



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

April 16, 2024 | 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 Dahl.

Others Present: Recreation Manager Nate Monahan.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.1. 2024-829 Approval of March 19, 2024 NRCB Minutes
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Boardmember Panning requested a change to the minutes on Page 4 at the bottom of the page, correcting the spelling of Boardmember Anderson's last name.

Boardmember Truchon requested a change to the minutes on Page 5, noting she had suggested a bench be installed in Pioneer Park in Dottie's memory because she was responsible for establishing Pioneer Park.

MOVED by Boardmember Anderson, seconded by Boardmember Panning, to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024 board meeting as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

5. New Business

5.1. 2024-21 Updated NRCB Board Policies *Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk*

Recreation Manager Monahan reviewed the updated board policies in detail. He explained boardmembers and commissioners are vital to the community and provide input and guidance on the many opportunities and issues Blaine faces as a growing community. Requirements for these volunteer positions include being a resident of Blaine, attending meetings, and having a community interest. In order to be most responsive to residents interested in serving on boards and commissions and to be able to be flexible during the recruitment, the appointment process previously outlined by ordinance was moved and included instead as a Council policy.

Mr. Monahan explained the City's advisory boards and commissions include the Natural Resources Conversation Board, Park Advisory Board, Planning Commission and Traffic Commission. There are other ad hoc boards and commissions whose members are appointed but do not directly report to the City Council including the Charter Commission, Fire Board, and Senior Advisory Board, as well as community boards such as the Blaine Historical Society. **Boards and commissions meet quarterly** or as needed, based on a calendar and work plan created and approved by Council and implemented by staff. The exception to quarterly meetings is the Planning Commission who meets more frequently to act on land use applications and hold public hearings as required by Statute.

Mr. Monahan reported board/commission appointments are made annually by City Council based on each term's ending, typically March of each year. Appointments are made based on balanced ward representation where possible for up to two 3-year terms per member. The Council can by consensus deviate from these criteria and allow for differing ward representation and/or additional term(s). Council will determine the candidate review and interview process each appointment cycle based on the number of vacancies, reappointments, and applications received. He indicated members may be removed by the mayor if the removal is confirmed by a majority vote of the City Council. Current members who move from the council election ward they were appointed to will be allowed to complete their term with the approval of the mayor and the two councilmembers from the council election ward they moved from. Terms of current members who move outside the City shall end immediately.

Mr. Monahan stated most boards/commissions are comprised of seven members. Each board/commission will appoint their chair/vice chair and adopt rules for the transaction of its business which may include provisions for conducting public hearings and the filing of written testimony by the public if needed. With the assistance of staff, each board/commission will provide a public record of its proceedings which include the minutes of its meetings, its findings, and action taken on each matter heard by it, including the final recommendation. He explained board and commission members will be compensated at

the rate of \$60 per meeting attended and \$75 per meeting attended for chairpersons, not to exceed two meetings per month.

Chair Rafferty asked if the NRCB would remain in place through 2024. Mr. Monahan stated this would be the case.

Boardmember Truchon questioned when the council would be making a decision on the NRCB/Park Board merger. Mr. Monahan indicated the council would be discussing this matter in further detail at a future workshop meeting.

Boardmember Panning inquired why this board would remain at five members instead of seven. Mr. Monahan stated he was uncertain why the council made this decision.

Boardmember Panning feared this board would be lost due to attrition. Mr. Monahan explained typically vacancies are posted by the city, applicants are received and appointments are made by the city council.

Boardmember Truchon asked how many residents applied to serve on the NRCB. Mr. Monahan reported three residents applied, but two of the residents had the NRCB as their third choice and Boardmember Dahl had the NRCB as his first choice.

Boardmember Anderson commented on the NRCB work plan and asked if the capital improvement plan falls under the budget umbrella. Mr. Monahan stated this was the case.

Mr. Monahan questioned when the Board wanted to hold its four meetings this year. He suggested the remainder of the 2024 meetings be held in June, August and October.

Boardmember Panning supported the work plan having the Board discussing work that needed to be done in the winter months within the BWS.

Boardmember Truchon indicated she would like the work plan to include an item that would have the NRCB continuing to review and discuss the condition of the city's open spaces. In addition, she wanted to hold a discussion regarding a prairie restoration. She suggested City staff speak with Great River Greening regarding the plan they drafted for the BWS.

Mr. Monahan stated he would email the NRCB members a draft work plan and would request comments or feedback.

- 5.2.** 2024-23 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Consultant for Wetland Bank and Trail Development
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager, Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator

Mr. Monahan provided an update on the hiring of a consultant for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Site 7 Wetland Bank and trail design/development. He explained the city has been working with local and state agencies to finalize the details of the consultant contract to

meet wetland bank requirements.

Boardmember Truchon asked who was managing the EDA wetland bank. Mr. Monahan stated this would be part of the contract, managing Branch 3, as well. He commented further on the work Great River Greening did this past winter to maintain and restore the southern portion of the BWS.

Boardmember Truchon reported Great River Greening has been a great partner to the city of Blaine. She thanked them for the interest they have taken in the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

5.3. 2024-830 NRCB Updates
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

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

New Rain Garden Conceptual Sign review - Staff reviewed the new sign design that was created by Metro Blooms. It was noted these signs would be the same size as the interpretive signs within the BWS. The board appreciated the colorful sign design and suggested the font size be increased.

Boardmember Truchon requested staff speak with Metro Blooms about creating another sign that speaks to the importance of wetland banks. Mr. Monahan indicated he could speak with Metro Blooms regarding this matter.

Boardmember Anderson discussed several language changes for the rain garden sign.

Boardmember Truchon suggested language regarding curb cut rain gardens be included on the sign if space allows.

Dottie McKinley Memorial Bench at Pioneer Park - Staff reached out to Dottie McKinley's three daughters in order to discuss a memorial bench at Pioneer Park. He explained language for the plaque was being finalized along with a location for the bench. He believed it would be nice to hold a ceremony with the NRCB and Dottie's family once the bench was installed.

Rare Grass *Aristida Longispica* Educational Sign at Lochness Park has been install next to hole 5 of the disc golf course - Staff reported a rare grass sign has been installed in Lochness Park.

Updates from March NRCB Meeting - Staff would be passing along the PowerPoint presentation from the March NRCB meeting to the Boardmembers.

Eagle Scout Projects - Staff commented on an Eagle Scout bench project that would be completed along the trail just north of Sunrise Ponds Park. He stated another Eagle Scout would be adding benches on the island within the BWS off the boardwalk.

Aveda Walk - Boardmember Panning invited all residents to attend a walk around the Aveda property on Sunday, April 21 from 1PM to 3PM.

Garlic Mustard Pull - Boardmember Truchon reported a garlic mustard pull would be held at Pioneer Park on May 11 from 9AM to 12PM.

6. Adjournment

Chair Rafferty adjourned the meeting at 7:48PM.