

West St. Paul Environmental committee
November 7, 2018
West St. Paul Municipal Center-Administrative Conference Room

1. Call to order

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

2. ROLL CALL

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

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

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Minutes The minutes of the October 3, 2018 meeting were approved by the committee

b. Adopt-A-Storm- Drain Discussion

Schletty talked about cities' efforts to keep storm water drains clear of obstructions. The Public Works Director told Schletty about the Adopt-A-Drain program. Cities in Minnesota are asking residents to help keep the storm water drains clear by removing leaf and other debris from the drain. Participants would also report to the city about the amount of debris. Wagner asked about how the residents get rid of waste. Hall said that she has cleared a drain; she recycles what she can. The rest is placed in the garbage. Otte asked if the City could advertise the program in the spring newsletter. Schletty said yes, and he suggested dedicating a webpage to the program. The committee could also promote the program at the Environmental Fair in the spring. Wright asked if there is a fee attached. Schletty said that the cities in the Watershed Members group pay for the fee.

Wagner made a motion to forward the Adopt-A-Storm-Drain program to Council for consideration. Discussion of the motion followed. McCarty asked if a website page could advertise other clean water initiatives. Saatzer suggested that the website page feature the lake cleanup efforts in Thompson County Park. The motion carried. All Ayes.

c. Site Plan Review for Garlough Elementary School

Schletty talked about the new site plan for Garlough Elementary School. The school plans to add four additions and to reconstruct the south and northeast parking lot. The plan requires the removal of trees. The city ordinance requires a thirty percent tree replacement that would equal 123.5 caliper inches. Schletty said that city staff recommended using 2.5 caliper inch trees. Otte asked if it were possible to move the existing trees. Schletty said that the city could ask. Saatzer said that the crab apple trees were planted twenty years ago; they are well established. There is one tree that was planted at a corner that may be able to be transplanted.. Otte asked about the required amount of caliper inch replacement. She asked how much the percentage replacement would increase if the plan used 2.5 caliper inch trees to replace the trees being removed. Schletty said that he did not know. He said that it would not affect the percentage much and that the trees that being planted are smaller-sized trees. This may account for the percentage difference. McCarty asked if there is a way to collect the run off from the pavement in the parking lot. Saatzer said that there was a rain garden and two prairie areas near the parking lot that will collect run-off. Saatzer asked if contractors come back to the site to check on the trees. Schletty said that the trees have a one-year warranty. After the first year, the school district is responsible for maintenance.

Wagner commented that there are no maples in the new tree replacement. It maybe because of fear of disease.

Wagner made a motion to pass the plan for Garlough School with the addition of transplanting trees if possible, and increasing caliper inches in accordance with the City's request. The motion carried. All Ayes.

d. Site Plan Review for 150 E. Thompson/1510 Robert St

Schletty reviewed the plan for the new Hy-Vee site at 150 E Thompson and 1510 Robert Street. The plan proposed a much smaller site (at 68,000 thousand square feet) than most Hy-Vees in the Twin Cities area. The new site would have the same features that other Hy-Vees have: a restaurant, off-sale liquor, online pickup/delivery and gas [station]. Because of the constraints of the smaller site, the applicant had some problems with zoning requirements. The applicant proposed rezoning the property as a planned development. Schletty added that the applicant has proposed a tree preservation plan to save about 1,070 tree caliper inches. One quarter of the trees that would be removed under the original plan would now be saved.

City staff recommended the following: a tree planting on each parking lot island; trees added to the south end of the parking lot and Crawford Drive and the retention of trees along portions of the eastern and northern property lines that will provide screening from nearby residents. The committee talked about the site plan. Otte asked if a small rain garden could be installed. Schletty said that there are catch basins in the middle of the parking lot that will flow into the five-foot-deep wet pond. The water will be filtered out into a storm basin that can withstand 5-year, 10-year and 50-year [flood] events. Wagner asked about the height of the Hy-Vee building. Schletty said that the City has not seen plans for the building. He thinks that it will be the same height as other Hy-Vees. McCarty asked if the building could have a green roof. Schletty said that a green roof would be tough to enforce because the City does not have an ordinance for them. Wagner said that a lot of new construction are "already painted white." Pace asked if the green roofs are part of the GreenSteps program. Otte suggested that the committee work on a new ordinance for green roofs in the future. Otte asked about the grasses and shrubs, and if someone does inventory on the plantings. Schletty said that he did not know, and he will ask the Building Official. The trees, however, are counted. Otte said that some of the perennials are pollinator friendly; the committee could suggest more varieties of pollinator friendly species to plant. McCarty added that the committee should also be aware that pesticide use could be carcinogenic. It should be on the committee's "radar." Schletty said that the tree list for the site plan was good and emphasized the tree screening and the addition of trees to the back of Hy-Vee. Trees should not be planted around the planned County trail. The County will need to clear the area first to build the trail. Trees can be planted afterward. Wagner asked about how much green space was allotted to the trail with concerns of drainage. Schletty said that the trail would be built with outlets around it. A large "greenway" is planned. Gausman asked when construction would begin. Schletty said he did not know; he thinks it will begin in 2019.

McCarty made a motion to approve the proposed plan with two friendly amendments recommending the addition of the following perennials to the plant list: yarrow, purple coneflower and bee balm, and the approval of all the city staff recommendations.

Discussion followed the motion. Gausman asked if there were any dumping [contamination] problems on the site. Schletty said no; the land belonged to the YMCA previously. The motion passed. All Ayes.

Wagner said that the plant warranty might need to extend beyond one year; most plants lie dormant for one year.

4. OLD BUSINESS-NA

5. UPDATES

a. Subcommittee

i. **Adopt a Highway** was not supportive of adopting Robert Street for volunteer cleanup. They suggested other highways. Pace said that the cleanup of Robert Street is a staff wide discussion. It may need to be put in the budget. Residents say that they spend a lot of money on the street already. He was surprised that the Adopt a Highway program did not want to adopt Robert Street. He said that business owners should be interested in the cleanup.

ii. GreenSteps

Otte and Tara Wright met to look at the inventory for the GreenSteps program. The City has completed steps #16 Urban Forest, #18 Parks and Trails and #22 Solid Waste Reduction. Otte and Wright are now researching step #15, Sustainable Purchasing Adopting Practices. The City is currently working on step #2 [Efficient Existing Private Buildings] with the solar panel proposal. Schletty said that the City Manager has talked with Cassandra [Recycling Coordinator] about buying recycled material. Because there is a reduced market for recycling materials, it may not be economically feasible to purchase 30 percent post-consumer materials. Post-consumer material may be more expensive for the City to purchase which is not fiscally responsible. The City may need to change the language of the GreenSteps practice to “when economically feasible.” Schletty will contact the GreenSteps program staff to see if the language change is possible. Schletty will also contact other cities to see how they have approached this step. Schletty said that the City no longer has water bottles or cans at City meetings. Water pitchers are used. All utensils and plates are compostable. Otte said that the subcommittee hoped to finish with “Climate Adaption and Resilience” this year in order to move on to step #3 [New Green Buildings] in 2019. Otte said that there are steps in the program that are optional; the City can complete them later. Schletty that if the GreenSteps Cities language is negotiable, he will put the GreenSteps program on the Council consent agenda. Pace said that Council is on board with the program. The next meeting of the subcommittee is on November 25 at Amore Coffee.

b. Council Updates

Pace said that a new developer would present their plan to Council for the former golf course site. (The current project was tossed out.) There are some challenges with the project. The City would like the plan to be “as green as possible.” The new developer wants to build two tall buildings. In order for the project to be profitable, the buildings need to be a certain size for the developer. Wagner asked if anything is happening with the K-Mart location or the north [side.] Pace said that there is nothing has changed for that process. The owners are waiting for the “right price.” Wagner asked about the north end at Annapolis and Robert. Pace said that part belongs to Dakota County. It is not owned by the City but by the County. Otte asked about the solar panel installation. Pace did not know. Schletty said he would find out.

c. Staff Update –The Thompson County Park improvements are underway. There will be a closure in front of St. Croix Lutheran for the improvements.

d. Parks and Recreation Committee

Gausman said that the Halloween Extravaganza went well. There was decent weather and about 500 hundred hot dogs were served in an hour. It maybe become a very popular draw to the City in the future. Many local business set up on the [spooky] trail.

e. Planning Committee Update- NA

6. OTHER-NA

7. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:24 pm.