

Village of Bellaire

PLANNING COMMISSION

Commissioners: Dan Bennett, Butch Dewey, Bill Drollinger, Fred Harris, and Don Seman

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

September 27, 2017

5:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Drollinger called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call Attendance:**
 - Present:** Chairman Drollinger, Dan Bennett, Butch Dewey, Fred Harris, and Don Seman (5:07 p.m.)
 - Absent:** None
 - Staff Present:** Lori Luckett, Zoning Administrator
 - Also Present:** David Schulz, Eldon McPherson, Ken Stead, Colette Stanish, Amy Tate, Melinda Jones, Kevin Sayers, Lee Mueller, and Christine Crissman
3. **Work Session Item:**
 - a) **ReLeaf Community Tree Planting Presentation:** Kevin Sayers, administrator of the Urban and Community Forestry Program for the State of Michigan addressed the planning commission. He explained that his job functions to serve communities, non-profit organizations, homeowners throughout the state in promoting the benefits and needs for trees in urban and community areas. This job with this project is as a partner/facilitator to work with securing funds. Why trees matter? Particularly when dealing with storm water, water quality, and planting the right trees in the right area to maximize the benefits they provide to the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed. The objective of the session is to review outcomes of project, outline next steps, and address how we got to this point. What got it to this point? The project is funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The focus is on improving water quality and habitat in the Great Lakes with an emphasis on combating aquatic invasive species, reducing pollution and water runoff to watersheds. The project is focusing on five communities within the Great Lakes Bay Watershed and the need to improve the green infrastructure within those communities. This is an ongoing grant project; the model program involved the same groups in the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Federal funds are provided through the U.S. Forest Service grant program - landscape restoration. The program connects to state, local, and regional plans and priorities as they pertain to protection of the watershed. Partnering with the USDA Forest Service and the Michigan DNR is the Davey Resource Group for tree canopy analysis, ReLeaf Michigan for planting education and community outreach, and the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed. The goal is to educate communities on the importance of green infrastructure and demonstrate effective tree planting in order to improve water quality locally and in the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed. The goal is to facilitate tree planting of 50 trees by volunteers within local communities. The proper planting of trees fosters interception of sedimentation run off. Trees are the green infrastructure that appreciates and provides greater value over time. Trees are a wise investment for the environment, the economy, and community health. 100 trees provide the cooling effect of 1000 air conditioners. 100 mature trees can catch 200,000 gallons of rainwater each year. Green infrastructure is worth the time and investment.

Christine Crissman, Executive Director of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center spoke next. She explained that a “watershed” is all of the area surrounding a body of water where anything that falls on that land goes to a common water body. The Grand Traverse Bay Watershed is about 1000 square miles and extends from the tip to Northport, to Kingsley, Kalkaska, and the entire Chain of Lakes. 132 miles of shoreline is in the watershed. The average depth is 180 feet; the deepest point is 600 feet. 60% of the water

in the watershed comes through the Elk River Chain of Lakes; 30% from the Boardman River; and 10% from smaller tributaries. There are 9 sub watersheds. The Elk River Chain of Lakes is the largest. Smaller include Mitchell Creek and Yuba Creek. The center is the author of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Plan. The plan is 12 years old but still serves as a guide to identify priority and critical areas to focus on to improve water quality. Updated plans will be focusing on the sub watersheds and smaller tributaries to narrow the focus. Two biggest threats to water quality are sediments and nutrients, largely through storm water. Approximately 10 years ago, the watershed decided to determine the value of trees in the watershed and conducted a canopy assessment. Between 2001 and 2009, a little over 4000 acres of tree cover was lost. Trees manage storm water through the leaves intercepting rainwater and uptake through roots. Uptake includes water, nutrients, and pollutants. More impervious surfaces equals more run-off. Green infrastructure is more cost effective in helping with storm water management. Comparisons are made with cost of maintaining green infrastructure compared with maintaining gray infrastructure. Trees also improve air quality and help provide shade for cooling. In terms of stream erosion, tree roots help stabilize soil.

