

Minutes
West St. Paul Environmental Committee
March 5, 2014 6:00 p.m.
WSP Municipal Center – Administrative Conference Room

1. ROLL CALL

Committee members in attendance: Dick Cordes, Jon Thompson, John Margot, Andy George, Chris Gevara, Sheila Williams-Ridge, Jamie Nikolai

Committee members excused: Paul Larsen, Megan McGuire

Non-voting members present: Bob Gausman, John Bellows, Dave Schletty

Non-voting members excused: Dave Napier

2. REVIEW/APPROVE FEBRUARY MINUTES

Page 1, 3rd paragraph under New Business, 2nd sentence: change present to presented

ON MOTION of George and seconded by Margot, the minutes of the February 5, 2014 meeting were approved as amended. All Ayes: 7/0.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Harmon Park Site Plan Review

Assistant Director Schletty reviewed the memo to the Environmental Committee dated February 28, 2014, regarding site plan approval for the redevelopment of Harmon Park. He advised that LED lighting was proposed for the site and impervious surface would be reduced by approximately one acre from its existing condition. Asst. Dir. Schletty also noted the Project Narrative that was provided with the packet. Staff requested the Environmental Committee review the site plan and provide recommendations to the Planning Commission/Council.

Member George clarified the number of trees being removed and new trees proposed for the site. Asst. Dir. Schletty pointed out that Code requires caliper inch replacement and that Staff was recommending a condition of approval to ensure caliper inch replacement was consistent with Code requirements following a tree inventory.

Discussion took place regarding reduction in impervious surface and inclusion of rain gardens into the site plan. Members discussed flower beds and native vegetation proposed. They also questioned water runoff from the splash pad, treatment of water, and amount of water used. It was stated that the splash pad would not hold water, water would drain into sewer because it would not require treatment, and the splash pad was estimated to use four million gallons per summer. Asst. Dir. Schletty advised that a water recirculation system was considered but the cost was more than the amount of just paying for the water used and payback on such a system was estimated at 80 years.

Member Williams-Ridge confirmed there were no guidelines in place for the playground structure such as using recycled plastics or natural materials. Members also discussed proposed playground equipment and confirmed wood fiber mulch would be used for fill.

Asst. Dir. Schletty advised that the equipment would be similar to other City parks and that he would look into the equipment proposed to determine materials used and type. Member Nikolai and Member Williams-Ridge further discussed the type of equipment agreeing that the equipment should be engaging to encourage play, such as climbing walls and nets, and be aesthetically pleasing to the environment and neighborhood.

Committee members reviewed the community building size and purpose to be used as a gathering space for activities, meetings, and/or rented out for other functions and confirmed it would be a four-season building with internal restrooms and a capacity to hold 50 people at tables. A depiction of the building elevation was displayed for members' reference. Members also discussed hours of buildings and security. Asst. Dir. Schletty stated the intent was for buildings to remain open during park hours, staffing was uncertain, and security was still being discussed internally with options such as employ city staff or park patrol to monitor facilities.

Other discussion ensued regarding restroom facilities, indoor and outdoor drinking fountains, and concessions which would be operated by athletic associations. Member Thompson supported outdoor drinking fountains and requested consideration to include a tap to fill water bottles.

Member Margot confirmed with Asst. Dir. Schletty there would be three grass soccer fields, not sod. Asst. Dir. Schletty noted that most of the soccer field area would remain untouched through construction. Chair Cordes and Member Gevara inquired about the decrease in the number of hockey rinks and relocating to the opposite end of the park. Asst. Dir. Schletty advised that other parks allowed space for additional ice rinks if more are warranted and that relocating was necessary to provide a separate warming house.

Member Gevara inquired about historical markers. Asst. Dir. Schletty advised there were two, a flagpole with monument on it and another in the middle of parking lot, and that the City was hoping to incorporate both into the proposed park. Bike racks were also discussed. However, no decision had been made for their location. The consensus was to place bike racks to service the playground but also ensure all areas were accessible.

Per member request, the timeline for the development included review by the Planning Commission, discussion at potential approval by Council on March 24th, bidding in early April, ground breaking in early May, and completion of the project in October.

