

**Saint Anthony Park Community Council
Environment Committee
Minutes of the January 22, 2020 meeting
CoCreatz, 2388 University Ave W, Saint Paul, MN**

Present: Betty Wheeler, Karlyn Eckman, Tim Wulling, Steve Ray, Stephen Mastey, Michael Russelle

Our formal meeting followed a discussion of next steps on the Council's formal appeal of a site plan for 2495 Kasota Ave. We intend to present a summary of our objections at the City Council Public Hearing, currently scheduled for March 5. Further planning meetings will be held before that date.

MPCA Environmental Assistance Grant applications are due March 11. They have about \$250,000 for statewide investment in climate adaptation, \$150,000 of which is targeted to communities with higher concentrations of low-income residents and people of color. We discussed several potential projects, including establishing gardens at Hampden Square apartments, insulating Seal Hi-Rise, and planting trees to reduce the heat island effect in South SAP. **Michael will find out the status of the 2000W Society's project in south Minneapolis to insulate a high-rise building. The committee would like to see a list of projects this program has funded.**

We discussed our accomplishments on the 2019 goals and set goals for 2020. These are attached.

Tim Wulling notified us that he will be leaving the committee. We are sorry to see him go. He has been an inspiring, dedicated, and effective member of the committee.

Next meeting set for February 26. Location TBD.

SAPCC Environment Committee Accomplishments – 2019 DRAFT 2/12/2020

Initial list of goals from the 10-year plan:

CC1.2: Set goals for and promote energy-efficient, healthy, and comfortable buildings by working with public and private partners to provide air-sealing, insulation, and other improvements, while also mitigating and preventing indoor mold due to improper insulation and inadequate moisture control and encouraging bulk buy opportunities for high-efficiency AC, HVAC systems, and heat-recovery ventilators.

We had a speaker from the Center for Energy and Environment (which merged with Neighborhood Energy Consortium). He provided information on Home Energy Audits and Multifamily Building Audits. The latter have been shared with local apartment landlords and managers, and it led to a full audit of a senior cooperative housing building.

CC1.5 Explore ways to increase composting of organics by residents and businesses on private and public property and with neighboring institutions, including expanding the availability of compostable “single use” items.

We were able to help establish collection of organics for composting at one multifamily building and a member of the committee helped organize education of the residents on what materials can be composted. People in about 30 units are actively participating.

CC2.1 Set goals for energy production, with improved equity and local jobs. For example, by 2030, secure 50% of the community’s electrical energy from renewable sources, such as Community Solar Gardens that allow subscribers who have modest credit rating scores, and install charging stations for electric vehicles in every public and most private parking lots and ramps.

We have been unsuccessful in establishing a Community Solar Garden in the neighborhood, but have helped communicate to the community about opportunities to subscribe to other CSGs. A committee member has been active in gathering information and organizing plans for a large (90kW) solar array that could be installed on a multifamily housing building. That member is also actively encouraging that residents subscribe to Windsource as another way to support generation of renewable electric energy. Discussions on installing a public electric car charging station in North Saint Anthony Park have been initiated.

CC2.2: Promote and support installation of renewable-energy production systems (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass methane) throughout the District, with battery storage systems for electric power where feasible. Use Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) and other financing options.

918 Raymond Ave is the first new construction we know of in Saint Paul that is fully electric, although it was not easy to convince the City to approve the plan. It will have a solar PV array over the 6-stall parking lot on the alley. The committee publicized Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light’s Just Solar program and bulk buy program at the Saint Anthony Park Arts Festival and the 4th of July parade. Another member and one staff person familiarized themselves with MN PACE opportunities and communicated them to multifamily housing units.

PR3.1: Work to maintain and strengthen the physical assets and programming at Langford Park and assist with maintaining and improving the park now used by Joy of the People.

A committee member received permission from Saint Paul Forestry to save some hyper local oak tree seedlings by moving them from the 918 Raymond construction site to the Parks and Rec land leased by Joy of the People.

PR5.1: Obtain funds to support maintenance of rain gardens in boulevards and parks.

Accomplished maintenance of the raingardens with the assistance of students from Avalon School. Also renovated one raingarden near the Hampden Park Foods driveway, installed another at 918 Raymond, and improved the boulevard between the two.

WSA1.3: Determine where water flows and identify areas with potential for localized

flooding.

No progress was possible due to lack of funding for a GIS intern.

WSA4.1: Maintain an information database and interactive map of identified sites of soil pollution, and identify suspected areas for further investigation.

Decided to maintain a map from the MPCA on the SAPCC website, rather than develop our own.

WSA4.2: Conduct a neighborhood mapping project to identify areas of concern regarding soil contamination (e.g., boulevards and park land that may be used for food production).

No progress to date.

WSA4.8: Seek opportunities to monitor outdoor air quality.

In part due to our earlier advocacy, MPCA included an air quality monitoring site in our neighborhood at Urban Growler.

WSA5.4: Work to reduce noise from compression braking by truck drivers and night-time racing through and near the neighborhood.

No progress was made on this goal.

WSA5.8: Advocate for strengthening and enforcing sign restrictions intended to reduce billboards and sign clutter.

No progress was made on this goal in 2019.

Accomplishments on additional goals from the 10-year plan

PR 5.2 Develop a neighborhood volunteer corps to maintain rain gardens

Thanks to the help of staff, we were successful in having Avalon students help again. We still need to devise ways to build a core of neighborhood (residents and businesses) to take responsibility for the rain gardens, receive recognition, and motivate others to join.

