

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee
Environmental Committee August 4, 2021
West St. Paul Municipal Center-City Council Chambers**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Committee members in attendance: Constance LaCombe, Cindy Joanning, Nicholas Hager, Laura Zanmiller, Jade Pennig, Ken Paulman, Lauren Hazenson, Liz Pearson, Joshua Prybylski

Non-voting in attendance: Robyn Gulley, Dave Schletty

2. NEW BUSINESS

a. **Minutes**-The May 5, 2021 minutes were approved.

b. **Review Committee Bylaws and Election of Chair/Vice-Chair-**

After reviewing the Committee Bylaws documents with the Committee, Schletty asked if there were any questions. Pennig asked if the text of the documents would be updated with the change in number of committee members. Schletty said the City Clerk is working on this. Pennig and Zanmiller said they might be interested in chairing the Committee.

c. **U of MN Environmental Change Class Projects-**

Schletty related that a Councilperson was approached by a resident with ties to the University of Minnesota. The City has been chosen to “pitch ideas and topics” for a class called “Problem Solving for Environmental Change.” Upper level students on the environmental or sustainability tract choose a topic and research it thoroughly. The research will be presented to City Council in December. (City staff and Council composed the topics in early July.)

The topics presented were:

- Right of way vegetation management
- Expansion of fruit bearing trees and shrubs in park and public land
- GreenCities Advancement and Next Steps
- Volunteer Urban Tree Survey, (Updating the City Tree Inventory)
- BikePed Plan review (environmental changes and equity of access)
- Residential Yard Nutrient Management and Water Usage
- Plastic Bag and Styrofoam Ban
- Park Use Assessment –Equity in Areas of Need
- Promoting an Adopt a Drain program
- Stormwater Management Education
- Pollinators and Bird City USA;

Schletty said that he would try to have the students attend a meeting to discuss their work. Depending on the number of students in the program, at least nine of the topics would be picked.

Committee members commented on the program. Gulley was enthusiastic about the new faces of the Committee; more work could be done with more members. Paulman commented on the BikePed Plan. He is interested in going beyond the ancillary document and looking at existing policies in other cities and at design standards. He would like to research practices or process barriers that prevent the plan from being implemented. Regarding stormwater management, Paulman is also interested in finding out if the City’s system could handle extreme weather events as changes in climate happen. Hazenson commented that topic #6 mirrors topic #9; yard nutrient management and yard use is closely related to

stormwater management. Leaves and yard waste that run into the storm drains go directly to the lakes, rivers and streams. This develops phosphorus, a pollutant that produces algae. Joanning said she is working very hard to get rid of lawn waste. She mulches and does the bee alternative. More insects and birds have returned to her yard. Ground cover helps. Hager had an idea of each Committee Member picking one topic that interested them and continuing the work after the students finish their work in December. Committee members could work with the students and then continue the learning afterwards. Schletty said that this a good idea. A couple members could also collaborate on one idea as well. To answer Paulman's comment about the BikePed Plan, Schletty said that the City has adopted a Complete Street plan for all the projects. Hager suggested that the City could also collaborate with the U of MN on fruit bearing trees. Hager said resident education on environmental topics needs to be a focus for the City. Hazenson commented that community engagement is needed particularly with rental properties/multi-family homes. The City needs feedback from these residents. Schletty said that the City does have a recycling coordinator who works directly with the rental community. Schletty will bring the coordinator in to the work with the University. Joanning said she works a lot with Maureen Hauck on the west side. Hauck "pushes seed programs" and community gardens. Zanmiller said that partnership with other organizations is important, I.e. the PCA, Metro Blooms. Other agencies have already done the work. The City should investigate how to fit their work into its practices. The City will soon have more renters than homeowners.

3. OLD BUSINESS-NA

4. Updates

- a. **City Council-** Gulley welcomed all of the new members to the Committee. She thanked them joining.
- b. **Staff-**
 - i. **GreenSteps Cities Update-** Schletty said the City did attain Step 3. He will soon add this award to the City's set of blocks. Step 4 and Step 5 are "down the line."
- c. **Park & Recreation Committee-** Schletty said the Parks and Recreation Committee is now reviewing improvements to Marthaler Park. The reconstruction of the park will take place over the next 3 years.
- d. **Planning Commission-**Schletty is working with the City Planner to get a new liaison from the Planning Commission.

5. Other-The Committee Members introduced themselves to each other.

6. Adjourn

With no other business before the Committee and no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield