

**West St. Paul Environmental Committee**  
**March 6, 2019**  
**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: Tara Wright, Jonathan Wagner, Polly Saatzer, Kristy Otte, Jade Pennig

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

Guests: Michael Orange

Clpn. Pace introduced Clpn. Lisa-Sarne to the committee. Introductions were made to the new committee member, Jade Pennig.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Minutes** The minutes of the February 6, 2019 meeting were approved by the committee.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**5. UPDATES**

a. **Subcommittee**

i. **Arbor Day Event**

Committee members talked about the upcoming Arbor Day Event. Saatzer said that Garlough School is in the middle of "packing up" for the new construction and are very busy. No one has yet volunteered to organize the Arbor Day event at the school. There is a possibility of not holding the event at Garlough this year. Schletty said that the committee needed to make a contingency plan. In the past, the city would hold its own event. Harmon Park could be the backup location. The actual date of Arbor Day is Friday, April 26. The city newsletter has already been finalized; Schletty will make a social media push to advertise the event. Saatzer said that most of the planning would be the same for the event. Subcommittee members will contact to participants through email, Facebook and telephone.

The event will need to be scaled back if West St. Paul hosts it. (The event includes a beanbag toss game and the prize wheel. People answer recycling questions to win prizes like herbs and trees donated by Southview Garden. Southview Garden also donates the tree being planted in honor of Arbor Day. [If West St. Paul holds the event,] Schletty said that Arbor Day would be part of the West St. Paul Days. The Arbor Day event will be held on May 18 at Harmon Park. Saatzer will know the Garlough School's plans at the end of this week.

ii. **GreenStep Cities Program**

Ten steps have been entered; Schletty is waiting for more documentation on nine additional steps for the inventory. The committee will then qualify for the Step II designation. Schletty is working with the Community Development Department for documentation. He is also working with the City Engineer and investigating ordinances and other documentation to button up the inventory. This will complete the inventory. Schletty will go back through every action step to make certain. The chair discussed Step 29, Climate Adaptation. The documentation will take six months to one year. The Falcon Heights is a good reference for why climate ordinances should be in place. Falcon Heights is tracking the data for their city and they are educating their residents about

their efforts. Schletty said there is some action on this already. The chair noticed that very old documents come up for sustainability on the website. The 2040 plan is not on the website yet. Schletty said that the plan is in the final stages; it has not been approved by Council yet. Schletty said that the city already has a hazard mitigation plan.

The chair talked about best practice number ten; the city would become a "Bird City." Number 10 has a couple of options; the city would need to be recognized as a Bird City Minnesota. The city would have a panel of six people that are "Bird City" people. (The Environmental Committee would fill the requirement.) The city would need a Migratory Bird Day, and create and maintain a sanctuary for birds. Marthaler Pond does have a bird habitat. There is an initial \$250 cost and there after \$100 each year. The committee could fundraise \$250 and the city could cover the yearly dues. Committee members suggested bird clubs and Cardinal Corner. The seniors group at Thompson Park may be interested. Schletty said that he could speak with the County on the reconstruction of Thompson Park.

The chair talked about the "Dark Sky" step. All street lights/traffic signals could comply with the "Dark Sky." Schletty said that the city has changed almost all the lights over to LED, (with an exception of a few lights.) There is no ordinance to for "Dark Sky." Orange said that Dark Sky should meet a zoning code, so that when a new development comes in, they have standards. Orange said the standards are on line.

If you are thinking of moving on to Step III, there is the option of doing an assessment of the greenhouse gases that City Hall is emitting. It is important for city staff to bring them together to getting better lighting, change better HVAC, electric vehicles. The assessment will help to find where city staff is currently and where they want to go. Orange has done the assessment for about 20 cities.

iii. **MN Urban Forest Credit Program**

**MN Urban Forest Credit Program-** Orange said that he is working with the Pollution Control Agency on carbon sequestration through trees. The state has made a pledge to be carbon free by 2050 and Xcel has made the pledge to be carbon neutral by 2050. Carbon will be offset by tree plantings and tree preservation. The City Forest Credits Program (out of Seattle), certifies carbon credit that can be sold to utility/bank organizations that want to offset their carbon emissions. Orange would like to present the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) program to see if the program can qualify for the credits. West St. Paul has one of the highest percentages of ash trees (40%) and a good tree preservation program. The potential of carbon credits would be about \$180,000. It would involve a commitment of preserving 1,200 trees. Schletty has some information about the program. If the city becomes one of the inaugural cities, it can help other cities as well. The commitment to the trees would extend another 25 years beyond the present program.

**A motion was made to support MN Urban Forest Credit Program. Discussion followed. Wagner would like to look at other programs for sequestration. McCarty asked about more information regarding soil sequestration. Schletty asked the council liaison if Council would be amenable. Eng-Sarne said she did not know. She does not see any reason why council would not support the program. The motion carried. All Ayes**

Schletty said that he would follow up with recommendation to Council.

- b. Council Updates-**Eng-Sarne welcomed questions from the committee. She referenced the Neighborhood Meetings and Council Strategic Planning.
- c. Staff Update –**Schletty reported that there are no staff updates.
- d. Parks and Recreation Committee-**Schletty mentioned that the meeting is next week. They will have a public meeting regarding putting up basketball hoops (half-court) in Oakdale and Haskell Parks.
- e. Planning Committee Update-** We are getting a new sushi place and filling a vacant building on Robert St. closer to Annapolis. The sushi place is going into the strip mall near Goodwill. The Bingo Palace is going into the former Goodwill location. There are not site plans for the committee to review right now.

**6. OTHER**

- a. Green Clubs/100 Percent Clean Energy Initiatives-**The chair mentioned this school initiative. Saatzer said that this would be part of the Environmental Fair at Garlough.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:52 pm.