



CITY OF WEST ST. PAUL
1616 HUMBOLDT AVENUE, WEST ST. PAUL, MN 55118

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2017 AT 6:00PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER
LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM

1. Call To Order
2. Roll Call
3. New Business
 - 3.A. Approve January 4, 2017 Minutes
Documents:
[010417.PDF](#)
 - 3.B. Discuss Article For Spring City Newsletter
4. Old Business
 - 4.A. Priority List Of Agenda Items
Documents:
[PRIORITY TOPICS.PDF](#)
5. Subcommittee Update
 - 5.A. 2017 Arbor Day Planning
6. Other
7. Adjourn

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West St. Paul Environmental committee
January 4, 2017
West St. Paul Municipal Center-Administrative Conference Room

1. ROLL CALL

Committee members in attendance: Jon Thompson, John Margot, Jessica Vanella-Friendshuh, Chris Gevara, Lauren Smith, Kristy Otte

Non-voting members present: Dave Napier, Dave Schletty, Bob Pace, Bob Gausman

2. NEW BUSINESS

a. MINUTES

The minutes from the December 7, 2016 meeting were approved by the committee.

The committee welcomed Bob Pace, the new Council Member assigned to the Environmental Committee. The chair thanked Dave Napier for this work for the committee.

b. RULES OF ORDER

Schletty talked about switching conference rooms for the committee meetings. The new lobby conference room is twice as big and has the same type of technology.

The chair reminded members that the meeting is being recorded and members should inform Schletty if they are going to attend the meeting. According to open meeting laws, meetings outside of the regular Environmental Committees meetings must be limited to a number less than a quorum. (A quorum consists of more than one-half of the members of the committee.) Email messages must only be sent to all members at once or to a number less than the quorum.

The Environmental Committee has not had a Planning Commission representative for more than a year. Other committees have Environmental Committee representation. There have been discussions to have Planning and Environmental subcommittees meet once or twice a year.

Pace said that he will talk to Anthony Fernandez about appointing Planning Commission representation on the committee.

A motion was made to accept the Rules of Order with the change to the lobby conference room location. The motion carried. All Ayes.

In a secret ballot, Chris Gevara was elected Chair of the Committee, and Kristi Otte was elected Vice Chair.

A motion was made to accept the election of the officers. The motion carried. All Ayes

c. ARBOR DAY PLANNING

Committee members talked about Arbor Day event planning. Arbor Day entails having a tree planted and advertising the event as an Arbor Day Event and having a proclamation done by the mayor. The committee has had a table [for the last few years] at the Garlough School Environmental Fair to celebrate Arbor Day.

The chair's recommendation was to keep having the event at Garlough. It is simple to do and Garlough likes the city's involvement. It is a "good bridge" between the school and the city. The contacts for the school are Polly Saatzar, (kindergarten teacher) and Kim Reisig (PTA President.) Schletty does the bulk of the work for the event. He gets the trees for the event and obtains the spinning wheel for the prize giveaway.

Schletty reported that the city has been given the "Tree City USA" rating.

A subcommittee was formed for the event: Otte (as chair), and Smith.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Priority Topics

Smith discussed the desire to see more tree planting in the city and why trees are not a priority topic for the committee. She is curious about whether or not the city is gaining trees. She commented that the committee was initially formed to address "greening" in the city.

Margot said that the committee has worked very hard on the issue of trees, specifically on Emerald Ash Borer, (EAB); there is a replacement policy for boulevard trees. Trees that are taken down do not automatically get replaced. The homeowner gets to choose. Often the trees cannot be replaced because of the location in the boulevard. Steve Cook, a former member of the committee, tree expert and a "force to be reckoned with," was responsible for the ordinance for the tree replacement. There is currently a fifty thousand dollar budget (per year) to deal with EAB. Most of this money will be for maintenance and take-down of infested trees. The city has done a tree inventory to ensure that it is planting a diverse variety of trees. The city's tree inventory [information] is "way ahead" of other cities.

Other members commented on the current priority topics. The committee is trying to address areas that need the most attention. West St. Paul should not be "the lowest on the totem pole," for recycling [in Dakota County.] Trees are important to the committee; however the committee is branching out into other issues. "EAB took a lot out of the committee." . The committee also worked a lot on "pollinators." The committee makes recommendations to landscape plans regarding zoning regulations that determine the minimum number of trees. The trees that are being planted on Robert Street were "a fight."

Margot said that the city may lose up to forty four percent of its trees to EAB. There may be some legal liability with branches falling off of trees dying from EAB on the boulevard. Smith talked about the city raising more money for planting trees and using the right of way in boulevards to plant more trees in the city. It would raise property values, beautify the city, help with pollution, and help with storm water problems.

The city newsletter used to feature one-half page for the environmental committee. The committee could reclaim the half page and dedicate part of it to planting trees on the boulevard. Smith suggested the city do an outreach to new homeowners to encourage them to plant trees. Schletty said that there is no city staff time to do this outreach. The committee is welcome to form a subcommittee to investigate funding resources.

Gausman mentioned that with the ash tree loss, buckthorn growth will increase. Gevara said that the buckthorn issues can be addressed by both the Environmental Committee and the Parks and Recreation Committee. The chair said that we will revisit the tree issue once the committee is back to regular size. She asked Schletty to contact Dan Nowicki for the newsletter article. Schletty said that the next deadline will probably be in early February.

b. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

No updates reported. Time will be used during the next committee meeting for subcommittee work

4. OTHER

- a. **Committee Member Applicant Status-** Schletty reported that we have plenty of applicants for the committee
- b. **Thompson Oaks Golf Course-** At the December meeting the council said that they would make a final decision at the end of January. It's very likely that the golf course will be open this year. Pace said that YMCA has not decided what their future is in West St. Paul.
- c. **Last meeting-**The committee said good bye to Vanella-Friendshuh. This was her last meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:15 pm.

Priority Topics:

1. Walkable City - Trails and sidewalks, Robert Street and the lack of neighborhood grocery store, ("Food Desert") were grouped under Walkable City.
2. Pollinators
3.
 - A. Community Gardens/Gardening
 - B. City Code Modifications (Residential Lakes and water control issues were grouped under city code modifications.)
 - C. Recycling (including organics)
 - D. Storm Water Management
4.
 - A. Styrofoam/Plastic bag Bans
 - B. Thompson Oaks Golf Course/Preserving Green Space

Other Topics:

- Outdoor Play and Education
- Mud Lake Clean-up and commercial applicators
- Invitations to Bike and walking clubs