

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**6:00 pm, May 4, 2022**  
**West St. Paul Municipal Center- City Council Chambers**

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

**2. Roll Call**

Committee members in attendance: Connye Lacombe, Laura Zanmiller, Nicholas Hager, Lauren Hazenson, Jade Pennig, Ken Paulman, Liz Pearson, Joshua Prybylski

Non-voting members in attendance: Robyn Gulley, Dave Lynch, Dave Schletty, Lisa Stevens

**3. New Business-**

**a. Approve April 6, 2022**

Under the subcommittee updates, Pennig made a correction. Under the subcommittee updates, the correction is as follows: Hazenson, Prybylski and Pennig are members of the No Mow May subcommittee. With the amendment, the April 6, 2022 minutes were approved by the Committee.

**b. City Website and Environmental Initiatives**

Schletty showed the website page dedicated to environmental initiatives, like “No Mow May.” Pennig asked about the enforcement of the code during the month of May and if it were necessary to have the signs in order to participate. Gulley elaborated and said that Council was ambivalent about needing a sign. However, it is an educational piece. Strictly speaking, code enforcement will not be enforcing lawn height compliance during the month of May. Council is strongly encouraging residents to display the sign so that other residents do not report them to code compliance, and to inform residents about the event. Pennig suggested that the language on the website be changed to, “We highly encourage you to print/display the sign.” She does not want the sign to be a barrier to residents.

Pennig talked about the new webpage and the environmental programs that she would like to highlight on the webpage. These include the Environmental Committee itself, the GreenSteps program, the compost program in Thompson Park, the Tree City and Bird City programs, etc. The webpage also features events and information on how to be more environmentally friendly. There is also a section for Hager’s calendar ideas, “Thinking and Acting Green, Every Month of the Year.” Pennig would also like to feature an air table that features all native Minnesota plant species and their soil/sun tolerances, etc. LaCombe mentioned adding picking up litter for March and April when the snow is going away. Hazenson said picking up pet waste should be added as well. Hager asked how the committee could avoid being lost in the city website. Pennig said she is hoping for the City to issue a call out every month and space on the home page. Schletty said he also thought about doing the same thing. The city website would issue a call out on the first of the month that month’s environmental initiative. If residents see it enough, they may automatically go to the environmental page. LaCombe suggested having a QR code in the newsletter linking to the homepage. Paulman asked who would be responsible long-term for the content of the website. Schletty said that the actual editing would be city staff. Committee members can email staff about the website content from time to time. Pearson said that the Blue Thumb website features a plant species worksheet. Schletty suggested doing a table that featured West St. Paul photos of the plant species. Hazenson suggested some other websites that have already done the work and provided photos of the plant species. They are good resources.

A subcommittee was formed to work with city staff and vet the material for the website. The members are Prybylski, Hazenson and Pennig.

#### 4. Old Business

##### a. Environmental Fair- Subcommittee and Planning

Schletty said that he would like to get a subcommittee formed and start planning for the event. The subcommittee formed consists of Hazenson, Hager, LaCombe, and Pennig. LaCombe said she attended the Environmental Commission last Saturday. She sent Schletty her notes from her breakout session regarding environmental fair ideas. Pearson volunteered for the raffle work. Schletty said that he would like to sit in on the subcommittee meeting. Schletty said that there is a budget for the event and that the City is approaching business owners directly for sponsorship. Committee members may not need to solicit donations for the event.

##### b. Little Free Seed Library Update

Schletty did a little research and found that the little free seed libraries are “pretty common.” The City needs to find a location for the library and decide how to label and brand it. It should also be one of the website initiatives. A callout should be made to residents to come and share their seeds. LaCombe said there is a resident who lives on Butler and Ottawa that has a massive seed library. She could be a resource. Pearson said she is on the West St. Paul Green Thumbs website. Pearson mentioned Maureen Hark, who does Growing Westside. She is the curator for the seed library at Wabasha and George/Riverview. Committee members liked the idea of having the seed library at the Wentworth Library. Pearson said the library is centrally located. It would be best to ask the Wentworth Library staff where the seed library should be located. Schletty will order a seed library enclosure for the City. Schletty asked if it was going to be a year round initiative. Pearson said that the seed libraries are usually “put to bed” during the colder winter months.

#### 5. Updates

##### a. Subcommittee

- i. **Arbor Day/Migratory Bird Day (Bird City USA)**-Pearson said that the resolution would be presented at the next council meeting. Pearson asked for an annual calendar to be provided to the Committee in September, so that the Committee can start planning earlier. Pearson summarized the requirements for the Bird City USA designation: a resolution needs to be read, and signed off by the city council; the resolution must be posted publically, and then the City needs to have an activity to promote migratory birds on International Migratory Bird Day, May 14. The City already has many events planned on May 14. The subcommittee has planned a tree planting on May 14. The tree planting completes the requirements, “within the letter of the law.” Pearson said that the Committee could plan something more extravagant for next year.

Schletty showed the Migratory Bird Day Resolution to the Committee. It is a standard template that other agencies have used. Schletty also showed the Arbor Day resolution to the committee as well. The Committee decided to hold the tree planting/resolution reading event at 12 Noon on May 14 at Marthaler Park at the large picnic shelter in bad weather. In good weather, the event will be held on top of hill between the new trail and the pond.

**b. City Council-**

- i. **South St. Paul Compost**-Gulley reported that the South St. Paul compost site is open again for yard waste, (\$2 per bag.) .
- ii. **Wetland Health Evaluation**-Dakota County is still looking for Wetland Health Evaluation volunteers.
- iii. **No Mow May**-Council strongly encourages residents participating in No Mow May to get a sign from City Hall.

**c. Staff**

- i. **City Hall Construction is still underway.** There are some delays because of supply chain issues. The new window framing went in this week.
- ii. **New Park and Recreation Staff**- The city hired a new full time recreation staff person this week. -

**d. Planning Commission**

Stevens reported there was a short meeting and nothing pertinent to Environmental Committee meeting.

**e. Parks & Recreation Committee**

Lynch reported that Maya Guthrie wrote a nice column on No Mow May in the Star Tribune last week. Lynch related that the City Manager came to the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and said that he wanted [big] ideas from the committee no matter what the cost. Lynch said it is a good time to think about what could be done environmentally for the parks like shoreline restoration and removal of invasive species. Gulley said subcommittees could work together on this initiative. Schletty said that a work session could be scheduled for this type of collaboration.

**6. Other**

- a. **Bike and Pedestrian Survey**-Paulman said that the survey is now live; there is now an interactive map where residents can suggest improvements in the city. The link to the survey is on Julie Eastman's and Wendy Berry's Facebook page. .
- b. **Curbside Pickup**- Schletty mentioned that the Curbside Pickup for appliances was this Saturday. .

**7. Adjournment**-The Committee adjourned at 7:00 pm.