

Natural Resource Commission Minutes
June 15, 2017
7:00 PM

Call to Order:

Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call:

Present: Chair Bob Larson and Commissioners David White, Dan McDermott (via conference call), Kate Winsor, and NOHOA Liaison Diane Gorder.

Absent: City Council Liaison Marty Long and Commissioner John Murphy.

Staff: Administrative Clerk Kathy Laur and Recording Secretary Gretchen Needham.

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Winsor moved to approve the agenda with a second by Commissioner White. Motion approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

NOHOA Liaison Gorder moved to approve the May 2017 minutes with modifications with a second by Commissioner White. Motion approved unanimously.

Conservation Award Committee Report

Chair Larson asked about certificates to be prepared for the awards; Clerk Laur volunteered to make arrangements for creation of the certificates. There was discussion about how to promote/advertise the awards, and an email blast and notification published in the North Oaks News were suggested.

Tick Task Force

Nothing new to report.

Kate Winsor's Report

Commissioner Winsor submitted two articles to the North Oaks News: one regards purple loosestrife as weed of the month, and the other is about bee-friendly (pollinator) lawns.

City Update: Kathy Laur's Report

Clerk Laur made a presentation about a survey she'd done on the NRC. The history of the NRC dates back to 1992, when Councilmember Tom Watson put together a series of meetings focused on the City's natural resources. In April of 2004, as Mayor, Watson created a Natural Resources Task Force; its goal was to assess the City's natural resources, identify priority areas, and evaluate the success of resource management. This task force evolved into the Natural Resources Commission, which now concentrates on public education and informing the residents and City Council of issues of environmental concern.

Laur created and distributed three separate surveys last year (one to the community, one to the NRC, and one to the City) asking if the NRC is still relevant and attempting to better understand the community's perception of the NRC and what it does. Participation in the surveys was poor (responses were collected from 14 households, four NRC members, and one council member). The overall conclusion is that the community values the NRC and wants it to continue and broaden its mission.

There was discussion of the NRC creating a logo to help promote visibility and awareness in the community. A banner displaying an NRC logo could be used at future events, such as the Community Fair. Discussion was held about new ideas for generating interest with children at next year's Community Fair. Wildflower seeds that could be planted in pots were suggested by Commissioner Winsor.

Commissioner McDermott asked for a quarterly report of the yearly budget for the next meeting.

NOHOA/NEST Update

NOHOA Liaison Gorder attended a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) workshop in White Bear Lake recently about the risks to the environment from the invasive plant purple loosestrife. According to Gorder and Winsor, purple loosestrife can be found in North Oaks in the Deep Lake Channel and in Long Marsh.

Gorder is organizing a volunteer opportunity with the Vadnais Lake Area Management Organization (VLAWMO) for a "picture post" to be installed in North Oaks, which allows a camera or cell phone to take repeat photographs of a landscape or the sky. Deep Lake Channel was mentioned as an ideal place for this. A series of photographs of the same area over time allows for monitoring and recording of environmental changes.

Other Business:

None

Adjournment:

Commissioner Winsor made a motion to adjourn with a second from Commissioner McDermott. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:52pm.

Next Meeting: July 20, 2017