



Meeting Minutes
Ladd Arboretum Committee
Monday, March 17, 2014
7:00pm
Morton Civic Center, Room 2402

Members Present: Virginia Beatty, Barbara DeCoster, Tracy Hubbard, Pam Johnson, Jim LaRochelle, Louise Taylor

Members Absent: Kathie Biddle

Staff Present: Paul D'Agostino, Assistant Director Parks/Forestry, Beth Cullen, Clerk III

Guests: Claire Alden, Program Coordinator, Evan Foley, Eagle Scout Candidate, Fran Foley, Bob Seidenberg

Presiding Member: Virginia Beatty

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Virginia Beatty at 6:45pm and a quorum was established.

2. January 13, 2013 Board Minutes

Minutes were approved.

3. Staff Reports

- The Pollinator Project planting space needs suggestions. The Committee proposed the area in the parking lot referred to as the "Bridge". The second is the Bird Sanctuary on the far side towards Green Bay Road; between the Bird Sanctuary and the raised beds. The proposal will be emailed when more information is available. The sizes of the plants are "plugs". The people involved with the Pollinator Project are willing to take plants suggestions and the plants will come from a local source. The City Parks Crew will prepare the soil and volunteers will plant.

4. New Business

- The Eagle Scout Project Proposal: Eagle Scout Evan Foley presented his Eagle Scout project proposal. This project addresses the overgrown area, path and to a lesser degree, the steps. During Evanston Spring Break work would begin. There would be six to ten Scouts volunteering in this project which would be done in phases. Ms. Beatty emphasized the importance of the stairs as the path is steep and safety is a concern. Mr. D'Agostino said the City would have Mr. Ciolek and Mr. Khatkhate involved. Landscape fabric would be laid to prevent weed on the pathways. Goal is to incorporate natural plantings in a nature trail to be used in environmental education. Ms. Beatty was concerned with the upkeep and watering of the plants over the next two years as they established themselves. The Committee was supportive, especially of invasive plant removal and the pathways, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Election of Officers: For Chairman, Ms. Beatty was nominated by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. LaRochelle; motion passed: For Vice-chair, Ms. DeCoster was nominated by Mr. LaRochelle and seconded by Ms. Johnson; motion passed.
- Revisions to the Ecology Center expansion: A rough rendering was passed out. This was signed off on by Mr. McRae, Director of Parks/Recreation and Community Services. This is a continuation of the existing classroom. Ms. Beatty commented that this looks dark and additional

light would be advantageous. Windows should be in the corner to invite visitors to spend time in a natural setting. It is on the footprint of the current Greenhouse. The estimate should be less than first proposal. Suggestions were made to rearrange the window placement and to add natural components to increase appeal. Mr. LaRochelle questioned if this met the Ecology Center staff's needs for additional programming. Ms. Alden indicated that this space would be able to provide this and a great connection to nature. Windows are important in this vision. The Committee questioned if more windows would be more money. Mr. D'Agostino will take comments back to City staff.

5. Unfinished Business

- Evanston Community Foundation 2014 Responsive Grants program proposal was in on time and the Committee should hear if it was successful sometime in May.
- Bridge Street Construction: The project should be restarted March 24-next week. Should be completed by July 1st. Re-sodding of disturbed areas will occur as this is an IDOT project; they require this on their projects. There will not be an entrance to the parking lot on Bridge Street. The entrance will be permanent on McCormick Blvd. Crossing will be at the designated cross walk. The trees removed by the project will not be replaced as there is no more room. Mr. D'Agostino will check on places where plantings can be made around the corner crosswalk area. Ms. Beatty was unhappy with the lack of natural things here and stated that children would be meeting up with blacktop. There were questions on the delay in the work on the project. On the other side of the channel the existing bike path is being re-arranged to meet up with the sidewalk. On this side, the sidewalk will be removed and a widened bike path will be in place. The loss of the wildflowers along the path was brought up as well.
- Arboretum Multi-Use Pathway: Hopefully this project is designed to affect as few trees as possible. Adjustments will be made at both ends. Ms. Johnson inquired about the process. She expressed shock. This is an Arboretum! What is the role? Rubberstamping misleading information? When she inquired about more information from a City engineer, she was told not to worry about it-several times. Things went from planning stages to being finished with no information. Lack of information and conversation from start to finish. The Committee is unhappy with this whole process. Mr. D'Agostino has had conversations with City officials involved in the process and they let him know that the process will be different in the future. The Committee appreciates hearing this, but there is some skepticism about this. Ms. Taylor asked about the Twiggs bike trail as it is relatively unused. This is a blacktopped trail that can be used, which was pointed out several times by Mr. LaRochelle in the process. The LAC made a presentation to the Rules Committee about the ruts that had algae in it as well as the iron circle that was removed. This has been a frustrating issue, some due to financial limitations. How much, if any, maintenance has been done over the years. There has been a lack of upkeep and commitment to the Arboretum over the years. The City's Public Works Department seems to get what it wants. The blacktopped multiuse trail will change the whole feel of the Arboretum. This is being created as a plowable walkway for the kids among other things.
- Mr. LaRochelle and Ms. Hubbard are serving as liaisons from the Evanston Environmental Association (EEA). Mr. LaRochelle will serve until end of term (9-14) and states he is disappointed and discouraged in the City of Evanston. The Arboretum is special and should have the same attention as the Lakefront. The EEA president is aware that there are 2 positions to fill effective in September 2014.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 8:40pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Ladd Arboretum Committee will be May 19, 2014 at 7PM at the Evanston Ecology Center.

Minutes respectfully submitted for approval by:
Beth Cullen, Clerk III Evanston Ecology Center