Meeting Minutes of the  
Natural Features Protection Review Board  
February 25, 2020  
Regular Meeting

CPED Department, 245 N Rose Street

A. Call to Order at 4:05 p.m.

B. Roll Call and Excuse Absent Members

Directors Present:
Lettow
Cole-Wick
MacNellis
Sylvester
Martin

Directors Absent:
Fuller
Glasser

Staff:
McCarthy
Bergstrom

Mr. MacNellis made a motion to excuse absent members. The motion was supported by Ms. Cole-Wick. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

C. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. MacNellis made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was supported by Ms. Cole-Wick. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

D. Adoption of Meeting Minutes, January 28, 2020

Mr. MacNellis made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2020 NFP Review Board meeting. The motion was supported by Mr. Sylvester. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

E. New Business:

1. The NFP Review Board did a preliminary review of a conceptual site plan for a project at Bow in the Clouds. No action was taken on this agenda item. The property is owned by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC). The landscape architect firm of OCBA was in attendance to represent the SWMLC’s project. Mr.
Lettow, NFP Review Board chairperson told the board that he is an employee of the SMWLC. Mr. Lettow began by introducing the project and providing details of the overall scope. The 49-acre property is managed as a public preserve, and SWMLC is planning to improve trails so that they are ADA accessible, wide enough for City maintenance vehicles, and build a small educational kiosk area near the entrance to the preserve. Mr. Lettow explained how City sanitary sewer infrastructure is located on the west side of the property and the City has discussed the need for better access to the infrastructure.

The NFP Review Board discussed various natural features on the site, including wetlands and planned tree or woodland cutting. It was determined that protected slopes on the site would require a variance to re-grade for the accessible trails.

2. Dr. Binny Girdler’s environmental justice class from Kalamazoo College attended the meeting to talk about the NFP overlay district map. No action was taken on this agenda item. The class is working on an evaluation of the overlay district from an equity perspective. Four students and Dr. Girdler discussed what information they would gather and use to evaluate the disparity in NFP coverage throughout the City.

F. Old Business

1. NFP overlay data review

Ms. McCarthy and Mr. Bergstrom presented mapping results for natural features across the City. The map included all parcels adjacent to surface water, public preserves, and parcels that contain slopes with 20% grade or greater. No action was taken on the agenda item.

G. Board Comments

H. Citizen Comments – Karin Larsen gave public comment during citizen comment period. Ms. Larsen is a resident of the Oakwood neighborhood. She wanted the NFP Review Board to be aware of a project the neighborhood association is exploring at Oakwood Memorial Beach. The beach property is located in the NFP overlay district. The stairway down to the beach needs to be replaced and the association is interested in making the beach more accessible.

L. Adjourn Meeting at 5:46 p.m.

Jamie McCarthy – Recording Secretary

Mitch Lettow - Board Chair