



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL
City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation
Regular Meeting

Winslow Woods Park - Shelter
Wednesday, August 14th, 2024
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

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I. CALL TO ORDER at 4:39 pm

II. ROLL CALL –

Denise Gardiner, Jeff Ehman, Bill Jones, Marne Potter, Dave Parkhurst
Staff: Steve Cotter, Rebecca Swift, Haskell Smith, Allen Edwards, Natalia Dickerson

III. APPROVAL JUNE OF MINUTES – 2024

IV. AGENDA

A. Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period
No Public Comment.

Denise Gardiner, Jeff Ehman, Marne Potter, Dave Parkhurst, Bill Jones

Rebecca Swift, Steve Cotter, Allen Edwards, Natalia Dickerson, Haskell Smith

No public comment

Discussion of potential for studying camping in parks. Rebecca Swift said a task force has been formed to address the issue.

Swift spoke with Dave Kittaka about ERAC's opinion that brown trout should not be stocked in Griffy Lake.

Denise moved to approve June Minutes Jeff E. seconded. Minutes were approved.

Old Business

B-1 Miller-Showers Pond Maintenance

ERAC previously voiced concern about whether existing vegetation would be removed. Some vegetation remains which should repopulate the wetland cells. Eco Logic contract is scheduled to be approved by the Park Board in September to revegetate the areas which were used to access the site. Turf will be planted next to the path but below that native plants will be installed. More plants may be added next spring. Swift will share summary report with ERAC.

Swift received no reports of issues with pond wildlife during the project.

There was a tear in the pond liner which was repaired. Sediment was collected and drained before it was removed. Jeff Ehman asked how long the sediment has been accumulating. Cotter guessed it has been since 2002 (the project was completed in 2004.)

Bill Jones recalled a tour after it was completed and mentioned the stormwater interceptors. Swift mentioned an MOU is being created between Parks and CBU to ensure regular maintenance of the infrastructure within the Park.

Haskell Smith mentioned that the callery pear trees at the north end of the Park, which were just removed, were the last 6 that were planted in the Park system. Swift asked that any additional questions about the project be emailed to her.

New Business

C-1 Education Update (Griffy Interp. Signs, Guided Tours, Nature Days)

Interpretive signs at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve

ERAC members voted on the top five topics they'd like to see on the interpretive signs.

Rebecca S. mentioned BugFest is coming up on August 24 at Karst Farm Park from 10:00 – 2:00. Over 1300 attended last year. Shooting for 1500 attendees this year. Live entertainment, music, games crafts prizes and food trucks. COB, MCPR, Purdue Extension and Wonderlab are sponsoring this event.

Rebecca S. mentioned that Nature Days are coming up on Tuesdays starting Sept. 2. Volunteers are needed to help lead stations and to lead the groups to the different stations.

The BPR Program Guide just came out and registration is live.

A Griffy Insect Inventory is being conducted to add to the Griffy Master Plan. There is a citizen science aspect to the inventory. Participants that submit at least 50 photos of insects at Griffy will be eligible for prizes.

Natural Resources Coordinator position interviews have been completed and the new person will start before Nature Days begin.

Haskell S. said 70 trees will be planted in the restoration area at Ferguson Dog Park on Oct. 12. This is the second round of plantings at the park.

There is a creek cleanup planned for Switchyard Park in September.

Allen E. will have a workday at Crestmont Park with the Bloomington Disc Golf Club to improve the disc golf course.

Jeff E. mentioned the possibility of creating a tour to highlight the intertwined history of CBU and local parks. Rebecca S. said the new Natural Resources Coordinator will take on this project.

C-2 Storm Resiliency Plan & Ongoing Storm Cleanup Efforts

Rebecca S. suggested people not hike at Winslow Woods Park yet due to the number of trees that came down in the June 25 storm. Trees that came down in the June 25 storm have been cleared from the trails at Wapehani Mt. Bike Park and RCA Park.

Haskell S. reported that BPR and the Street Dept. have collected over 200 tons of tree waste since the June 25 storm. The wood chips will be used in parks. Priority streets were all cleared within 24 hours of the event and all accessible trails, sidewalks and paths were cleared within 48 hours.

Haskell S. said the previous Urban Forester created a storm response plan in coordination with the Engineering, Planning, Police, Fire, Street, Sanitation Departments and local EMS. He said the plan needs to be tailored to local conditions. He offered to answer any questions or to provide the document. Rebecca S. will send more information on the Storm Resiliency Plan.

The grant-funded Storm Resilience Pruning Project will allow tree pruning on priority streets to reduce storm damage on important routes. The Request for Proposals will go out in October and the 4-year contract should begin in November or December. The amount of the contract is not to exceed \$25,000 and should provide pruning on about 60% of priority streets.

The final round of the Bicentennial Trees and Trails Bond should allow for 380 trees to be planted throughout town. Surveys were sent to 280 residents with trees in road right-of-ways and they have been responding.

The updated Tree Care Manual created by Urban Forestry is now available.

