

UPDC
Environment & Parks and Neighborhood Involvement
Committee Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2022

Chair: Greg Gridley

Committee Attendance: Jerry Clendenin, Barb Deming, Kirsten Fryer, Jenny Keyser

Staff: Abdulrahman Wako, Executive Director, Union Park District Council Leah
Timberlake Sullivan, Program Director

Guests: Dave Birkemeier, President of Co-Operative Plating Company

Ed Wakefield, Senior Engineer with Co-Operative Plating

Don Brabreck, a Merriam Park resident

Jason McNalley, a Merriam Park resident.

Assign Note Taker

Jerry Clendenin will take notes and type minutes.

Approval of Agenda

An agenda was sent out in advance of the meeting.

We approved the revised agenda.

Welcome/Introductions

Don Brabreck and Jason McNalley both live close to the Co-Operative Plating plant.

Discussion of Emissions Permit Renewal for Co-operative Plating

Wako suggested that we begin recording the meeting. The members present agreed. Most of the May 17 meeting was recorded on Zoom.

Co-operative Plating Company has an industrial plant that is located at 1605 Iglehart Avenue, between Snelling Avenue and the Canadian Pacific rail tracks.

Dave Birkemeier, President of Co-Operative Plating Company, said the company is in the final stages of working to get a renewed Air Emission Permit issued by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

The MPCA has put together a draft for the new Air Emission Permit. The MPCA is working on revising the draft.

Dave Birkemeier expects that the draft Air Emission Permit will be available for public review and public comment in July.

Negative Air Pressure

Ed Wakefield, Senior Engineer, said that a major improvement for controlling air emissions is a system to maintain negative air pressure inside the plant.

Co-operative Plating has installed a second large fan on the roof. The fans blow contaminated air up and into the atmosphere. The system is designed so that all of the air leaving the plant exits through the roof fans. The system is intended to get better control of emissions.

The plant has several pressure measurement devices. When doors open or close, pressure in the building will change. The pressure measurement devices send signals to fans on the roof. The fans speed up or slow down as necessary to maintain constant negative pressure.

The MPCA website says that Particulate Matter, and Particulate Matter less than 10 microns are pollutants of concern at Co-Operative Plating. Dave Birkemeier said that the system does not filter small particles from the air. The system is designed to blow small particles up and away from the plant. It is designed to disperse small particles and other contaminants so that pollutants are concentrated at a level for reduced risk.

Monitoring

Ed Wakefield said that the MPCA requires monitoring of air leaving the plant. The measurements are to determine if the air leaving the plant has less pollution than allowed by the MPCA Air Emission Permit

He said that Co-operative Plating hires an independent third-party company to monitor emissions. The third party has to be approved by the U S Environmental Protection Agency.

Jenny Keyser asked about monitoring results. How are results from monitoring released to the public?

Ed Wakefield said that he is not sure how the monitoring results will be released to the public. He will have to ask the MPCA.

However, he said that the MPCA will make a public announcement if Co-operative Plating emissions are out of compliance with MPCA rules.

PFAS Forever Chemicals

Jenny Keyser wanted to know what Co-operative Plating is doing to control PFAS or “forever chemicals.”

Ed Wakefield said that Co-Operative Plating does not use PFAS chemicals. He said that PFAS chemicals are used in the plating industry for applying “hard chrome.”

Co-operative Plating does provide hard chrome plating.

Dave Birkemeier said that the MPCA requires many companies to test for PFAS chemicals. Co-Operative Plating was put on the list of companies where testing is required, even though Co-operative Plating does not use PFAS chemicals.

Dave Birkemeier also said that Co-operative Plating does not use trichlorethylene, another chemical that may cause health problems.

Possible Expansion of Co-Operative Plating

Dave Birkemeier said that Co-Operative Plating is considering expanding the plant. The company has been discussing possible expansion with the City of Saint Paul.

The company's plan is to add from 5,000 to 6,000 square feet. If the City approves the expansion, Co-operative Plating will tear down a building now used for cremation. It is on Carroll Avenue.

The additional land will be used for parking. The company will add landscape improvements.

Dave Birkemeier said that the company Intends to contribute toward improving the overall parking in situation in neighborhood.

Keeping watch for a draft permit

Wako asked about the next steps in the process of that the MPCA will follow to issue a permit.

Dave Birkemeier repeated that the MPCA will make a draft Air Emission Permit available for public review and comment. He said that the MPCA will post a public notice and issue a press release when the draft permit is available. We can also watch the MPCA website for an announcement for the draft permit.

Jerry Clendenin said that Union Park District Council should encourage people in the neighborhood to review and comment on the draft permit. We need a program to distribute flyers or find some other method to encourage public comments.

Outreach Plan and Progress Update for Micro-grants

The micro-grants provide funds for small projects that bring residents together through activities in their community. Other goals for the micro-grant program are described on the UPDC website.