Committee members agreed that the proposed site plan was well thought out but that Member Williams-Ridge's recommendation regarding playground equipment be incorporated into recommendations for approval.

ON MOTION of George and seconded by Nikolai, the Environmental Committee supported the site plan as proposed with recommendation to consider installation of a dynamic structure that will engage children and meet their developmental needs more

than traditional play structures and that also uses environmentally friendly (natural or recycled) materials. All Ayes: 7/0

4. OLD BUSINESS

None.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

a. Environmental Fair

Member Gevara advised that a meeting was scheduled with Garlough contacts to further discuss vendors and organizations that will be in attendance. A list of other potential vendors to contact was distributed to the subcommittee for follow-up after the meeting with Garlough. However, the Subcommittee requested referrals for any additional environmentally friendly business to solicit and potentially include on the list of attendees.

The subcommittee confirmed with Asst. Dir. Schletty that the request for a donation from Rotary had been submitted. Members were also to follow-up with Southview for donation of the ceremonial tree and if possible, request an oak tree as the park was established as primarily oak.

Other discussion took place regarding ideas from the last meeting, including a spinning wheel and a truck from S&S Tree Service, new ideas for other potential vendors, and other places to solicit donations. Ideas included the MPCA creating natural cleaners with kids and parents, bean bag toss relating to EAB and farmer's market. Member Gevara suggested requesting Council funding in the future to help subsidize organization and vendor costs for attendance and/or materials. Asst. Dir. Schletty requested the subcommittee keep track of vendors and fees, if any, and when the City begins to discuss budget, he will place this item on an Environmental Committee agenda for reminder, review, discussion and possible request for funding.

b. Recycling

Member George advised that the subcommittee would meet in March to review information and establish a timeline for 2014.

6. Other/Miscellaneous

EAB

Chair Cordes requested an update regarding EAB progress and the tree inventory. Asst. Dir. Schletty advised that a tree inventory was to begin in late spring/early summer, the vendor was narrowed but not selected, and that cost would be more than budgeted. He stated that they would have a complete inventory but it may not be as thorough as intended. Chair Cordes inquired whether recommendations for whether trees are to be removed, saved, etc. would be included in the inventory which Asst. Dir. Schletty advised that portion would likely be conducted by staff. Chair Cordes suggested contacting a former member about ways to complete the process cost-consciously stating there may be ways to reduce costs by using volunteers.

Green corps Volunteer

Chair Cordes noted a conflict of interest in applying for the grant to host a Green corps volunteer. Members reviewed the four categories of Air quality, recycling and waste prevention, green infrastructure, and living green outreach. Asst. Dir. Schletty would discuss with other Staff before the Committee decides to pursue to ensure a project would be available. Volunteers wouldn't be out until September.

Robert St. Landscaping

Members discussed the status of the Robert St. corridor landscaping noting a decision had been made for LED streetlights at a cost of approximately \$1 million and that tree recommendations were to be made at the next PAC meeting. Options for trees were near the curb or behind sidewalks but it was noted that the recommendation would likely be a mixture due to building locations along the corridor. Members aware of the status also reviewed other features including hanging baskets, lighting, banners, and irrigation as well as project construction stages. They also reviewed discussions at all levels regarding cost of the project and City estimated portions of total costs.

LA Fitness

Planning Commission Liaison Bellows reviewed the status of the LA Fitness site plan, and discussions regarding glass windows, spandrel glass, and lighted murals. He advised that the site plan passed Planning Commission and Council.

Member Expiring Terms

Asst. Dir. Schletty reminded Members Jon Thompson, Dick Cordes, and Andy George that their terms were expiring in April and asked that they complete applications found on the city's website if interested in continuing to serve on the Committee.

Community Garden

The City would be accepting applications for community garden plots beginning March 10th.

Miscellaneous

Members asked Asst. Dir. Schletty to look into whether the City had a banner for the Environmental Committee to display at the Environmental Fair and other environmental functions and if not, whether one could be made.

7. Adjournment

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Jennifer L. Dull