Como Woods Outdoor Classroom Advisory committee

MINUTES

Monday, March 29, 2010

Attemdees: Deb Robinson, Sally Worku, Susan Jane Cheney, Teri Heyer, Kelley Dinsmore, Alison Bunge, Joan McKearnan, Ruth McDonald, Trudy Fagre (guest)

1. **Launch of our new website!!!!**

http://comowoodland.org/

IMPORTANT: steering committee members input will be needed to keep the website fresh and provide multiple voices (right now it is mainly Deb’s voice). When providing materials for posting to Jennifer remember to:

1. Have it post ready, it is not Jennifer’s responsibility to do content editing.
2. Tell Jennifer exactly where it goes on the website.
3. If the material has a end date, tell Jennifer when it needs to be removed.

Comment: it would be good to have an annual “spring cleaning” of the website to go through and make sure materials are not too dated.

Calendar/scheduling-the CWOC SC can put up events that we know about however it is up to Park and Rec (now Meghan, later probably volunteer person) to post events that they know about. Later the “school liason” would post visits from their school. This person needs to have a password. What else might go up besides school visits? MN Cons. Corps doing work, forestry crew work.

ACTION-Teri contact Meghan to remind her about scheduling.

There needs to be more items in the event section-there was a lot from the old website.

ACTON-Deb follow up with Jennifer.

QUESTION-from Meghan-are there SC members that are willing to assist with volunteer groups that may want to do work in the woodland? This is possible.

ACTION-Teri send follow up email to committee telling interested members to contact Meghan.

Comment-something for the future- a phenology and sightings sections.

1. **Status of LCCMR grant-feedback from committee meeting and bill discussion**

*Bill tracking, Response to educational standards, Letter writing*.

Deb has been tracking LCCMR bill as it moves through House and Senate.

**\*March 15**, On the House floor, Rep. McNamara (R) tried to amend LCCMR bill and take away all CWOC recommended funding (and 3 other proposals) to reallocate those funds for EAB tree removal on private land – failed but some DFLers voted for it. Deb attended Senate Finance Committee hearingon **\*March 22.** Sen. Anderson offered Amendment A4, which changed the name of our project back to **“Get outside – Urban Woodland for City Kids”** – passed. There were questions from Sen. Gen Olson (R) about all LCCMR Educational proposals: Do they meet School Scientific Standards and testing outcomes? Sen. Anderson told the Finace Committee that CWOC has trained “100s of teachers.” Sen. Anderson suggested that we write letters to Senators (DFLers from north district mostly I think) that may be tempted to amend LCCMR Bill when it reaches the Senate Floor. *“We are working on our strategy for the senate floor. I think a good message for letters to send to senators: please pass the Lccmr bill with NO amendments, respect the process and the work of the commission.” Ellen*

ACTION-steering committee members write letters to Senators, see sign-up sheet, and Deb will send out a follow up email with assignments and addresses.

1. **Spring events in the woodland and Como Park:**

Park Clean up: Sat. April 10 from 9-11. NOTE-Deb will be receiving an outstanding volunteer award from the City at the 8:30 am opening remarks at the Lakeside pavilion. Interested SC members meet there and we will get supplies to take to the woods. Deb looked over the area and trash is light, mainly adjacent to the streets, estimate need 6 volunteers.

Como Sr. High Spring field day-Friday, May 21. If you are interested in being a mentor to the students contact Jessica Ley (Jessica.ley@spps.org).

Other events of note:

Como Park Transportation Plan open house: April 14 from 6-8pm, Como Conservatory visitors center, 2nd floor. For more information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/comoparktip>

Arbor Month tree planting in Como Park, Sat. May 1 9-11am. About 200 native trees will be planted along Hamline where buckthorn has been removed. To sign up go to:

<http://www.stpaul.gov/index.asp?NID=1043>

1. **Fiscal agent discussion:**
* Como Friends—no go, their focus in on the Campus complex at this time
* Belwin Conservancy-the selling is that the classroom would be considered a “satellite EE site”-Josh will look into this-don’t know.
* MN Assoc. for EE-interested, see below.
* EcoEduation-interested on a case by case basis.
* Local branch of the Sierra Club-no one followed up.
* Audubon-OK with small grants.
* St. Paul Parks Conservancy-focus right now on Lilydale but it still is a possibility, may need to work with Mike Hamm who is on the board.

