

West St. Paul Environmental Committee
May 1, 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, Rebecca McCarty, Polly Saatzer, Jade Pennig, Kristy Otte

Non-voting members present: Dave Schletty, Samantha Green, Lisa Eng-Sarne

Guest: Claudia Englehoff

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. The April Meeting minutes were corrected: on page 2, Penning should be "Pennig." The April 3, 2019 minutes were approved with this correction.

b. Site Plan Review 1720 Livingston Ave

Schletty presented the site plan for the Sola Salon at 1721 Livingston Avenue. Pat Elgin, owner of the salon, plans to build a 7,800 square foot building. The building will be behind Raising Canes. Seven of the existing trees will be transplanted; there will be 17 trees on the site along with shrubs, perennials and grasses. Code requires that one quality tree be planted for every 20 linear feet of property line. This would total 34 trees in all. City staff, however, think that 34 trees would be an unreasonable number and the proposed number of trees is appropriate. Staff proposed that the size of the matador maple trees be increased. Wright asked who comprised city staff. Schletty answered Ben Boike, City Planner and Melissa Sonnek the Community Development Coordinator. The committee talked about the plan. The committee talked about other seven trees and the possibility of donating them or selling them back to Southview Garden. Wagner asked about the stormwater in the parking lot. Schletty said that the storm water would be managed by a catch basin that will empty into the pond at the Thompson Library. Schletty said that the seven trees that are not being replanted might be a variety that may not survive replanting. Schletty also said that the current trees do not look in good shape.

A motion was made to approve the site plan for the Sola Studios at 1720 Livingston Avenue with the friendly amendment to preserve trees if possible, and to offer trees to the community. The motion carried. All Ayes.

Schletty asked if the committee wanted the language of no neonicotinoids and pollinator-friendly plants. The committee said yes.

4. OLD BUSINESS-NA

5. UPDATES

a. Subcommittee Update

- i. Arbor Day Planning-** Saatzer said the middle school may have some volunteers for the the event. She said that the DNR has some free beautiful posters that can be given out as prizes. Schletty said that there are no outside groups at this year's event because of the limited space at Harmon Park; outside groups need to apply to the West St. Paul Days committee in order to have a table at the event. In past years, the city asked to join Garlough School in their environmental celebration event to encourage more people to attend the city's Arbor Day event. Without Garlough School, there was not a lot of attendance at the city only event. Schletty is still working out the logistics of the

tree planting ceremony and the Mayor's proclamation. This year the committee will have a table outside the building under an awning. There will be an Arbor Day Flag at the committee's table. The event will be on May 18, 2-5 pm. Schletty said that he would send out a schedule of the events to the committee. He suggested for volunteers to park at Heritage School.

- ii. **GreenStep Cities Program-** Four of the City's best practices have been approved by the GreenSteps staff. The City needs eight best practices to proceed to step two. The GreenSteps program sent Schletty an assessment sheet evaluating the City's progress. The City was given either a one/two/three star rating on its best practices. The assessment sheet detailed where the City needs to take action on a certain practice. Schletty remarked that it is hard to find the necessary documentation to support the best practices. He was able to enter 7-8 practices with the assessment sheet evaluation. The City only needs four more best practices to proceed to step two. The GreenSteps recognition will be held in June in Duluth. There are sixteen best practices to complete for step three. They are more difficult. One of the steps (Conservation/Preservation) would be fulfilled if the City becomes a Bird City USA. One of the requirements is to designate and maintain stewardship of a wildlife habitat. Volunteers would remove invasive species like buckthorn and burdock from the habitat. The volunteers would also be in charge of maintaining bird boxes in the designated park. Interested parties (including committee members, staff and Council) would attend a presentation done by the Audubon Society. Participants would receive information on how to take care of birds. Schletty suggested Harmon Park as a good place to have the presentation. The committee needs to raise \$200 for the Bird City USA application fee. Wagner suggested having a jar for donations at the Arbor Day Celebration.

The committee would need to forward a resolution to Council to recommend becoming a Bird City USA. The chair said she ran the resolution in front of Cpln. Justen and Justen said it looked good.

Saatzer said that Marthaler Park would be a good choice for the designated wild life habitat because it has two different habitats, a woods and a pond. Schletty said Dakota County would be getting rid of the invasive species in Marthaler Park, (through a County Grant.)

Other interested parties would include Cardinal Corner and the school district.

A motion was made to go forward with the resolution to make West St. Paul a Bird City USA resolution to Council. The motion carried. All Ayes.

The committee asked Cpln. Eng-Sarne if the resolution need to include the monetary component. Eng-Sarne said she has not seen a resolution with this included.

The next step for the committee is the "Dark Sky" coding. Then number 29, "Climate Sustainability," which will be a long-term project. Eng-Sarne said she would attend the June 27 League of Minnesota Cities Recognition program. Otte asked about the resolution Claudia Englehoff put forth to the committee at the last meeting. Schletty said that the committee needs to do more research before putting the resolution in front on council. The committee cannot go to Council without a "good game plan." Engelhoff said that there is no rush for the resolution. The committee talked about the

Energy Innovation resolution. A general resolution regarding climate change is a component to step 29.

McCarty said at the last committee meeting, she objected to HR763. It hampers EPA involvement for 10 years. She cannot support moving forward. She does support endorsing action on climate change. The specific bill is troubling and needs reworking. The [situation] needs regulation. The bill wants big government out. There are no "teeth" with the carbon dividend bill.

Schletty reiterated that the resolution would need to be more fully developed before being sent to Council. If the resolution were embedded in the GreenStep program it would carry more weight. The resolution, however, cannot be amended by the committee. McCarty said that a resolution would need openness so that other policies can come in. The resolution needs flexibility.

- b. **Council Updates-Eng-Sarne** said the Clean-n-Press went through with the recommendations from the committee. The owner did remove one parking stall from the back. (The stall may be used for green space.) The property owner was open minded to the committee's suggestions. The property owner will install a bike rack for his employees.

Eng-Sarne encouraged committee members to contact her if any of the GreenSteps work needs immediate action.

c. **Staff Update –**

- i. **Mud Lake Clean up**-Schletty is organizing a cleanup of the trail around Mud Lake. He would like the cleanup to be a community event. Volunteers would haul brush away using a wheelbarrow. Park maintenance staff would do the heavy work like chain sawing. Schletty will ask the volunteer coordinator for volunteers and will post the event on social media. He will also keep committee members up to date on the event.
- ii. **Oakdale Butler, Art Park lot**- An Eagle Scout is going to plant a pollinator-friendly garden on the Oakdale Butler lot. The Eagle Scout needs some plants for the project. Wright said that the Green Thumbs group has many plants. Schletty said he would forward a list of criteria for the plants.

d. **Parks and Recreation Committee-NA**

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 6:59 pm.