PR 7.1 Provide education about which species we may want to support and others that may need some type of control, their habitat and corridor needs, including niche habitat and nesting sites, and how their populations are controlled ecologically.

We organized a community engagement event at Kasota Ponds when buckthorn was removed with funds from a grant. We discussed why some species should be controlled and others promoted.

CC3.2. Retain and develop green spaces that help reduce the heat island effect and provide cooler areas where people can gather during heat waves.

We filed a formal appeal and a petition for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet to a conditional site permit to develop a green space on Kasota Ave. Paving this site will add another acre of asphalt and concrete and reduce the evaporative cooling the current vegetation provides.

This appeal also supports another community goal

WSA 3.1 Design and promote approaches to reduce the inflow and concentrations of

road salt in Kasota Ponds.

We do not agree that the stormwater management design proposed for the development will prevent salt movement from the impermeable surface and the adjacent roadway to the West Pond.

WSA 3.3 With the MWMO and other partners, determine the sources, buffering, and potential removal of contaminants other than salt from Kasota Ponds.

WSA 5.1 Reduce litter and illegal dumping through advocacy, education, and engagement with local businesses and organizations. In particular, advocate for reductions in availability and use of plastic containers.

We continued our decades-long practice of hosting a spring cleanup around the Kasota Ponds, which includes removal of hundreds of pounds of trash around the three ponds and educational events for the volunteers.

WSA 5.6 Through education and other means, work to reduce the impact of metal recycling (dumping, noise, traffic, and aesthetics) on wildlife habitat.

We were very pleased to see that MN DOT finally installed J barriers to keep vehicles away from the slopes to the North Kasota Pond. On this truck turnaround on Hunting Valley Road, "metal scrappers" and others would discard trash and hazardous materials. MnDOT also cleared invasive plant species and reseeded the slopes. We wrote a letter of appreciation to Dick Rohland, who has worked to achieve this for three years.

SAPCC Environment Committee Goals – 2020 DRAFT 2/13/2020

CC1.2: Set goals for and promote energy-efficient, healthy, and comfortable buildings by working with public and private partners to provide air-sealing, insulation, and other improvements, while also mitigating and preventing indoor mold due to improper insulation and inadequate moisture control and encouraging bulk buy opportunities for high-efficiency AC, HVAC systems, and heat-recovery ventilators.

Committee members and staff will inform and encourage owners of multifamily residential units and local businesses to improve energy efficiency of their buildings.

CC1.5 Explore ways to increase composting of organics by residents and businesses on private and public property and with neighboring institutions, including expanding the availability of compostable "single use" items.

Michael will work on this. Have already had one Transition ASAP event that promoted composting.

CC2.2: Promote and support installation of renewable-energy production systems (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass methane) throughout the District, with battery storage systems for electric power where feasible. Use Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) and other financing options.

Michael will work on this, in particular with a multifamily residential building.

EBD general principle: The challenge for the next 10 years will be to retain traditional industrial and distribution jobs where appropriate, while enhancing a framework that takes advantage of our urban amenities and encourages innovation.

Steve Ray offered to organize a tour of West Rock for committee and community members, in part as a response to negative comments on social media about this neighborhood business.

HP 5.5 Promote the design and implementation of historical interpretive signage along transportation routes, including bicycle paths, sidewalks, streets, bus lines, and LRT lines, working with Metro Transit when possible.

Karlyn will seek a way to install signage for the historic Red River Oxcart Road in and near our community.

PR3.1: Work to maintain and strengthen the physical assets and programming at neighborhood public spaces, including water quality, ecological restoration, and pollinator habitat.

Stephen and Lisa will work on this.

PR5.1: Obtain funds to support maintenance of rain gardens in boulevards and parks. *Steven and Betty will work on this.*

PR 7.1 Provide education about which species we may want to support and others that may need some type of control, their habitat and corridor needs, including niche habitat and nesting sites, and how their populations are controlled ecologically.

WSA 1.7 Promote installation of rain gardens, surface and subsurface infiltration galleries, green roofs, curb cuts to divert water from street gutters, and development of retention ponds and streets for higher rainfall events.

Stephen will continue working with the City and JOTP to daylight a stormwater pipe, encourage infiltration, and provide water for more trees. This also addresses:
EBD 2.2 Support locating storm water holding devices under new green spaces.
Encourage new developments and public infrastructure to connect to these systems.

WSA4.1: Adapt MPCA's What's In My Neighborhood database and interactive map of identified sites of soil pollution for Saint Anthony Park, and identify suspected areas for further investigation.

Michael, Karlyn, and Betty will work on this.

WSA4.2: Conduct a neighborhood mapping project to identify areas of concern regarding soil contamination (e.g., boulevards and park land that may be used for food production).

This is a priority issue given Minnesota Chemical issue. Follow-up by Michael, Karlyn and Betty

WSA4.4: Seek opportunities to monitor outdoor air quality.

Lisa will work on this.

WSA5.4: Work to reduce noise from compression braking by truck drivers and night-time racing through and near the neighborhood.

Karlyn will follow up with Saint Paul Police

WSA5.8: Advocate for strengthening and enforcing sign restrictions intended to reduce billboards and sign clutter.

Karlyn will follow up by contacting billboard companies and inquire about rates to post environmental messages. Michael will support an appeal against installing a dynamic billboard near I94 and 280.