

PPA Environment Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 13th, 2022
6:30 - 8 pm

Present: Rick McCormick, Mary Britton, Kathleen Davis, Steve Zimmer, Lydia McEnerney, Jean Bachman, Vera Marshall, Sam Nothnegal, Schaneen Maynie

Fall Cleanup Status: Lydia

Lydia explained what tasks are included in managing the fall cleanup. She reported that the person who had expressed interest is no longer available. No other person stepped up to volunteer so the event will not occur. Lydia will do a blurb for PPA newsletter explaining its demise.

Glendale Townhomes -gardening Mary

Schaneen, a Glendale resident, is in charge of the landscaping in Glendale. She started by doing gardening and neighborhood cleanup and was hired by Luxton to be the Glendale landscaper. She has been working to get water bags and lightweight hoses to water newly planted trees. The next Wednesday, September 21, there will be a produce give away and also Schaneen will offer hostas and lilies. When asked what Glendale needs in terms of gardening, Schaneen replied anything landscape oriented. Donations of plants help as well as seeds. She is working to persuade her neighbors to plant gardens in their backyards. Vera and Lydia agreed to attend the Wednesday event and ask for feedback from the community regarding what gardening assistance or equipment community members would like from the committee. Possibilities include basic gardening kits (water can, gloves, rake?), garden tools lending library, plant giveaway in spring, and fruit trees and bushes for common areas or backyards.

Raingardens or Pollinator Gardens in Stadium Village in 2023 Mary/Sam

Sam presented information on two possible locations for rain gardens or pollinator gardens in Stadium Village at 1015 Essex. Permission of the owners of the multi unit property would be needed. Sam believes the area is a food desert for pollinators and would like to provide more habitat. Mary explained that Metro Blooms provides grants for either rain gardens or pollinator gardens and that if someone took on this project, they would need to reach out to Metro Blooms. Mary pointed out this would be an excellent volunteer opportunity and they would be working with Sam.

Trees in Prospect Park Mary

Mary would like to see more trees planted in Prospect Park and wants to encourage the city to plant more. Mary showed the committee the mapping tool at

<https://metrotransitm.nshinyapps.io/growing-shade/> that maps out the existing tree canopy in Minneapolis. Based on the map, she pointed out that the areas west of 27th and north of University need more trees.

Mary reported that several members of the committee planted three maples at the University Ave post office. Also the committee purchased equipment to make watering the trees planted in Glendale easier. (hoses and water bags).

She also suggested that the University could be a partner in planting gardens and trees in the area west of 27th. This would be an excellent volunteer opportunity if anyone on the committee wants to take it on. Finally she suggested that next year the committee should reach out to Venture Academy for volunteers to assist in planting gardens and trees. Several people made a plea to everyone who has trees planted on the boulevards to please water the trees.

25% by 2025 Initiative - Next Steps Mary

Mary proposes that the 25% by 2025 initiative target the 40% of homes that use the most gas. According to CenterPoint, 875 houses and 2-4 unit housing in Prospect Park fall into this category and 350 of the homes are in the highest bracket of gas bills in the state. (chart in agenda). Also based on recent TISH findings, 20% of these houses have no wall insulation.

The question raised is how to reach the owners of these homes to persuade them to make changes. One suggestion from the group was to present a workshop on how to read the new gas meters. Lydia would like to see a workshop on reading bills from Centerpoint. Mary raised the question how to make the case that insulating the home is cost effective. It was generally agreed that publicizing the availability of funding is vital because in the end, people will make the changes if they can see future financial savings. So the committee could use examples from recent energy audits results, could discuss how long it takes to pay off loans vs the financial benefit of the changes, how to get 0% financing, and the positive impact of upgrades on resale value. Also Mary suggested that presentations on these issues could be given to PPA Board and Committees, Garden Club, SE Senior workshops, churches, book clubs and other neighborhood groups. Mary asked folks to consider these volunteer opportunities for the coming year.