



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
Parks and Recreation

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL

City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation
Regular Meeting

Wednesday, June 8th, 2022
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/86072357739?pwd=Q0pWc0hyaWlxczgUzFkMVnTGU3UT09>

Meeting ID: 860 7235 7739
Passcode: ERAC

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:33PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Denise Gardiner, Jeff Ehman, Dave Parkhurst, Angie Shelton, Dave Rollo

Staff: Steve Cotter, Erin Hatch, Joanna Sparks, Tim Street, Rebecca Swift, Rachel Van Voorhis

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 2022

Shelton moved to approve to the meeting minutes, Ehman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. AGENDA

A. Public Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period

No public comments were submitted this meeting.

B. Old Business

B-1 Election of Officer

Swift discussed the position of Vice Chair and asked if anyone in the group would be willing to fill in. Shelton offered to fill in as Vice Chair. Parkhurst approved, Ehman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

B-2 Griffy Reptile, Amphibian, and Avian Inventory Survey Results

Cotter provided updates on the survey results, which indicated the need for signage on the causeway to protect wildlife. Street added that he spoke with the engineering team, who were unreceptive to adding animal crossing signs in the public area. There was minimum research supporting the utility of

signs, although they may still be considered in future plans at Griffy. Signage would need to be on City property, rather than in the right-of-way.

B-3 Switchyard Park Wetland and Stream Mitigation Annual Monitoring Report

Sparks commented on progress at Switchyard Park. A contract with Ecologic was finalized. There were notable improvements in biodiversity at Switchyard, specifically in the basin area although there were many invasives along the edges of the basin. Sparks and Street noted that they potentially heard an American Bittern at the park, along with many pollinators and other species. Shelton commended the work at SYP.

B-4 Invasive Plant Management Updates

Sparks said that weekly Weed Wrangles were still ongoing. They have had over 85 volunteer events this year with almost a thousand volunteer hours. They had a successful day at Winslow Woods Park and noted the presence of the invasive species Oriental Bittersweet. Sparks also commended Gillian's work in networking, specifically for the popup native planting event. They are looking to continue improving public outreach and bringing in new volunteers. They will be transitioning focus from Garlic Mustard to Japanese Stiltgrass. The Adopt-a-Greenspace program had 8 adopters at 18 different properties with over 40 volunteers and new adopters steadily participating. New events were planned at Highland Village Park.

B-5 Lower Cascades Project Updates

Street noted that the Lower Cascades Project was very close to completion and a walkthrough was planned for that Friday. Water had risen along the creekbank, cutouts were sodded, rock removal was performed, and the area was seeded. About 85 of the 115 planned tree plantings were completed, but they experienced issues with availability of purely native sugar maples and shagbark hickories. They plan to revisit this issue in the Fall and hopefully replant those species. About 40 to 50 trees had also been planted along Griffy Creek with minimal disturbance to ground cover. The boardwalk was opened with attention focused on invasive control and removal.

Ehman asked if there were any steps on the boardwalk. Street responded that the entire boardwalk was on an incline, although there are steps going down to the actual waterfall. Cotter discussed the birdwatching potential in the area. Street discussed potential future issues, including erosion, flooding, utility infrastructure, and long-term project potential.

Rollo commented on the UDO list of trees allowed to be planted and asked why maples were allowed since they are not on the current list. Hatch responded that maples could be planted since they were replacing trees that had been removed, and at the time of the removal maples were included on the UDO list.

Street expanded on the question and added that they are ensuring compliance with the UDO, DNR, and National Register. Cotter pointed out that parts of the picnic tables could be salvaged. Street confirmed that old picnic tables had been salvaged and new picnic tables were put in.

Sparks added a brief update on planting and sodding in the area. Swift asked about the sand volleyball court. Street confirmed that the volleyball court will be rebuilt, and also discussed the seed mixes in response to Sparks. Street transitioned to discussing historical signs for the area, how they were brought about, and what information would be included.

C. New Business

C-1 Education Update

Swift described the upcoming event Get Outdoors Day, which would have about 10 tables and lots of foot traffic due to the location at SYP and weather. Hoosier National Forest was a partner for the event and had a table. The city was also partnering with Hoosier Riverwatch to provide free basic training on environmental education, including water quality reporting for IDEM. Additionally, Banneker Nature Club began and continues Monday through Thursday from 1pm to 3pm. The "Adopt" programs were still very active and had great turnout. Planning was already started for Leonard Springs and Griffy Lake Nature Days. Swift noted that about 75% of the budget for nature days was allocated towards bus transportation and gas. Finally, floral workshops would be hosted at Griffy soon to study the area and take floral inventories.

C-2 Bicentennial Bond Tree Planting Project Updates

Hatch explained that the bond provided funds for the tree planting project. They utilized the tree inventory and accessed about 304 sites for planting. 118 trees were planted in the spring, and the rest will be planted in the fall. One issue the team encountered was unidentified utilities that blocked planting. Various input from adjacent homeowners who did not want additional trees also posed a challenge. Only native species were planted.

Shelton asked the location of the tree plantings. Hatch responded that the team planted at Green Acres, on the Central-East side of the city and East side of State Road 46. Ehman asked for more details about site criteria. Hatch described that they chose vacant sites, many of which only had information about above-ground infrastructure. They targeted sites based on existing canopy cover, income level, and percent non-white. Of the four target areas, two had been finalized in the spring. They will continue to balance environmental and socio-economic factors when planting.

