

Community Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting Eleven

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Pesticide Advisory Committee Meeting

June 17th, 2019 5:00 – 7:00pm
Cedar Conference Room

PAC members present Kari Christianson, Mike Lynch, Alex Roth, Russ Henry and Jim Calkins

4 members of the public attended the meeting.

Staff, commissioners, and speakers present:

Jeremy Barrick, (MPRB), Kait Ryan (MPRB), Joe Green, Jason Wolford, Chris Aumock and Roberta Groening (MPRB)

1. Welcome and Updates

Committee members and staff introduced themselves and reviewed 5/13/19 meeting notes

2. Presentation: MPRB Golf Team – Minneapolis Golf Operations Overview

- Golf team introduced staff structure, types of golf courses, staff and labor costs associated with each type of course.
- Team reviewed golfer standards and expectations and individual MPRB golf courses, acreage and individual golf course superintendent along with their qualifications and certifications.
- The golf team also reviewed positive environmental impacts as well as challenges experienced by staff in maintaining parkland being used for golf courses.
- The team then reviewed the current spray program, the diseases that they are treating and managing for and reviewed the EIQ rating (Environmental Impact Quotient). The EIQ is to remain below 35% and the MPRB golf courses have maintained a rating of below the 35% marker. Along with this review, the golf staff also commented on other chemical or organic experiments that have been carried out through the years to try to manage disease that had limited success.
- Staff reviewed the only known organic golf course, methods of operating at this golf course, challenges to translating to our soils and courses, and reviewed ideas about transition plans to making MPRB courses pesticide free.

In response to the presentation, a committee member asked the team what time frame and other factors in their experience would they dedicate towards a testing program to transition a part of a golf course. The answer was 3-5 years, at a course that had a staff of Foreman, a parkkeeper and 6-7 employees to run the test program.

The Committee also requested the arrangements be made to invite Chip Osborne of Beyond Pesticides to join this committee at their July meeting, to talk about what a transition plan might look like for MPRB and timeline.

3. Discussion on Minnehaha Falls pesticide treatment

Russ Henry, chair of the committee opened the discussion by reviewing pictures and talking about his observations after MPRB staff sprayed Garlon 4 on poison ivy and other native and non-native plants and into Minnehaha Creek at Minnehaha Falls. MPRB responded by admitting that this treatment was a misuse of Garlon 4 and against the label directions. MPRB also showed pictures provided by Russ Henry, reviewed the actions taken by the parkkeeper who performed this treatment and an acknowledged some missteps in the process. Members of the Committee inquired about the incident being reported to the MDA and staff indicated they will follow up accordingly.

Committee members offered input on how the situation could have been possibly handled differently, including using additional signage, better containment, having the signage up for longer, better internal review and elimination of the use of chemicals to control weeds. Minnehaha Falls Landscaping president, Russ Henry reiterated the fact that his company has volunteered to pull all weeds including poison ivy at Minnehaha Falls Park and that this offer still stands.

Staff shared with the committee that they are working to move all herbicides in the park system to a central and secure location with access controlled by the Horticulture Supervisor. Staff is also compiling a list of all currently planned herbicide treatments and will share with the Pesticide Advisory Committee to review and provide recommendations for potential alternatives.

4. Open comment time:

- a. A member of the public expressed their wish for the park system to be transitioned to pesticide free. He also expressed his study of Hydrogen as a potential alternative way to provide clean water with several uses. Another member of the public expressed her concern that golf course users should pay for the additional costs associated with transition plans to pesticide free. Yet another member of the audience indicated her wish for the park board to consider cultural practices around plants and to include elements of public education. She indicated some of the measures discussed in these meetings would serve to confuse more than clarify.

5. Thank you and adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm