Community Outreach Program - Prospect Heights Natural Resource Commission

- Website
- Monthly journal about activities, plants, wildlife, ecology and nature.
- Workday notices
 - Prescribed burn, tree removals, cancellations of programs, etc.
- Library Programs
 - GGH working with library on story walks.
 - Could start quarterly speakers on various natural resource topics.
- Video series
 - Focus on management of open spaces, best practices, plants and plant ID, prescribed burns and sight tours.
 - Establish a Bluebird Trail
 - Plant trees/shrubs in a public area
 - Create a game for hiking a trail or open space - Open Space Passport promotion.
 - Adopt a Park Program
- Earth Day Events
- American Wetlands Month promotion
- World Fest booth
- Blaine Open House booth

Chair McKinley asked about the quarterly speakers and Ms. Haug stated the speakers would be advertised as other programs are within the City. If there are fees associated with the speakers that would need to be determined how the fees would be covered.

Chair McKinley suggested a gathering at the BWS during National Wetland Month for the residents.

Boardmember Varian asked what is meant by Adopt-A-Park Program. Ms. Haug stated people commit to cleaning up a park and advising City Staff of any maintenance needs. Boardmember Varian stated she thought there were already parks adopted. Ms. Haug stated the program is ongoing throughout the year. Boardmember Varian asked if the Park Board isn't also taking on this as a goal. Ms. Haug stated the Open Spaces are considered parks under the program. Boardmember Varian stated at the last meeting the GreenCity was discussed and the functions should be looked at. She looked at Coon Rapids website and they have a Sustainability Commission which supports a green and sustainable community. Boardmember Varian suggested the Board look at expanding the NRCB goals into some sustainability concerns. Ms. Haug stated a

change in the responsibilities of the NRCB would need to be approved by the City Council. Boardmember Varian suggested it be discussed among the NRCB.

Boardmember Truchon provided some history on the NRCB and her membership coming from the Environmental Committee. She suggests the NRCB focus on the BWS and trails throughout the City since this is within the charge of the Board. A joint-meeting with the Park Board to discuss trails would be good.

Chair McKinley suggested a joint-meeting be planned with the Park Board.

Boardmember Varian also looked at what Andover is doing and they are looking for Open Space. Chair McKinley stated the NRCB was formed to oversee the acquisition of Open Spaces using the bond funds. The NRCB is charged with ongoing care of the Open Spaces. There are currently no monies available for future acquisitions.

Chair McKinley asked each Boardmember do activities in addition to the Board Meetings. Ms. Haug stated with the sale of wetland credits that money could be used for future acquisitions of Open Space land.

Boardmember Rafferty suggested the individual park tours be done since it was not done this year. Chair McKinley asked each Boardmember to select one of the Open Space areas and visit and report back to the Board on what was seen and what needs to be done. Chair McKinley stated she would visit Hidden Ponds. She asked each Boardmember to walk the boardwalk.

Boardmember Panning asked if the list of Open Spaces is listed in the book provided to the NRCB.

Chair McKinley asked the Boardmembers to visit the Lever Street Park. Ms. Haug stated there is a new development in that area and there is access for a future trail. Ms. Haug will bring the plat to the NRCB Meeting in February. The parcel is 11.7 acres.

Ms. Haug reviewed further the 2019 goals.

Boardmember Genet asked if the dates have been set for the events. WorldFest is the 3rd Saturday in May. Earth Month is April 15 - May 25.

Boardmember Truchon suggested Emily Johnson with the ACD as a

possible speaker. She also suggested Carrie _____ could help with the seed collections.

Boardmember Theisen asked if the NRCB has ever partnered with Anoka-Hennepin Schools other than Jefferson Elementary. He noted there is a natural space by Jefferson Elementary on school property.

Boardmember Truchon stated that could be included on the list and a connection could be made to educate on the care of open space and natural areas.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Genet, to approve the 2019 goals as revised. Staff will provide an updated listing at the February NRCB Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

5.-2

RECOMMENDATION SUPPORTING A PETITION TO COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT TO IMPOUND ANOKA COUNTY DITCH 59-8 AND 59-9 IN PIONEER PARK AS PART OF THE PROPOSED WETLAND BANKING PROJECT IN PIONEER PARK

Ms. Haug reviewed at the August 2, 2018 City Council meeting, staff presented the concept of creating a wetland bank at Pioneer Park in conjunction with a wetland bank planned for the adjacent property to the west owned by Jason Husveth, Critical Connections Ecological Services, Inc. (CCES). The Council supported the project and completing the first phase of the formal application.

