



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

April 18, 2023 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

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.

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - 2.1.** 2023-106 Approval of the March 21, 2023 NRCB Meeting Minutes
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager
- 3. Open Forum for Citizen Input**
- 4. Approval of Agenda**
- 5. New Business**
 - 5.1.** 2023-109 Oaths of Office to: Dottie McKinley, Kristen Genet, Mary Jo Truchon, Ken Anderson
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager
 - 5.2.** 2023-107 Wetland Bank Presentation
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager
 - 5.3.** 2023-108 NRCB Updates

Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

6. Adjournment

**City of Blaine
Anoka County, Minnesota**

**Natural Resources Conservation Board
Tuesday, March 21, 2023**

7:00PM
Council Chambers
10801 Town Square Drive

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.
2. Roll Call – Boardmembers Genet, Panning, Rafferty, and Truchon.

Absent – Chair Perkins and Boardmembers Filipi and McKinley.

Others Present: Recreation Manager Nate Monahan, and Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom.

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Boardmember Genet, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2023 board meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Boardmember Panning asked to add several items to the agenda, the first being a grant opportunity, second being the onboarding process for new NRCB members, third being the accounting for the \$3.5 million bond referendum and lastly a discussion on Friends of the Open Space.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Genet, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

6. New Business

6A. RESOLUTION 23-49, Recommendation of than RFP for consultant services to update the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail System

Ms. Hedstrom provided the board with an update on the wetland sanctuary trail contract staff was working to secure. She noted she had three different proposals and staff needed feedback on alternative building materials for several of the trails. She asked if the board could support cost saving materials (composite or precast) being used if proven to be an effective alternative.

Boardmember Genet discussed how the trails were to be constructed in order to have minimal impact on the wetlands. She questioned if the weight of a composite decking would adversely impact the wetlands. She stated she wanted to be sure all wetland requirements be followed for the new trails.

Boardmember Truchon agreed noting she would like to see trails installed where they are needed and not trails everywhere. Ms. Hedstrom explained trails would be installed on upland whenever possible to save on costs and to reduce the impact on the wetlands.

Boardmember Genet commented on how a composite material would be more durable and she appreciated how composite decking would be made from recycled materials. She suggested this topic be further discussed with Patrick Hughes at the April NRCB meeting.

Boardmember Truchon requested asphalt be used as little as possible within the wetland sanctuary. She indicated she preferred the use of gravel instead.

Boardmember Panning thanked staff for bringing these options before the board and noted she appreciated the fact the city had the option of moving forward with a sustainable composite building material for the trails that could not be gravel or asphalt.

Boardmember Truchon asked if the trails included any lookouts or teaching stations. Ms. Hedstrom stated this could be included as an alternative within the bid for the upland portions of the wetlands.

Ms. Hedstrom reported staff would have the preliminary alignment and delineation information for the NRCB to review in April or May.

Boardmember Genet requested further information on how this project would move forward. Ms. Hedstrom provided further information on how this project would move forward.

6B. MOTION 23-47, Review and Discussion of Draft RFP for Consultant at Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Restoration Site 7 Wetland Bank

Mr. Monahan stated staff was looking to get a consultant on board in April to begin monitoring work for the city. She noted the staff was still in the development stage and should have a draft RFP for the board to review next week. She commented on how Blaine's wetland bank was unique and noted she had a preliminary list of six contractors that the RFP would be sent to. She further discussed the components of the RFP with the board and asked for comments or questions.

Boardmember Genet stated Critical Connections has a great history with the city and understands how to report on an ENRV (exceptional natural resource value) wetland bank. She supported the city continuing to work with Critical Connections going forward.

Boardmember Panning questioned what the term would be for the monitoring contract. Ms. Hedstrom stated she would recommend a three year contract.

Boardmember Genet supported the city having a contract longer than three years with the monitoring vendor. Ms. Hedstrom reported the

original intent was to have a contract that was seven years. The board supported this recommendation.

Boardmember Truchon commented further on the great work that has been done by Jason Husveth and Critical Connections in the state of Minnesota and in the city of Blaine. Ms. Hedstrom reported the city had \$75,000 per year for the next five years set aside for the monitoring contract.

6C. MOTION 23-48, Updates

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

Update from City Council Merger discussion – Staff noted Mary Jo Truchon, Dottie McKinley, Kristen Genet, Sarah Filipi and Ken Anderson to the NRCB. In addition, Gene Rafferty was appointed as the NRCB Chair. He noted three residents would be invited to serve as adjunct members. He reported the NRCB would be operating separately from the Park Board for the time being.