Lee Mueller – Davey Resource Group explained the technical aspect of the community tree canopy assessment. Urban tree canopy is essentially an umbrella. In Michigan and throughout the mid-west, we built our cities in forests. Those ecosystems still exist within our communities. While they may not function fully as in nature, they still exist. Generally, we like trees and want them in our communities. Some communities may have unbalanced tree canopies. Measurement of tree canopy may be done for zoning, planning, community policies, and grant opportunities. He reviewed the data for the Village of Bellaire. There are obvious areas of tree canopy and pavement. The data was entered into computer software that identified 5 categories - trees, other vegetation, pavement, bare soil and water. A land cover map was generated of the Village - 13% of impervious surface in the business core; 54% tree canopy; 26% other vegetation; 1% bare surface; and 6% water. Tree canopy and impervious surfaces were the focus of this study. They also looked at right-of-way tree canopy because it is an area within village control. There may be future tree planting opportunities within the right-of-way, including tree pits, a 4' x 4' area in the sidewalk where trees are planted. He reviewed TreeBenefits.org to review and calculate the benefit of trees and quantify the value of trees. The village receives a \$25 per year benefit as far as carbon monoxide removal. Ozone the community forest takes in 31,500 pounds of nitrogen, equal to \$2,204 per year. Storm water avoided - 9,856,389 gallons; carbon – 3207 tons. Trees slow down the rate storm water goes into the watershed. Chairman Drollinger asked about the cost of maintenance and removal of the trees. Mr. Mueller indicated that they had not done a cost-benefit analysis for the village. He briefly reviewed the impact of tree removal within the airport approach. He noted that the tree canopy removal in the airport approach had been offset over the years by tree growth in other areas. Mr. Mueller provided recommendations of the trees that would be low growing in height for planting consideration in airport approach: Hedge Maple, Serviceberry; European/American Hornbeam; Redbud; Kousa Dogwood, Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn; Crabapple and Japanese Tree Lilac. The last component was a prioritized planting map. The goal is to provide the community with the tools to make informed decisions, not to tell what has to be planted and where. Increasing tree canopy is a matter of preserving existing trees and re-planting those that have been removed. President Schulz explained the Sugar Maple planting, the removal due to disease, and the need to replant. Questions were asked about the recommended trees and the use of pine trees. The report is available at GTBayCanopy.weebly.com. It will be linked to the watershed and ReLeaf Michigan websites. The interactive map is available at: gis.davey.com/gtbay. He reviewed the community map and demonstrated how to turn on the layers and zoom to look at different levels. Information will be provided for GIS use as well.

Melinda Jones, Executive Director of ReLeaf Michigan, addressed the outreach and education component of this grant project. It is important to keep updated on the diseases that are currently affecting the trees. She explained that the tree planting is scheduled. 50 trees will be planted between Richardi Park and Craven Park. Volunteer tree planting – site selection; soil analysis to assure selected trees will thrive; “right

tree right place” to avoid overhead utilities; logistics site visit. Trees are 1 1/2” caliper. They will be in containers. Holes will be dug in advance of the planting on October 21st. Holes are 36” x 24”. Water source must be available at day of planting. Mulch will be available. Volunteers are asked to gather at 8:45 a.m. at Richardi Park. There will refreshments and a brief ceremony followed by a tree planting demonstration. Those who participate will learn the proper way to plant a tree and will hopefully take on and plant privately. Generally, 3 people are assigned per tree. Planting will be finished by 1:00 p.m. People love the experience because they make a tangible difference. Saturday, October 21, 2017 8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please sign up with the village clerk. This is an opportunity for community service hours, boy scouts, FFA, sports teams, families. All are welcome to help. Required tools include shovels, garden rakes, 5-gallon buckets for water, pocketknives. Closed toe shoes work best. People should come prepared to get dirty. Planting is done rain or shine unless there is lightening. If there are sufficient volunteers planting is done on schedule. She thanked the members for convening a special meeting and thought the community story map would be very informative.

Commissioner Dewey asked about the dredging of Craven Pond and effect on Chain of Lakes. Christine Crissman encouraged a management study to determine the nature of the sediment. Commissioner Harris spoke about his experience with sediment building up and the effect on fishing activities. Ms. Crissman spoke briefly about the court-regulated water levels on the upper chain. Commissioner Bennett asked about the TCE plume. Ms. Crissman explained that it was a concern for drinking water in the affected areas. As soon as the TCE touches surface water, it dissipates. Commissioner Harris asked about Tamaracks.

4. Adjournment: Work session adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Minutes compiled by:
Lori Luckett, Zoning Administrator & Recording Secretary
Minutes are subject to approval.

Approved: _____
William Drollinger, Chairman

Date: _____