

St. Anthony Park Community Council
Environment Committee
May 23rd, 2007
Minutes

Present: Gregg Richardson, Gordon Murdock, Ranae Hanson, Matt Hass, Steve Haselmann, Suzanne Garfield

Guests: Meghan Manhatton (St. Paul Parks and Recreation), Stephen Mastey, Kara Ferguson, Ross Jackson

Presiding: Nancy Dilts

Staff: Nina Axelson

The meeting convened at South St. Anthony Rec. Center at 7 p.m.

Introductions

Approval of May Agenda

Agenda approved

Rock-Tenn Update

Axelson updated the committee on the progress of the Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel (RCAP). SAPCC Board approved a resolution at its May meeting, which supported the general structure of a community advisory panel and gave authority to Rock-Tenn Interested Neighborhoods (RTIN) to finalize details. Matt Hass continues to serve as representative for St. Anthony Park on this collaborative group. RTIN expects to finalize details in the beginning of June and have the RCAP appointed and functioning by July.

RTIN has also been planning a community forum for June 29th. The forum will highlight a presentation from Carl Nelson (Green Institute) to assess the availability of biomass fuels for Rock-Tenn. There will also be a timeline presentation from Ken Smith (District Energy), a review of the MPCA permit for the impending fuel oil burners by Justin Eibenholz (Southeast Como Improvement Association) and a question and answer period with select experts in public health, public policy, energy, and biomass economics. There has been some concern about the Garbage Burning Task Force from Merriam Park, but RTIN is confident that this meeting will be educational and useful for all opinions regarding this issue. Axelson invited committee members to attend and stressed the growing importance of this issue to St. Anthony Park and the greater community.

Hampden Park Next Steps

Axelson reviewed the primary funding available from the city, Star Grants and Capital Improvement Budget funding. The Star Grant application is due June 1st, and money is only available for hard costs, usually bricks and mortar projects. The committee has not made enough progress to complete this application. The Capital Improvement Budget process does not open again until fall of 2008, but could be appropriate for long-term planning and implementation. Stephen Mastey explained that money was potentially available from Capital Region Watershed and Ramsey Conservation District. Axelson will invite them to the next Environment Committee meeting.

The committee then discussed the needs of the project and were agreed that the project should share ecological and human function, native plantings, restore tree health, and encourage community space. Brainstorming ideas included:

- Address Sumac issues
- Focus on triangle for garden
- Keep project low maintenance
- Collaborate with neighbors, city, and organizations
- Incorporate environmental education
- Engage youth through a contest
- Lights (maybe solar)
- Gazebo
- Tables
- Benches
- Minimize concrete
- Balance structure, recreation and open space
- Gardens: rain, prairie, butterfly
- Trees: Burr or Red Oaks
- Traffic Calming

The committee would like to work on preliminary designs and present a series of options to the community in August. Axelson will contact the City of St. Paul, University of Minnesota Center for Design, the watersheds organizations, and Ramsey Conservation District to attend a meeting in June to discuss design, funding, and project timelines.

Action Needed: Axelson will look into the Design Center and invite guests to the July meeting.

Capital Improvement Budget Update/Traffic Calming

The bike lane project is being implemented along Raymond Avenue, which has been a positive addition for bikers and helped calm traffic by narrowing driving lanes. There have been some concerns with changes to the Bayless turn lane, poorly drawn lines, and confusion with parking restrictions. It appears that the Bayless turn lane will not be restored, but that most other errors have been corrected.

The CIB process is still underway, and the Raymond Avenue Traffic study and traffic calming implementation ranked very well during initial review. Final review will occur in the beginning of June. In the meantime, intermediate traffic calming measures have begun, including the outline for the new medians at Raymond and Gordon, a speed meter over the railroad tracks and a structure at Raymond and Long.

SAPCC encourages the City of St. Paul to use native plantings, whenever possible for median installations along Raymond Avenue. Murdock moves. Haselmann seconds. Motion approved.

Action Needed: Axelson will forward the resolution to the board and along to Paul St. Martin.

Mississippi Watershed Management Organization Update

Richardson shared that the MWMO continues to make changes as it expands its programming. They have just approved a study to look at interactions with ground and surface water, which involves the Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota

Pollution Control Agency. They are also looking for permanent offices, as they are growing substantially and have just hired 2 new staff. The committee also discussed increasing participation with Capital Region Watershed, and investigating board membership.

Action Needed: Axelson will discuss opportunities with Capital Region.

Organizer Update:

Park Citizen of the Year –

The committee discussed nominations for Park Citizen of the Year through Friends of the Park. Axelson recommended Bruce Weber for his annual cleanup in South St. Anthony, service on the Booster Club, and outgoing chairmanship of the SAPCC Land Use Committee.

The SAPCC Environment Committee recommends Bruce Weber for the Park Citizen of the Year Award. Richardson motions. Murdock seconds. Motion approved.

New membership –

SAPCC approves the appointment of Meghan Manhatton to the Environment Committee. Hass motions. Garfield seconds. Motion approved.

Action Needed: Axelson will send a letter of recommendation for Bruce Weber. Axelson will pass the Manhatton appointment on to the board.

Old and New Business

The Metro Green way has run into a problem because of a deteriorated railroad bridge. The city may not replace the bridge, which would be a major challenge to completing the Greenway. No additional information is available at this time.

Garfield shared an idea for building bird houses as a community activity, and potential fundraiser. This idea could be incorporated into the park planning, art fair and other community activities. The Environment Committee could host workshops explaining appropriate structure and educate folks on bird activity in this region. Garfield also suggested a dog parade be considered for fundraising.

*Action Needed: Axelson will ask Russ Stark about the Greenway
Garfield will forward the article regarding the bridge.
Garfield will look into how the birdhouse project was conducted and share details with the staff and committee.*

Meeting Adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Axelson