

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: Thursday Jan. 7, 2021

TIME: Scheduled for 4:30 pm (Virtual Zoom Meeting)

PRESENT: Dan Hall, Niki Ciulla, David Ruff, Lynette Power and Julie Fassbender

GUESTS:

STAFF: John Howard, Katie Grannes (Community Forestry Corps), Kelsie Travers (GreenCorps)

1. **Call to Order:** Call to order at 4:34 PM by Dan Hall (Chair)
2. **Review and Approval of Nov. 2020 Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Julie, second by Dan, approval unanimous.
3. **Community Garden Discussion:**

Dan asked for an update. John said there was not much news, although he did communicate CEQC discussion points to Park and Rec. staff. The Park and Rec. department thought the West Lake and Sobieski sites are worth discussing further. John did not have news regarding the East Rec garden.

John relayed that the Park and Rec. department was also looking at private land for gardens. Dan wondered if these would be owned by the City or leased? John is not sure of the plan. John displayed the site of vacant lots near J.R. Watkins.

Julie suggested that Lynette prepare some questions for the meeting. Lynette asked about who oversaw the gardens at the East Rec? John said it was Lydia Boysen, the East Rec. coordinator, for the first 2-3 years, and Laura Hoberg this past year.

Niki suggested asking local groups, and gauging interest in partnering in the garden. Discuss with master gardeners to help develop. Niki has experience with gardening, but not planning.

Katie shared that composting can be good tie in to the garden. Possible connection with YMCA.

Niki wondered about connection with high school? Julie suggest contacting Riverway and Dwayne Voegli. Dan concurs.

Niki asked if the sponsoring partner is an important part of getting it up and running or also maintenance? John believed it is both.

Lynette shared that the Maplewood community gardens are very popular and fill up shortly after being open.

4. **Boulevard Planting Policy Code Discussion:**

John pulled up the proposed text and asked for CEQC input on the proposed changes. John elaborated that other City staff reviewed the edits and suggested a change to the language about distances from corner intersections.

Lynette asked about the text in 6. requiring engineering approval to adding anything to the boulevard, and what level of change is required. Dan said adding pavers should not trigger this stipulation, but wonders if the City sees it that way. John felt the clause would apply if the drainage changes, but can see a literal interpretation leading to more restrictive enforcement. Julie suggests less is more. Lynette, in the end, suggests keeping language as described – CEQC.

John also highlighted language about weeds, and sought CEQC input. Lynette suggests adding language about invasive species. Julie and David are not concerned that current language would lead to neglectful management by homeowners.

Lynette asked if “invasive” or “poisonous” or similar language should be included. Dan advised against “poisonous” since it is ambiguous. David felt invasive could be open to interpretation.

Lynette made a motion to submit, Dan seconded. Passed unanimously. Dan asked for the next steps, which would be Planning Commission? John stated that is his understanding.

5. **Emerald Ash Borer Treatment Update:**

John shared that the City Council voted against funding public ash tree treatments. Niki asked about consideration for replacement and removal cost by the Council? John said this was not a major consideration of the Council discussion. Niki wondered if there was any potential for the sustainability plan to address ash trees. John felt the timing would be too late. Niki asked about the remaining number – John said it was in the 900-1200 range, with about 750 having been treated in the past.

Community Forestry Corps member Katie has done some research on ash tree valuation. She provided a summary of the tree benefits of Sinclair and Windom Parks. Carbon sequestration is generally the largest benefit.

6. **Sustainability Planning Update:**

John provided a summary of the current progress. The City received 5 proposals from technical consultants, and the steering committee will be reviewing in the next week. The City intends to also hire an engagement consultant to facilitate local outreach.

7. **Other Business:**

Lynette suggested the City help fund the Habitat Restore as a resource to utilize existing materials. Recommends expanded hours to make it more user friendly. Saves a ton of material. Dan skeptical that the Restore would want additional government influence, suggests Lynette talk with Habitat. Lynette sees it as needing to go both way.

Julie noted the Broadway road diet is likely being discussed at the next Council meeting.

John shared that the grant for the prairie restoration was accepted, and he will be taking a land disturbance permit to the planning commission.

8. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm. Motion by David, second by Dan. Approval unanimous.

Notes prepared by John Howard.