

Minutes

Indian Hills Environmental Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 20 , 2019

Second Presbyterian Church Room 219

Present: LuAnn George, Mimi Zinniel, Patricia Vairin, Amy Broadhurst, Lyle Graham, Lee Maddox, Vance Von Borries.

Call to Order. Minutes for October meeting, distributed ahead of time, were approved without change.

Stone Bridge

Stone Bridge (on Stonebridge Road) construction has been delayed, due to a few items that have not been resolved quite yet. The biggest challenge will be for the contractor to find enough space in this historically and environmentally significant area, for mobilizing all the construction equipment and materials without damaging effects. Once the details are worked out, and the State Historic Preservation Office has issued a “No Adverse Effects” determination, then construction bids will be let for contract. As a reminder, this is part of the “Bridging Kentucky” program, wherein Federal funds are used to ensure that more than 1,000 bridges throughout the state are safe.

Tree Assessment

Tree Risk Assessment is almost finished, and the summary data and recommendations for action are being developed.

Next step is to notify private property owners formally. The letter will include a description of the work to be done and a copy of pertinent nuisance ordinances. While the City will fund the work on trees within City-owned property, private property owners will be financially responsible for the trees “within falling distance of the street” that must be removed or pruned.

LGE Project

LG&E will be undertaking several projects in the coming months.: Most significantly, they will need to clear-cut the area under the high-power transmission lines (they have a 100’ easement) in order to preclude power outages and fires that can be caused by the high-voltage lines when they come in contact with trees. (The wires can sag as much as 18 feet when there is a heavy load due to heat, air conditioners, or ice; trees falling on high-power lines will cut power to large areas for long periods of time. Likewise, high tension wires can throw out sparks and cause fires. Thus, the trees must come down).

Also, LG&E will be trimming trees under and near distribution lines, which are the lines that lead from the high-power transmission wires to homes throughout the city. Homeowners will be notified that LG&E contract workers will be working in their neighborhood and can answer questions homeowners may have.

The area around LGE modifications will start out looking bad. The work will include some replanting (primarily grasses) and will also help with bush honeysuckle removal.

Finally, LG&E will be stabilizing the high-power-line tower on Indian Hills Trail near Caperton Swamp. The work may interfere with traffic from time to time, but the project should be completed in a few days. Work will begin in January.

Canopy Tree Program Update

Oktoberfest: attendance seemed to be down, but attendees enjoyed it. Many came to the Environment Committee booth, and 23 applicants signed up to participate in the Canopy tree program. All applicants were selected as winners. With advice from the contracted arborist, homeowners picked location and tree species, and covered half the cost, with the City absorbing the other half. (\$250 each). This has been a well-received program.

Robert Woodford (the arborist) is responsible for picking up the trees and planting. (As of this writing on December 10, all trees in this program have been planted), and water bags installed. In 2020, the Canopy Tree Committee will be merged with the Environment Committee for efficiency purposes; details will be worked out early in 2020.

Scope of Indian Hills Environment Committee

We need to continue to get communication out to the community, so hope to work on a newsletter of our own in 2020.

We are considering some new twists to the tree program(s). For instance, we may want to adopt programs similar to the Anchorage Forestry Board's tree program which includes tree giveaways and discounts, with associated educational programming, twice a year.

The IH Environment Committee also will be responsible for public education, seminars, presentations, workshops. The committee discussed ideas such as disseminating information on appropriate plants around homes, and Wildlife issues ranging from deer and coyotes to raccoons and insects.

February and March were discussed as months for speakers.

For future planning: The US Army Corp of Engineers is developing a \$15 million long-range plan for improvements throughout Beargrass Creek (to include the South, Middle and Muddy Forks. The Muddy Fork winds its way from Brownsboro Rd to the Ohio River, largely through Indian Hills. Resident input will be requested and welcome, particularly with residents immediately affected. We will be kept updated on future meetings of the Beargrass Creek Planning Committee.

Feedback from and to residents is an issue; there is no easy communication vehicle to distribute information. We want to develop systems where residents with issues can get immediate response from the City that someone will be in touch to help resolve the resident's problem.

One area where the committee might focus and do some work is on the city-owned property along Arrowhead. Stay tuned for more information on this. Wayne Hancock at LCC golf course has been receptive to the Committee's interest in addressing some drainage problems that start at the golf course and come down onto Arrowhead and into the creek.

Committee discussed having a panel discussion on the abundant wildlife in the Indian Hills area. LuAnn is working on this for a February presentation with Q and A. All residents would be invited.

Planning

A city-wide plan for Indian Hills would be helpful for setting direction for plantings, conservation, drainage, design, and policies. Most cities develop some kind of plan, some much more detailed than others. A ten-year plan would greatly help with deciding issues and implementing proper management practices, and could save money by addressing problems before they become too much of a challenge. Developing such a plan is an expensive and time-consuming project; we will continue to bring it up at Council meetings and other opportunities to eventually present the project for approval by Council. We would bring in professional environment planners/designers to help with this project.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.