

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee**  
**January 8, 2020**  
**West St. Paul Municipal Center-Administrative Conference Room**

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

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

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

Excused: Samantha Green

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Minutes** -A correction was made to the December 4, 2019 minutes. Instead of ““Lawns to Loons,” it should be “Lawns to Legumes,” on page 2, paragraph 2. The minutes of the December 4, 2019 meeting were approved by the committee.

**b. 2020 Committee Bylaws/Chair and Vice-chair Selection**

Schletty told the committee that it was time for the committee to reelect a new Chair and Vice-chair. Schletty reminded the committee that they no longer needed to approve the By-laws; they were established by Council.

Schletty asked Hall to reapply for committee membership through the City website if she wished to remain on the committee for another term.

**A motion was made to reelect Otte for Chair and Wright for Vice-chair. The motion carried. All Ayes.**

Schletty reported that the committee expectations’ document has changed; the language has been softened. The signature page acknowledges the receipt of the expectations document, not compliance. Schletty passed around a signature page to committee members. The signature was not mandatory. Otte asked about confidentiality; she asked if she would be told if any committee discussions were confidential and not to be discussed in public. Schletty replied yes. Eng-Sarne added that the language changes were small. She talked about the expectation of informing City Staff when there may be a “large emotional attendance” at meetings. She had some issues with the expectation. Wagner asked what the phrase meant. Schletty clarified that it would be helpful for staff to be informed if a committee member knew an especially distraught person were to come to a meeting. Otte said that there was a lengthy discussion about this issue two years ago. Schletty said that Council members were called out during meetings by committee members and it got, “out of hand.” This is how the expectation came about. Otte said that if the committees follow Robert’s Rules and refrain from side discussions, the problem would be resolved.

#### 4. Updates

##### a. Subcommittee

- i. **1010 Dodd Re-development-** Pennig presented the plan for a mandala garden in the 1010 Dodd lot.

The plan featured:

- A 1,075 square foot three-foot tall planting bed space with a soil buffer; these features will promote accessibility. Each section of the mandala would be a sponsorship opportunity with an associated volunteer.
- Plaques in the garden would show sponsors' names and plant species.
- A smaller planter bed area in the front of the lot.
- Room for casual seating and a welcome sign in the front.
- Trees planted in the back of the lot. The trees are less likely to be removed in the future and will provide shade and screening from neighbors.
- Opportunity for food truck events and picnics.
- Birdhouses, a man made structure for shade with vining plants around picnic tables.
- Recommended pollinator friendly plantings, native to Minnesota, ranging from short to very tall.

Otte said she liked how the path worked and that the entrance to the garden is from the back of the lot. She complimented the subcommittee's work. Schletty reported that City Manager Schroeder commented that three trees might not be enough in the back of the lot. Schroeder also said the pathway should be modified and made of concrete. There would be cut-through traffic and the modified path would make it more accessible. The City could save some money by adding the plan to a street project. The City would be responsible for shoveling it since it is City-owned. Once construction was finished, the City would advertise the lot on social media. The City will try to raise the money for the project [with outside sponsorship.] Wagner said that Augustana Church is interested in the project. Schletty said the plan would be on the Council Work Session agenda next Monday. Gausman suggested having lilacs instead of trees; they might be more popular. He said a sample of soil from the lot could be tested by the U [of MN.]

Committee members talked about possible names for the garden and if there were a more appropriate term than "community garden."

Schletty said that the subcommittee did a "very nice job" on the plan. The committee thanked them for their work. Rice Park was suggested a reference for its concrete paths and raised garden.

##### ii. **GreenStep Cities Program**

Schletty reported that some GreenStep criteria could be checked off with the resolution that was passed recently. The next GreenStep deadline is at the end of May. The City Planner {Boike} resigned and the ordinances language revisions (i.e. Dark Sky) are delayed. Melissa Sonnek, the new City Planner, has a lot experience with the GreenStep

program. Schletty will follow up with the City Manager and the Social Media Manager regarding the Climate Change resolution.

- b. **City Council**, Eng-Sarne the only site plan to be reviewed was the Wakota Life building; Planning Commission will look at the plan again because some things have changed. There is development at Signal Hill with discussions regarding TIF. Sola Salon will be opening soon. Dodge Nature will have a state climate meeting this weekend.
- c. **Staff**- Schletty reported that the city received a tree-planting grant from the DNR (in conjunction with Emerald Ash Borer response planning. Michael Orange said the "Urban Forest Credit Program" is still in limbo; he is still waiting for funding and the effort has not died.
- d. **Park & Recreation Committee**- Gausman said that the Art Park is moving forward. The subcommittee has submitted a grant request and is getting input from residents. The Parks and Recreation Committee will work with a local artist for the mosaic column in the center of the park.
- e. **Planning Commission**- Schletty reported that the Wakota building discussion would be continued to the next Planning Commission meeting.

**5. OTHER-NA**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:47 pm. The next meeting will be in first week in February.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon G. Hatfield