CALL TO ORDER

The Oakdale Environmental Management Commission (EMC) held a meeting on Monday, June 17, 2024 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 7:00 PM.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Chairperson: Noah Gerding
Commissioners: Keith Miller, Vice Chairperson
Tim Doolittle
Bonnie Wilson
Also Present: Lavonne Dorn, Oakdale Resident
Hannah Dunn, Community Development Specialist
Andy Morcomb, Acting City Council Liaison
Absent: Commissioner Chang Yang

Quorum Present: YES ☒ NO ☐

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WILSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MILLER, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 17, 2024 AS PRESENTED.

4 AYES
0 NAYS

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MILLER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DOOLITTLE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 20, 2024 AS PRESENTED.
OPEN FORUM

Oakdale resident Lavonne Dorn addressed the Commission suggesting the City place recycling containers at gas stations (as people frequently clean cars out there), Target, and Fleet Farm. As a former teacher, she also suggested having someone from the City or County go talk to Kindergarteners, 1st, and 2nd graders at the end of September about the importance of not using plastic bags, perhaps handing out cloth shopping bags with a City of Oakdale logo imprint for their family to use. They could also be handed out at Summerfest, and other events. She feels that would be more impactful and relevant than sharing such topics only on social media blasts and through electronic signage.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION REVIEW

a. OLD BUSINESS

i. Environmental Fair Update

Community Development Specialist Hannah Dunn gave an update on the Oakdale Eco Fair that will take place in conjunction with Arbor Day in April 2025.

Commissioner Doolittle made suggestions regarding groups to reach out to, including the Oakdale Garden Club, the Washington County Garden Club, and perhaps ISD 622 or one of the schools.

Commissioner Wilson noted that Oakdale Wellness 50+ could help with a bike repair clinic.

Commissioner Miller stated Bike MN has a program on bike safety, and vendors involved in energy conservation in homes would be good to invite. He stated Lavonne’s idea of having cloth bags to hand out could be offered at the Eco Fair.

Chair Gerding mentioned being mindful and managing the amount of vendor items being handed out at the fair. He also mentioned his support for it being a family-friendly event. Dunn mentioned looking into having a food truck at the event.

b. NEW BUSINESS

i. Oakdale Park System Plan

Dunn gave a presentation and update on the Oakdale Park System Plan.
Commissioner Wilson asked who the stakeholders are that will be part of the meetings. Dunn said that the Oakdale Athletic Association, Oakdale Wellness 50+, and the school district are some stakeholders identified to date.

Chair Gerding asked, regarding online engagement, how often and the manner in which feedback was being solicited from the public. Dunn has been working with the Communications Department to promote surveys through social media, in the Monday Morning Minute videos, by word of mouth, and in person at community events. The next push of engagement will include multi-lingual yard signs in the parks with links and QR codes bringing them to the website. The summer engagement events will have the same flyers they handed out at the markets with the engagement website QR code.

Commissioner Doolittle noted the response “parks do not provide the amenities I want to use” being the number one barrier mentioned, and asked if there was a place in the survey to add which amenities they do want. Although not available for public view, Dunn verified there is a place to add that information. Commissioner Doolittle reiterated that the two most noted improvements mentioned were a water feature and new playgrounds.

Dunn asked if anyone found anything surprising in the responses so far. Chair Gerding noted he saw nothing shocking, but wondered if there was a way to share the feedback received so far as a way to incent other people to take the survey. Dunn noted it is something to consider.

Dunn asked if there were any environmental initiatives or features that the Commission would like to see incorporated. In addressing the comment on water features, Chair Gerding asked how the park amenities align with City ordinances. Dunn explained the process and how concepts were brought to the Development Review Committee who reviewed them and made sure they were up to Code. Commissioner Wilson asked if the City could incorporate some solar lighting in parks. Commissioner Doolittle asked if the City could incorporate tree plantings in the parks that are mostly mowed turf, along with signage with environmental messages. Dunn stated there are opportunities to look for grants to return areas to pollinator habitat or rain gardens, or add more trees.