The Council also approved entering into an agreement with the Coon Creek Watershed District to complete hydrologic monitoring. One of the steps to complete the hydrologic monitoring is to petition Coon Creek Watershed District to impound Anoka County Ditch 59-8 and 59-9. The petition would allow for the investigation process to begin by Coon Creek Watershed District to determine the effect of the proposed installation and impoundment and to make a report of the findings to determine if construction of a flow control device in both laterals at an elevation determined by Coon Creek Watershed District will provide the needed hydrology for a successful wetland bank. The installation of a flow control device will not impair the ability of the drainage system or deprive the affected landowners of the drainage benefit. The device will only be installed if the wetland bank project is approved by all regulatory agencies

and the city council chooses to move forward with the project.

Staff is requesting the Natural Resource Conservation Board recommend approval to the City Council to approve a petition to Coon Creek Watershed District to impound Anoka County Ditch 59-8 and 59-9 in Pioneer Park as part of the proposed wetland banking project in Pioneer Park.

Boardmember Truchon stated it looks like the City Council already approved this and questioned what the role of the NRCB is in this. Ms. Haug stated the City Council had approved the first steps in the process. The Council has not approved the weirs.

Boardmember Theisen asked how much of a water table change would occur. Mr. Jason Husveth stated the change in elevation is to be determined. The top of weir would be at the existing grade of the peat substrate. It has more to do with duration of saturation. In order to get this hydrologic aspect of application to move forward, some entity needs to petition the Coon Creek Watershed District. The Board is being asked to support the City moving forward as the petitioner.

MOVED by Boardmember Genet, seconded by Boardmember Villella, to recommend the City Council approve a petition to Coon Creek Watershed District to impound Anoka County Ditch 59-8 and 59-9 in Pioneer Park as part of the proposed wetland banking project in Pioneer Park.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

Mr. Husveth requested the addition of a National Eco-System Mitigation Conference in May and there will be a tour of the BWS during this Conference to the 2019 goals by attending the field trip.

Boardmember Genet asked if a college class of students could attend and Mr. Husveth stated that would be pushing it.

Mr. Husveth would also like to give a talk to the Blaine residents on the Natural History of Blaine. Chair McKinley suggested a program be done in May including Mr. Husveth's presentation. Ms. Husveth stated early spring would be better and it would be an inside talk. He would like it advertised well so residents would show up that normally wouldn't hear about this. Ms. Haug suggested later in the fall might be better as the spring advertising has already been completed.

Boardmember Villella asked if there were other organizations this could be

promoted through and Mr. Husveth mentioned several.

5.-3**2018 BWS RECAP**

Ms. Haug reviewed in 2018, the City's newest open space, the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary at 11980 Lexington Avenue, was home to many successful programs in its first full calendar year of operation. With the help of Growing Green Hearts and Wargo Nature Center, the City held six programs over the summer months with 111 participants having hands-on experiences learning more about the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

Two field trips with the Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth and the City's Summer Fun program allowed for approximately 80 students ranging in age from 5-12 to explore the site with some hands-on learning. A stargazing event was held with WCCO Radio meteorologist Mike Lynch, on a cold November night, with 25 participants in attendance.

The City began a partnership with the Spring Lake Park High School Advanced Placement science class. Thirty-six students visited the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary on multiple occasions. Students worked with the soil, learned about the plants, and the importance of wetlands to our environment and water quality. The goal of the class is to give students an opportunity to do real world research working in the field prior to graduation.

Educators from around the metro area were invited to attend an educator open house and receive free eSTEM curriculum, developed by Growing Green Hearts, focused on the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. The educators also took a tour of the site and learned about the programs for field trips. Anoka educator open house will take place in 2019.

Twenty members from Christ Lutheran Church volunteered by stenciling animal tracks on the boardwalk and trails through the BWS.

Thanks to a local Eagle Scout, seven picture posts were built and installed along the boardwalk. Picture posts are used to enhance community efforts to conserve, promote, and sustain open spaces and natural areas. Anyone can take pictures from the posts and upload them to the City's website.

In 2019, additional programs will take place at the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary and several interpretive signs, designed by students at Anoka Ramsey Community College, will be installed. More information about the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary is available at blainemn.gov/blainewetlandsanctuary.

Informational; no action required.

RECOMMENDATION TO USE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE REMAINING TREES AT BWS

Ms. Haug stated this item will go to the Council on Feb 7. This is for additional funds of \$115,000 for removal of the remaining trees at BWS. This would be a changeover.

Boardmember Varian asked if the neighborhood is aware of the additional trees that will be removed and Ms. Haug stated the trees were identified at the last resident meeting.

Boardmember Theisen asked in the future could a financial statement be provided for the NRCB when considering items such as this. Chair McKinley agreed.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Theisen, to recommend the City Council approve the use of additional funds for the removal of the remaining trees at BWS.

Motion passed unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair McKinley, Villella, Rafferty, Truchon, Genet, Theisen, Varian, Vedi, and Panning

Chair McKinley decided not to.

Adjournment

MOVED by Boardmember Genet, seconded by Boardmember Vedi, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.