

Natural Resources Commission Minutes

April 18, 2019

5:30 P.M.

Call to Order:

Chair Bob Larson called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Chair Bob Larson, Vice Chair Kate Winsor, Commissioners David White, Damien LePoutre, Commissioner Dan McDermott, and City Councilmember Rick Kingston.

Staff: Recording Secretary Gretchen Needham and City Administrator Mike Robertson.

Absent: Mayor Nelson and NOHOA Liaison Diane Gorder.

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner White moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner McDermott seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner LePoutre corrected the minutes to remove mention of a brochure in the pollinator resolution, changing of wording about Black Lake, changing of “acre” to “square mile” in discussion of deer, and correct spelling of the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO)’s acronym. Commissioner Winsor moved to approve amended March 21, 2019 minutes. Commissioner McDermott seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Pollinator Ordinance

Commissioners discussed a draft of a resolution endorsing pollinator protection and promoting pollinator habitat. A presentation was given by students of the University of Minnesota. The NRC hope to have the resolution finalized and ready for the City Council meeting on May 9.

Review of League of Minnesota Cities Award Application

The City plans to submit the Tick Task Force (TTF) information for the League of Minnesota Cities 2019 City of Excellence Awards. The application deadline is May 6, 2019.

Discussion of Open Meeting Law and NRC’s Role in Development

Commissioners reviewed the primary stipulations of the Open Meeting Law and how it applies and does not apply to the NRC. Commissioner LePoutre asked if Commissioners could discuss topics outside of meetings, such as data findings. Councilmember Kingston highlighted the intention of the law, which is to keep voting blocks from being formed ahead of scheduled meetings. Subcommittees would be allowed to do information gathering and sharing and that is within the spirit of the Open Meeting Law. Vice Chair Winsor mentioned that the NRC makes recommendations to the City Council, instead of deciding resolutions and ordinances that are binding. Commissioner LePoutre would like a definition on record of NRC’s role in advising the City Council and the Planning Commission.

Chair Larson entered into the record a memo regarding a meeting he held with Stephanie McNamara, the Superintendent of VLAWMO. Once the City approves the development project in East Oaks, VLAWMO will give their opinion regarding whether or not the plan has the minimum impact on wetlands.

Commissioner LePoutre questioned whether or not Sambatek is a good choice for consulting with the City on environmental matters given that they work for developers. Administrator Robertson said Sambatek provides an advantage to the city because they are familiar with developers and their experience navigating the specifics involved.

Commissioner LePoutre recommended that the NRC's mission statement be reviewed at the next meeting.

Tick Task Force Report

The newest TTF survey has begun. The survey will be publicized on the City's website, Facebook page, email blast, and in the North Oaks News. The state's health department data will be analyzed with the TTF data to do a compare/contrast of results. Next year, the Polco survey tool will be used, which will have additional features.

Kate Winsor's Report

The article in this month's North Oaks News is about Oriental bittersweet. May 11 is the Garden Club Plant Sale at the Hill Farm. There will be a table manned by NRC staff. Free trees available will be pine saplings and some varieties of oak.

City Update

The City has received a grant from the MN Department of Agriculture for \$2,750 to combat Oriental bittersweet. Liaison Gorder will assist managing the project, which includes volunteer hours, removal efforts, and education.

Deer management is completed for the year; 24 deer were taken in total. Whether or not to trap next year will be discussed. Commissioner White wondered if the traps served any purpose anymore, since they are catching so few deer. Councilmember Kingston suggested the City not do a deer count automatically but wait and see if one is warranted.

The week after the 4th of July will be the target date for weed removal in Pleasant Lake.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Winsor made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner McDermott seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:12 p.m.

Next Meeting: May 16, 2019