Commissioner Miller thought more communication about our parks would help address the survey comment of not knowing what is available – even featuring a different park every month and what amenities are there. Updating the City’s website to show the amenities up front like State Parks do is an option. Dunn mentioned the possibility of adding an interactive GIS link, and Chair Gerding agreed that way-finding is important as some parks are not marked and therefore not known.

Dunn asked for feedback on Tanners Lake Park as it has its own master plan. It is the City’s only park that has a shoreline. Commissioner Wilson mentioned the dock and suggested that the City invite an interpreter there once a month to talk about the lake and fishing. Commissioner Miller suggested it would be a good time to revisit the water quality data. Dunn mentioned that there may be a need for more rain gardens especially with the increased rain this year. Commissioner Doolittle would like to see more information posted about the lake and its history.
ii. Nomination and Election of New Commission Vice Chair

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WILSON TO NOMINATE KEITH MILLER FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MILLER, SECONDED BY CHAIR GERDING, TO NOMINATE TIM DOOLITTLE FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MILLER, SECONDED BY CHAIR GERDING, TO CLOSE THE NOMINATIONS OF VICE CHAIRPERSON.

Commissioners wrote down their votes for Vice Chairperson. Dunn announced the results, with Tim Doolittle being awarded the most votes for Vice Chairperson.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHAIR GERDING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MILLER, TO ELECT TIM DOOLITTLE FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR A PERIOD OF ONE CALENDAR YEAR.

4 AYES
0 NAYS

MOTION CARRIED

OTHER

i. Staff Liaison Update(s)

Dunn walked through the editorial calendar:
- July theme: Going Plastic Free
- August theme: Not yet determined. Water conservation was suggested by Commissioner Miller. He also would like to see staff go to schools to talk about this topic. Chair Gerding brought up the Washington County rain barrel program as a possibility.
- September theme: Electric vehicles

Dunn provided a number of Community Development updates:
- Monica Stiglich sent an email regarding Priority Two funding for the 3M settlement. The timeline is letter of intent screenings late in 2024; full RFP released spring of 2025; and applications due summer of 2025. Tanners Lake Park is a potential project site.
- GreenStep Cities sign - research is still ongoing with Public Works. If no sign is found, Dunn will look into the option of purchasing one.
- The Tree City USA designation through the Arbor Day Foundation – must meet four standards:
  1. Must have tree board or department
  2. Must have a public tree care ordinance
  3. Community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2 per capita
  4. Arbor Day observance and proclamation
There are two EMC applicants that will be interviewing with Council at an upcoming workshop.

ii. Commissioner Update(s)*

Commissioner Wilson announced that this is her last meeting, having served for six years. Commissioner Miller announced it was his last meeting as well, having served 20 years, 17 as Chair. Chair Gerding thanked them both for their tremendous service.

Chair Gerding provided an update on the Adopt-a-Drain program, as the Commission adopted three at City Hall and Walton Park. Dunn drafted a maintenance schedule that will be coming out soon to the Commission members.

iii. Council Liaison Update(s)*

Council Member Morcomb filled in for Mayor Zabel as Council Liaison. Council Member Morcomb thanked Commissioners Wilson and Miller for their service, as well as the EMC in general for their great work and input for the Council.

Council Member Morcomb gave updates on:
- Washington County rain barrels are almost sold out for 2024.
- The Acorn Award is open for nominations.
- Summerfest is almost here. Please attend the events.
- Regarding the Park System Plan, let the Council know if Commissioners come across grant opportunities.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the EMC will be Monday, August 19, 2024 in the City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DOOLITTLE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WILSON, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 17, 2024 REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAKDALE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AT 8:06 PM.

4 AYES
0 NAYS

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Dunn
Community Development Specialist