



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

November 21, 2023 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Present – Chair Rafferty, Boardmembers Anderson, Panning, Truchon.

Absent – Boardmember Genet, McKinley.

Others Present: Recreation Manager Nate Monahan.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.1. 2023-566 Approval of August 15, 2023 and September 19, 2023 NRCB Minutes.
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Boardmember Anderson reported the August 15, 2023 minutes were approved at the September 19, 2023 board meeting.

MOVED by Boardmember Anderson, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023 board meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

5. New Business

5.1. 2023-567 Approval of the 2024 - 2028 Open Space Capital Improvement Program
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Mr. Monahan reviewed the 2024 to 2028 Open Space Capital Improvement Program with the Board. He provided an overview of the open space fund, noting this fund included wetland credits and park dedication fees. He highlighted the expenditures proposed for 2024 which included a Blaine Wetland Sanctuary trail project. He explained staff received a review from the Army Corp of Engineers RFPs, noting this has been a slow process. Once the review was completed, the city could complete summary reports for 2022 and 2023. He hoped that construction of trails could begin in the winter of 2024-2025. He commented on the work that has been done at Laddie Lake in order to improve the wooded forest area. He stated staff was hoping to add woodchip trails through this park this winter.

Boardmember Truchon stated she supported the proposed trails within Laddie Lake Park. She recommended staff be careful about the trail placement because there were wetlands within the park. She suggested park benches and lighting be considered by staff as well. She suggested the entrance to the park have better signage. Mr. Monahan commented on the signage that was posted and explained lighting was already in place along the lake.

Boardmember Panning questioned if the neighbors could be invited to assist with buckthorn removal within this park. She suggested this event be hosted by the city next spring. Mr. Monahan stated this would be a great opportunity to engage with the neighborhood.

Boardmember Truchon asked how long it would take the consultant to get the city back on track with its wetland credits. Mr. Monahan estimated the consultant would have the city back on track by next fall.

Boardmember Truchon explained she still supported the BWS having a small interpretive or teaching center. She recommended the city begin taking donations for such a structure.

Further discussion ensued regarding the potential development that would occur and park dedication fees that would be paid in 2024.

Boardmember Anderson asked if the BWS had land that was suitable for a nature/learning center. Mr. Monahan explained there was an upland area that has been identified that would accommodate a structure.

Boardmember Truchon requested that the funding for the structure be moved forward to 2025. Mr. Monahan stated he could make this adjustment within the CIP.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Panning, to recommend the city council approve the 2024 - 2028 Open Space Capital Improvement Program as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

5.2. 2023-568 NRCB Updates

Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

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

Potential Recommendation of an RFP for Blaine Wetland Sanctuary - Staff was currently reviewing feedback from the Army Core of Engineers and hoping to provide more details and a recommendation to review by the board.

Rain Garden Updated Signage - Staff was working with Metro Blooms on new signage for the city's rain gardens. Staff hoped to have preliminary sign designs for the Board to review in December.

Boardmember Truchon requested staff look into the potential of installing rain gardens as part of the city's street improvement program. She commented on the grants that were available through the watershed district to assist with creating rain gardens. Mr. Monahan explained the developer from the Sanctuary Preserve neighborhood installed rain gardens within this development. He understood there were businesses in the community that were interested in having rain gardens and staff was working with these individuals.

Boardmember Panning suggested information regarding rain gardens be posted on the city's website and within an upcoming newsletter. Mr. Monahan stated this was a great idea.

Aristida Signage Update - It was noted Boardmember Genet provided staff with a rough draft for this sign. Staff commented on the two different trail locations where the signs could be placed. The Board supported the proposed signs.

The NRCB Meeting on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 has been canceled.

6. Adjournment

Chair Rafferty adjourned the meeting at 8:01 PM.