The City of Bloomington has been designated a disaster area due to the June 25 storm. All City Departments are tracking storm-related expenses in the hopes of getting %50 of the total expenditures reimbursed, including the purchase of a dump truck that was purchased to help clear debris.

The City has concluded roadside storm-related brush pick-ups.

C-3 Stiltgrass & Vegetation Management Updates

Allen E. gave an update on vegetation management in parks. Stilt grass control seems to be working. Less herbicide and less labor has been needed to control the population at Rogers Family Park compared to 2023. Clethodim is the preferred herbicide for stilt grass control. A new control techniques seems to be working on Japanese knotweed, which is very hard to control. Cutting the plants back to 4 inches high, then spraying the resprouts, has shown to work on local populations. Recent spraying at Creek's Edge resulted in the survival of only a few sickly looking plants.

Stilt grass management is ongoing at the Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. Storm clean-up has interfered with stilt grass management this season.

Marne P. asked if native seed would be planted in areas where invasive plants have been removed. Allen E. responded that the native seed bank should allow for recovery in these areas. Steve C. added that the Department is hesitant to bring in new seed because previous efforts to do so have resulted in the introduction of additional invasive species.

Rebecca S. mentioned that Johnson grass is also targeted for removal. She said she heard that it has been growing at up to several inches in a day.

David Parkhurst asked which chemical is being used to control invasive thistles. Allen E. said they are using clopyralid.

Allen E. added that the Field Maps app has allowed the Urban Greenspace team to work more efficiently.

Rebecca S. said herbicides are carefully chosen to treat specific plant species in an attempt to avoid off-target damage. Other techniques used include cut-stump treatment, basal bark treatment and mowing.

Trees have been planted at the south end of the field at Rogers Family Park and the prairie planting has been expanded to the south.

Steve C. asked if the Weed Wrangles are enough to get ahead of the spread of invasive plants in parks.

Allen E. said he didn't think they are sufficient. Rebecca said a strike team might be more effective.

Steve C. mentioned that Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis has a strike team to control invasives.

C-4 Project Updates (Gateway, Hopewell, Building Trades, Power Line Trail)

Rebecca S. said the Bloomington Bicentennial Gateway project, which is funded by the Bicentennial Bond Series C, is being managed by the Bloomington Arts Commission and the space for the installation is being provided by the Parks Dept. Construction has begun. Parts of College Ave. and Walnut St. will be closed during construction. The limestone has been sourced locally for the project. The limestone wall and lettering should be completed by the end of this fall. Input was sought about how the project could be safe for birds.

Jeff E. said he heard that different colors of lights would be used to backlight the letters. Rebecca S. said the lights will only be white.

Rebecca S. showed renderings for the Hopewell Commons project. She said there will not be a water feature in the park. There will be a turf area and a small stage included in the project. There will be small water feature that will collect rainwater that will be stored in a large cistern. The water will be used for irrigating the planted areas.

Jeff E. asked what the lifespan of that type of irrigation would be. Rebecca S. mentioned other parks that have irrigation. Hopefully the irrigation system will last long enough for the vegetation planted on the site to become established. Rebecca S. said she will look into the lifespan of the irrigation system.

A playscape will include limestone blocks and downed trees for people to play and sit on. There are pergolas included and swinging seats. Construction of the project is currently ahead of schedule. Rebecca S. said the closure of Rogers St. was done in part to upgrade utilities in the area and that the road should be reopened in early October. Rebecca S. offered to arrange a tour of the site.

Rebecca S. said the Building Trades Park Master Plan has attracted a lot of public comment. Pickleball courts are highly desired by many of the commenters. Basketball will remain on the large concrete court. Steve C. mentioned that bike polo is also played on the court.

The Park Board has approved Phase 1 improvements which will focus on accessibility. Internal pathways and curbs will be constructed. An accessible loop trail will be included. Park access will change when planned improvements to 2nd St. are completed. There have been a lot of questions about improving the restrooms. The project should be out to bid by the end of the year with a goal of starting improvements in early 2025.

Rebecca S. will manage this project and Mader Design won the contract for design of the project.

Rebecca S. mentioned that a new accessible shelter is being constructed at RCA Park.

The Powerline Trail easement has been secured from the Monroe County Commissioners. A public meeting about the project will be held at the Switchyard Park Pavilion on Sept. 4 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. The trail will connect Switchyard Park, RCA Park, Wapehani Mt. Bike Park, the Mill Trail and the Clear Creek Trail. Public Works is requesting a raised table-top pedestrian crosswalk across Rogers St. Aztec will send drawings which will be shared at the October meeting.

Denise G. sent an email that discussed a planned mural on the Duke Energy Substation that includes free roaming cats. Some members of the public have expressed concern that outdoor cats are included due to their impact on native birds.

C-5 October 2024 Meeting Agenda Items & Member Recruitment

No suggestions were received. Rebecca S. asked that any agenda item suggestions be emailed to her.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9TH , 2024

RCA COMMUNITY PARK – Small Shelter