May 15 was the due date of for the first round of applications. Proposals submitted after May 15 will be approved on a “rolling basis.” For 2022 the last day to submit request for micro-grants is September 1.

Four applications for grants were received by the first-round date of May 15. These first four requests will receive priority consideration for funding.

Reviewers for the Microgrants

Ellen Fee, Barb Deming, Kirsten Fryer, and Jenny Keyser volunteered to review the applications for Micro-grants. Leah Timberlake Sullivan will work with them. Wako will send Leah documents with criteria for evaluating the grant proposals. He will also send instructions on the review procedure.

Increase in Micro-grant Budget

The total budget for the Micro-grant program has been set at \$1,500. Wako suggested that we increase the budget to \$1,600. The maximum amount for an individual project is \$400. When we have four grant requests for \$400 each, then our budget of \$1,500 is \$100 short of funding the four projects.

Jenny Keyser made a motion to increase the budget to \$1,600. Barb Deming seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Discussion of a Sign for the No-Mow Area of Merriam Park

Barb Deming presented suggested text for a sign:

No-Mow Grass area

Volunteers maintain this area of naturally growing tall grass and oak trees. The grass is a blend of cool-season fescue grasses that require very little water, due to a large dense root system that also serves to inhibit weed growth. Not mowing this section of the park cuts down on noise and air pollution, reduces stress on mature oak trees, and allows new oak seedlings to grow naturally.

To volunteer, contact the Union Park District Council at
(computer address)

Jerry Clendenin said that he likes the text for the sign. The sign makes important points about the environmental benefits from the No-Mow Area.

We discussed three different types of support for the sign.

Jerry Clendenin presented a drawing for a sign. Unfortunately, the computer messed up his computerized drawing.

His design is for a sign to be attached to the hand railing near the steps that go up the hill at Merriam Park. He explained that the sign requires two pieces of wood and two bolts.

Wako suggested the type of sign that is placed at rain gardens.

A third idea is a sign supported by a steel stake.

Wako said that he will meet with Andy Rodriguez. They will discuss what type of sign the Parks and Recreation Department wants. Wako will report back to the committee.

Planning for No-Mow Area Maintenance

We discussed possible dates to do maintenance work on the No-Mow Area for the summer of 2022. Volunteers will pull out weeds at the maintenance event. Barb Deming said that we should avoid times when weeds are dropping seeds.

We set a tentative date of July 16, Saturday.

We also discussed how we might use flyers to get people who live near Merriam Park to come and work on the event.

We also considered possible dates for a maintenance event for the fall of 2022. Barb Deming said that we should avoid September 18, the date for Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam. We set a very tentative date as the last Saturday which is September 24, 2022.

For the year 2023 we also need a plan for maintenance. Barb Deming requested that we put maintenance planning on the agenda for the June meeting.

Budgets for ICPB&J and the Desnoyer Park Picnic and a Midway Peace Park Event

The Committee discussed funding for three events:

- Wako requested \$4,000 for the 2022 Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam.
- Greg Gridley would like \$3,000 for the Desnoyer Park Picnic.
- Wako suggested a budget of \$3,000 for an ice cream social event at Midway Peace Park.

Barb Deming said the Desnoyer Park Picnic is a good use for our funds. Many people turn out for the picnic.

Jenny Keyser noted an important resource for the Midway Peace Park event. She said that there is a local man with an ice cream truck. He is an excellent vendor.

She also noted that people who live south of I-94 came to the clean up event at Midway Peace Park. The clean up was in April. The same people may be interested in the ice cream social.

Leah Timberlake Sullivan suggested making the Midway Peace Park ice cream social an annual event.

How Funds are Allocated

Wako said that the funds for all three events can come from the Cell Tower Fund. Rents from the cell tower in Merriam Park provide about \$17,000 per year. Any part of the \$17,000 that we don't spend in the year goes back to the City of Saint Paul. We should use the funds or lose the funds.

Greg Gridley will fill out an application for Cell Tower funds for the Desnoyer Picnic. Wako will put together an application for funds for Ice Cream Peanut Butter & Jam and an application for the Midway Peace Park ice cream social.

The spending for all three events must be approved by the Union Park District Council Board. All three applications will be presented for approval at the June UPDC Board meeting.

Each of the three funding requests will be evaluated using the Environment & Parks Committee Cell Tower Funds Scorecard. The UPDC Board will have to consider the scores before approving any of the events.

Barb Deming suggested that we review the process for allocating cell tower funds. She suggested adding a review of the funding process at the June meeting.

Before the June meeting, Wako will send to each committee member the electronic version of Park Improvement Fund Application and the Environment & Parks Committee Cell Tower Funds Scorecard.

Motion to Adjourn

Barb Deming made a motion to adjourn. Kirsten Fryer seconded. The motion passed unanimously. We adjourned at 8:30 p.m.