

**Macalester - Groveland Community County
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, May 20, 2010 | 7:00 PM

Edgumbe Recreation Center | 320 South Griggs Street | Saint Paul

Members in attendance: Melanie Peterson-Nafziger, Gena Berglund, Mary Davis, Michelle Crain, Craig Skone, Rich Broderick, Lauren Anderson (staff)

Guests: Shawn Bartsh, Nancy Hone, Dianna Kennedy, Don Arnosti, Libby Arnosti

Meeting called to order: 7:02pm

Approval of April 2010 Minutes: no minutes to approve; full board approved committee update at 5/13/2010 meeting.

Added to agenda under Other Business: Dianna Kennedy will come in around 7:35pm to talk about the 2010 composting pilot and June 2010 – May 2011 work plan.

Neighborhood Clean-up Reuse Area

Shawn Bartsh from the HDC gave a brief update on the reuse area. In the past, it was disorganized and resulted in a lot of waste. Currently 75% of the collected items go to charities; two of the recipients are Bridging, which collects items to help families in transition, and Clare's Closet in Highland Park, which provides household items to families at Sibley Manor. For the remaining 25% of reusable items collected at the clean-up, residents and volunteers are encouraged to take what they would like – there will be better signage at the 5/22/2010 clean-up to mark the free area. Committee members with ideas for reuse area can email Shawn or visit her website.

Rock Tenn Anaerobic Digester

Don Arnosti, the MGCC rep to the Rock Tenn panel, reported that the Saint Paul Port Authority plans to recall the panel as a means of communicating with residents on a proposal for an anaerobic digester on SPPA property in the Midway neighborhood capable of processing 50,000 tons of material per year. Don believes they have submitted preliminary applications to the PCA and is currently talking to firms with experience building large digesters (>25,000 tons/yr) and that the plan is to process food waste primarily from institutions or large restaurants, suppliers, etc. Don also said that SPPA would like to make use of federal renewable energy incentives, which expire at the end of the year and would cover 30% of financing. Rich asked about SPPA's public process for the digester. Don said that he advocated for public hearings in addition to recalling panel – he will call Pete Klein at SPPA right way to encourage partnership with Community Councils to facilitate public process, which should include hearings and genuine opportunities for public input. Don also met with Tim Brownell & Susan Hubbard at Eureka Recycling about the upcoming compost study and concerns over digester technology, which may cut out certain compostable items such as non-recyclable paper.

2010 Composting Pilot and June 2010 – May 2011 Work Plan

Dianna Kennedy from Eureka Recycling gave a quick overview of the composting pilot project and plans to expand composting efforts city-wide. Eureka is currently focused on getting the community going on backyard composting, which is higher on the zero waste hierarchy than curbside composting pickup, and trying to create a repeatable model that other Community Councils can utilize. Part of the study will focus on tools for preventing food waste from happening while the other part will focus on different curbside compost collection methods including drop-off, truck and bicycle pickup, and a backyard-only control area. Dianna is currently working with Gena to develop goals and staff/volunteer roles for the June 2010 – May 2011 work plan. Gena would like to see increased engagement of the Environment Committee on the composting pilot and in the new workplan, partially because Eureka is a current funder of MGCC. Increased engagement would make composting work a central piece of the Committee's work and give it more time on future agendas. After goals are developed, work plan will go to Lauren and ER staff Megan & Lynn. Mary brought up having representatives from other committees (e.g. Community Outreach or Transportation) come to an Environment Committee meeting to engage with this work. Dianna discussed the need for different ways of communicating, including longer/deeper meetings and job descriptions. Melanie brought up the idea of creating a subcommittee for engaging volunteers who are particularly interested in composting work.

MacGrove Moves

The first and third golden shoes have been found, one is still out in the world, and two have yet to be hidden. Members of the committee have been delivering hundreds of brochures to churches, recreation centers, and public/private schools in the area. Melanie will create thank-you letters for businesses that donated prizes this year and Lauren will print and send.

Composting Home Visits

A total of 104 residents received home visits to set up backyard composting bins. Home visits were conducted by 35 dedicated volunteers and coordinated by Gena. An additional 70 (approx) residents also purchased backyard composting bins from Eureka Recycling.

Capitol Region Watershed District Update

CRWD is planning a Downspout Redirection Program (official name TBD) with 2010 pilot areas in sections of Thomas-Dale and Macalester-Groveland. They plan to measure storm water volume reductions in focus areas by offering home visits (similar to the NEC's Home Energy Squad model) to redirect downspouts to structures like rain barrels. CRWD will concentrate on the focus area between Pascal and Griggs and Stanford and Randolph, but some of the services will be available to all residents.

Sierra Club Resolution

Sierra Club sent a resolution to the Environment Committee on clean energy jobs. Gena made a motion to approve, Mary seconded, and the motion passed. The resolution will go to the full board next month and reads as follows:

To: U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken

Statement of Support for Strong Clean Energy Jobs Legislation

As trustees for our community, we call on you to work for passage of strong climate and clean energy jobs legislation in 2010. A strong bill is vital to curbing global warming, clearing our air, increasing energy independence, reducing consumers' utility bills, and creating new green jobs in the renewable energy sector. Immediate solutions to climate change are needed to protect Minnesota's northern forests and the Boundary Waters, which scientists say are at risk from warmer and more severe weather, drought, and invasive species because of global warming.

Strong legislation should include the following:

- Ensure that we meet reduction targets by reducing global warming pollution from old, dirty power plants;
- Retain the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate global warming emissions;
- Increase renewable energy and energy efficiency standards to create clean energy jobs;
- Invest more in clean energy and protecting consumers, communities, and natural resources.

We urge the Senate to strengthen, defend, and pass a strong clean energy jobs bill. Passing a bill this year is a much-needed response both to the climate crisis and to the persistent need for new Minnesotan jobs. It's time to transition away from dirty fossil fuels and toward a new clean energy economy of which we can all be proud.

Garbage Hauler Consolidation Packet

Lauren brought a 2009 copy of the packet to the meeting. The Environment Committee would like to revise & update the packet to make it more usable. This will include reducing unnecessary pages while still keeping important information such as the benefits of hauler consolidation in case a resident needs to persuade their neighbors. Originally this packet was put together by a subcommittee, but Lauren will work on updating the existing packet.

Meeting adjourned: 8:10pm