

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee**  
**June 5, 2019**  
**West St. Paul Municipal Center-Administrative Conference Room**

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Committee members in attendance: Carol Hall, Tara Wright, Jonathan Wagner, Kristi Otte, Rebecca McCarty, Polly Saatzer, Jade Pennig

Non-voting members present: Bob Gausman, Lisa Eng-Sarne, Dave Schletty

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. The May meeting minutes were approved by the committee.**

**b. Arbor Day Recap**

The committee thanked Schletty for planting the ceremonial tree. Saatzer said the event was fun. The plants were a hit. The committee thanked Schletty for the sign. It was nice to be connected to the City [West St. Paul Days] event. Schletty said that the event may not be the same next year. However, if the committee liked the way the event was structured this year, it could be done again in the same way. Another idea would be to tie the Arbor Day Event to Migratory Bird Day.

**c. Pollinator Habitat**

Eng-Sarne said the City is choosing plantings that are both salt-resistant and pollinator- friendly. Laura Zanmiller from [Dakota County] Soil and Water said that there is funding to support pollinator-friendly planting. Schletty talked about the non-neonicotinoid pesticide and pollinator friendly plant resolution that was formed by the committee. Otte asked if a friendly amendment was redundant when it came to the use of neonicotinoids [by other parties.] Schletty said that the City cannot enforce the policy on residents. Schletty said that it would be an ordinance change or apply to zoning code. He will research whether or not the committee can legally require residents/contractors to only use certain pesticides. Otte could see the [application] on street medians like on Robert Street. Schletty said that the policy could apply to boulevards plantings; he added that it might be problematic for boulevard maintenance because of the [Minnesota] climate. The school district has a policy in effect for this.

Wagner suggested using the policy/grant funding for more public places like parks, schools and churches. His church is interested in it. It would be a “big positive” for children going to school or people going to worship. It would be nice to specify certain places in the city for pollinator-friendly plantings. A committee member asked if City get requests for this kind of funding. Schletty is not aware of these requests. However, if residents were aware of possible funding they would apply. Eng-Sarne will talk with Laura Zanmiller about the program. Schletty said the City has a great partnership with the Green Thumbs group; they have started planting pollinator friendly plants in the park planters.

The committee talked about City code compliance and if the department knows the difference between weeds and pollinator-friendly plants. Schletty said that the staff is familiar with pollinator friendly plantings; the inspectors, however, must investigate any complaints. The committee talked about the length of grass [rules] in the City. Eng-Sarne said there is a little bit of room for improvement. Gausman said design can make a lot of difference in [perception] of plantings. He gave Garlough School as a good example of a community garden with its border design.

**d. Possible Adopt A Drain Program**

Ross Beckwith, City Engineer, is proposing a program for residents to “Adopt a Drain” and regularly maintain it by clearing the drain of any debris. Volunteers would also keep record of how much debris they collect. There is zero cost to the City and the program would free street maintenance staff to do other work. Volunteers would go to the Adopt-a- Drain website to register. It is an easy

way to do environmental stewardship. Schletty asked if the committee would support the program. Members agreed to support the program; Schletty said that there was not need to put forward a resolution regarding the program. Members talked about “taking selfies” while cleaning the drains to send to Dan Nowicki for the City Newsletter. Gausman said work would help the watershed and make the neighborhood look cared for. Schletty said that the volunteer work would not affect take the place of street sweeping. Schletty will get the number of catch basins in the city to committee members.

**4. OLD BUSINESS-NA**

**5. UPDATES**

**a. Subcommittee Update**

i. **GreenStep Cities Program-** The City has attained Step II of the program. The City will receive an award at the GreenStep conference. Schletty said that Eng-Sarne could sign up for a photo opportunity at the conference. Subcommittee members are going to cross check with St. Louis Park (a comparable city) in their efforts to reach Step III. Schletty will put the “Bird City” resolution on the Council agenda in 4 weeks. The subcommittee will also work on the “Dark Sky” ordinance language. Schletty is working on obtaining GreenStep City plaques for West St. Paul.

b. **City Council-** Eng-Sarne said the Sola Salon recommendations from the committee were approved by Council. Schletty said there is a development agreement for Thompson Oaks that the committee might review.

c. **Staff-** Schletty reported that the Boy Scout completed his project in the Art Park. He established the pollinator garden and built bee houses. Otte said the Green Thumbs group has many pollinator-friendly plants for the park. Schletty said he plans to put a Red Maple tree in the upper tier of the plot. The pollinator plants would be good to have around the tree. Schletty said Kevin Hendricks has reached out to him regarding funding for art in the park.

d. **Park and Recreation Committee-** Gausman reported there are drainage issues on Wentworth; rain gardens are being built near the basketball courts in Marthaler to help with these problems. A County path will run through this part of the park. The road to Marthaler Park needs upgrades. Schletty said that the basketball courts are going in. The Sports Complex is getting a new storage building.

**e. Planning Commission -NA**

**6. OTHER**

a. **Food Forest-**McCarty mentioned an article regarding the city of Atlanta planting the largest food forest in the United States. She wondered if West St. Paul could do the same thing in a plot of land like the former golf course. Schletty said that he can forward the idea on.

b. **Weschcke Park-** There was a complaint from a resident about the County project at Weschcke Park. Schletty explained that the work is a public works project to re-slope the park in order to prepare for the large storm 100-year event. The neighbor did not know about the easement in the park and many quality trees near the court were removed near his property. There are no plans to replace the trees presently. Once the work is done, trees can be planted in the park. The plan had been presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee last May. Schletty said he will research what can be done to replace the trees.

c. **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Update-** Gausman asked for an update on private properties. Schletty said EAB has not been a major problem on private properties. The City has responded, however, to any complaints about dead trees on private property.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:47 pm.