Rollo asked about using tree plantings to honor citizens. Hatch answered that those who met the criteria were honored appropriately. Rollo asked when those trees would be planted. Hatch replied that they are finding a location for the 40 trees that were allocated and will plant them when they find a place that makes the most sense. Street added that new trees are being identified to replace. Hatch listed some criteria for replacing trees, including size and age. Tim added that they were looking for a vendor that can plant large trees and trying to maintain a positive citizen response.

Rollo asked if the Callery Pears could be removed or sterilized. Hatch replied that they should be sterile, but the funds to confirm this are costly and the process is complex. Ehman asked how much the contract cost, which was listed as 182,000. Ehman asked if they expected to plant the remaining trees in the Fall, to which Hatch responded yes. Ehman asked about funding availability. Hatch explained that funds and other conflicts continue to be a challenge, in addition to utility conflicts. Hatch discussed how the team is staying in compliance with relevant laws. Ehman asked about improving data accuracy, suggesting the name Chuck Winkle. Street added that the city is engaging with CBU and is looking into adding utility locations and other granular data.

C-3 Roger's Family Farm Project Updates

Street provided an update for the Roger's Family Farm Project and an overview of their progress. The project design is close to finished. A permeable parking lot will be added to alleviate parking issues and give greater access to the space and to amenities. The goal of the project was not to change the

character of the park, but to improve access and amenities. Street discussed budgeting, trail connections, and restoring the field while staying mostly out of the flood zone. The DNR approved two open structures along the flood fringe. The project is focused on restoring the space until it is completely native species and making a unique area for the public to enjoy.

Shelton asked about controlled burns in the area. Street replied that no burns will take place at the location. Sparks added that the team is planting and mowing about a third of the area at a time, which includes treating with herbicides and hand mowers. Site challenges include flooding and other natural barriers to progress. Steve commented on the impervious surfaces above the area causing water to come down quickly and that it is retained in the valley. Street mentioned that no lighting has been added to the area. Shelton asked about the material of the parking lot. Street responded that the lot is primarily asphalt and permeable material.

Rollo asked if the cutting of the area is succeeding. Joanna expressed the continued efforts for removing invasive plant species. Street added the opportunity for education and using the space for public art. Shelton asked about when the prairie was restored and discussed the constant influx of invasives. Sparks responded that the prairie restoration began in 2016. Street commented further on how the team is addressing invasive species management.

Ehman mentioned increased maintenance and adding steps to access the area. Sparks responded that the inclusion of steps would inhibit bicycles access. Shelton asked about accessibility from the surrounding area. Street discussed the different trail connections and potential bike routes extending from the area.

C-4 Winslow Woods Property Updates

Cotter described the project updates at Winslow Woods. The area is on a ten acre lot, which was part of a farm until the 70's. Challenges are primarily encroachment from surrounding parcels, which use the property to dump compost and trimmings and as land for trampolines and other additions. Other concerns include unmarked trails, invasives, deer, and sinkholes.

Sparks commented that there are five Adopt-a-Greenspace volunteers for Winslow Woods. Cotter added that there are constraints to trail maintenance including access points, lack of drainage, a burnt down restroom, and fallen trees. The orchard also requested that cedar be removed in the area due to their effect on the apple trees.

C-5 Griffy Lake Project Celebration & Ribbon Cutting Event

Cotter identified July 29th as a potential date for the celebration. The city plans to host the event from 10am – 12pm. They will receive a canoe from the designer of the project at the celebration, have many speakers, and highlight the changes at Griffy. They hope to get Bill Jones to talk about the process of the project, which was originally proposed in 1984. There are a few details that remain to be finished at the pier which poses some aesthetic and safety risks. Identifying a location to connect the parking lot/boathouse area to the crosswalk is still on the table.

Parkhurst asked if the roadway was still closed to one-way traffic. Cotter responded that the roadway is back open for two-way traffic, but Spectrum is still working on finalizing some details. Spectrum is continuing to plan for projects that will update the area and has secured funding for the Dam Trail. Cotter expanded on how far the trail would reach and how the trails are connected to each other and to the parking lot area.

Swift mentioned that she was trying to collect historical photos and documents to contribute to the celebration and highlight the city's involvement at Griffy. Cotter recommended a small library-style installment to maintain any historical documents. Street added that he had seen many people at Griffy using the new fishing piers and accessing the renovated spaces. He provided information about the ongoing communication with Spectrum, future plans, and the allocation of funds for continuing the progress at Griffy.

Cotter discussed the lack of shade and discussed the planting strip area near the walkway and the potential for using that buffer to increase plant and shade cover. The buffer strip will also help with runoff. Swift noted that she was applying for a grant to address different areas including fish and plant habitat and restoration of vegetation. The team had to draw down the lake for construction which also had a significant effect on the vegetative areas along the edge. Cotter commented on the lake being drawn down and mentioned funding for controlled burns in the area scheduled in the fall.

Shelton asked if any vegetation surveys had been performed to assess the progress. Cotter replied that surveys were being taken that showed minimal change from year to year but a significant difference between the surveys from the first and fourth years.

Rollo asked about the tick population at Griffy. Cotter and Swift added that there is still a considerable tick population alongside invasive growth.

C-6 August 2022 Meeting Agenda Items

Swift added that they hope to be able to provide a more in-depth analysis of Griffy vegetation in August.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10th, 2022
Olcott Park – Young Pavilion**