Boardmember Genet requested further information regarding the adjunct members. Mr. Monahan stated these residents were appointed as adjunct members to learn more about the NRCB.

Boardmember Genet supported the NRCB having more members and recommended the adjunct members be serving as full board members.

Boardmember Panning suggested this being further discussed with the Mayor.

Onboarding – Staff commented on how binders would be updated for the new NRCB board member and adjunct board members. The board supported updating the binders to ensure all information was up to date for the new members.

Summer Programs – Staff commented on the Growing Green Hearts Yoga and Wargo Nature Center bird hikes that would be hosted in May.

Boardmember Truchon thanked staff for their efforts on the Rec Connect stating this was a tremendous publication. She asked that next year it be noted May was Wetland Month in the city of Blaine.

Earth Day – Staff commented on the clean up work that occurred for Earth Day and thanked Walter's for their generous donation to the city. Mr. Monahan discussed the city's adopt a park program. Ms. Hedstrom indicated the city would be having an adopt a stormwater pond program beginning in May as part of Wetland Month.

Bat House locations from Eagle Scout AJ Genet – Staff commented on the location within the island in the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary where the bat houses that were constructed by Eagle Scout AJ Genet would be located. He noted the city would be placing signs on the posts as an educational piece.

April Speaker on Wetland – Staff reported Patrick Hughes and Ben Meyer would be speaking to the NRCB in April. It was noted staff would be working with the communications team to ensure the public knows that these speakers would be presenting information on wetlands at the April meeting.

No Mow May – Staff explained the council supported residents and the city participating in a No Mow May program. Those interested in participating in No Mow May would be encouraged to register with the city. Staff commented further on the parks and open spaces that would not be mowed in May.

Volunteer Opportunities – Staff reported the Northtown library conducts education outreach for wetland month in May. It was noted staff would be working to provide the library with further information on the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. Staff commented on the upcoming Great River Greening events and noted garlic mustard pull events were being planned for this summer.

Boardmember Genet suggested the Rusty Bumblebee be asked to sponsor an interpretive sign on pollinators within the BWS. Staff reported they would speak with the Rusty Bumblebee to see if this was something they would be willing to consider.

Pioneer Park Wetland Bank recommendation was brought to City Council – Staff explained the NRCB recommendation for the Pioneer Park Wetland Bank was brought to the Council on March 6.

Pioneer Park trees along trails update – Staff reported the council approved the removal of dead and diseased trees 30 feet from either side of the trail in Pioneer Park. It was noted this work would be completed prior to March 31 and woodchips would be added to the trail.

Bond Referendum Funds – Staff reviewed the dollars that were spent noting the original bond was for \$3.5 million. Staff discussed the parcels that were purchased. It was noted the information staff had on the bond would be forwarded onto the board members. Further discussion ensued regarding the land the city has purchased over time for open space and wetland preservation. The board questioned if another bond should be considered for future land purchases for open space. The board suggested this topic be further discussed at a future NRCB workshop meeting.

Friends of Open Space – Staff encouraged the board to provide staff with updated content and information that could be posted on the city's website for Friends of Open Space.

Grant Opportunity to Assist with Additional Staffing – Staff noted they do not have the capacity to fill out the grant at this time.

Boardmember Genet stated it was a shame the city did not have the capacity to fill out this grant. She believed it would greatly benefit the city to have an additional staff member available to assist with sustainability efforts for the community.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Communication

None.

9. Adjournment

Chair Perkins adjourned the meeting at 8:39PM.



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2023-109

Agenda Date

April 18, 2023

Status

In Control

Natural Resources Conservation
Board

File Type

Presentation

New Business -

Agenda Item # 5.1

Oaths of Office to: Dottie McKinley, Kristen Genet, Mary Jo Truchon, Ken Anderson

Background

Recommendation

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2023-107

Agenda Date

April 18, 2023

Status

In Control

Natural Resources Conservation
Board

File Type

Guest Speaker

New Business -

Agenda Item # 5.2

Wetland Bank Presentation

Background

Patrick Hughes from Rice Creek Watershed District and Ben Meyer from Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources will give a presentation on Wetland Banking.

Recommendation

Informational

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2023-108

Agenda Date

April 18, 2023

Status

In Control

Natural Resources Conservation
Board

File Type

Presentation

New Business -

Agenda Item # 5.3

NRCB Upates

Background

No Mow May

Volunteer Opportunities

RFP for Consulting Services for BWS Wetland Bank

RFP for Consulting Services to update BWS Trail System

Eagle Scout Project - Bat Houses BWS

Recommendation

Informational

Attachment List

None