Comments from SPPR-Mike Hamm indicated that they can received state or federal funds but NOT funds from foundations.

MAEE: The board is willing to consider filling this role for your group on a case-by-case / grant-by-grant basis.

We feel that being a fiscal agent makes sense for us when: 1) The grant project fits within our mission to support and advance EE in Minnesota, 2) The relationship and roles for both paries are clearly defined in writing, 3) the role of MAEE is within our capacity, 4) we have at least a month or so to discuss the project/relationship before any grant applications are due, and 5) the MAEE benefits from the relationship financially.

1. **Kilmer fireplace rededication update**

**\*Feb. 24**, Sharon and Deb met to work on common grant application and Minn. Regional Arts Council grant proposal (for Poet-tree Workshops). Sharon asked **SPAS to serve as fiscal sponsor** for (Poet-tree Workshop) Target Educational grant proposal; they agreed. On \***March 1**, the Target guidelines released and did not fit our immediate grant needs (Target was for $2000 grant only).

\***March 6,** Deb had contacted Bryan and then Councilman Helgen about City 1% Public Arts funding for the Poet-tree Workshops. Helgen contacted Dir. Hahm who contacted me 3-6. He said that so far 1% Arts funding has only been used for capital projects (although their online guidelines say poetry would be eligible). Sent Dir. Hahm and Parks Resource Manager, Cy Kosel, an outline of our plans for the Rededication, and need for funds to pay poet and printing.

**Dir. Mike Hahm said that Parks & Rec could be Fiscal Sponsor for MRAC grant.** Thought that perhaps Parks & Rec could help with printing. **\*March 9**, Deb attended Minnesota Regional Arts Council – **“Arts Activities” Workshop** 3 to 5pm. Our Poet-tree Workshop not eligible because workshop is scheduled to take place in a school during school hours. This is end of MRAC grant cycle. However, next cycle, we may be eligible for a “Community Arts” or “Arts Learning” grant – (maybe room to tailor a future an Arts & Culture project using the website for history and community context info for teachers, and publishing future student arts & culture work online). **\*March 18**, Sharon and I met to discuss a new, less time consuming funding course to pay for the already planned Poet-tree workshops in Como Park Elementary. **Matching fund** was the preferred choice. **\*March 21**, Met with Chris Bedford, chair of D. 10 Fund Development Committee, to ask if D.10 would set up a Matching Fund for our Poet-tree Workshops. Sharon and I will match every dollar donated by Advisors and public. **\*March 18**, Brian Hoffman, Department of Anthropology, Hamline University, wrote me: *“I recently found the website on the Como Woodland classroom. I am very interested in this project and would like to know more about its current status. I am a resident of the Como neighborhood (Chelsea/Hoyt) and I teach archaeology at Hamline University. I have always been fascinated with Como Park's history (and St. Paul neighborhood histories). Part of my research interests include a* ***community archaeology project*** *in the Hamline neighborhood. I think there may be some interesting possibilities to combine what I do with your Como Woodland classroom. In any case, I am interested in learning more about your program and other planned development for the Como Park. I'd appreciate any information you can provide.”* **\*March 19**, Bryan Murphy wrote Deb: *“At one time, I thought you said you had an 'historic' photo of the back side of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace. [edit] I am* ***trying to finish the bid documents*** *and just want to make sure I have everything in line.*”

NOTE: Deb and Sharon are still struggling to find funding for the poet in residence project at 2 schools (Chelsea and Como Elementary), cost is $600 for 2 schools. They are considering donating some funding to D10 with the idea that supporters will match this. Look for more information on this as it progresses.

1. Report back from education subcommittee discussion on School Forest, Teacher training, and Teaching aid materials.
* Pursuing School Forest with Como Sr. as the primary school, with more can be added later.
* Contacts with the St. Paul School Board have indicated that there are two ways to get a resolution passed (this is required as part of the School Forest application)—either submit a written resolution or do a presentation. Group felt that a presentation would be best and even include other schools besides Como Sr. School Board has indicated that August would be a good time for this to happen.
* At this meeting the group asked Kelley for a recommendation on how to proceed with the teaching materials. Kelley walked the site and felt that the post are a great idea (note don’t have to start with 50, can start smaller and add more later.) Materials would point out interesting natural or cultural features at the post or what would make sense to focus on with students. The idea is that teachers would also be providing feedback as to what they do at a particular post.