

**Environmental Sustainability Committee**  
**Wednesday, June 28 2017**  
**6pm**  
**Black Forest Inn**

**Attendees:** Nicolle VanWie, Willow Kreibich, Dave LaViolette, Greg Schmidt, Christine Popowski, Brian Foster, Jo Ann Musumeci, Laryssa Stolarskyj, Erica Christ

**Staff:** Paul Shanafelt, Ivy Girdwood

- **Stormwater Mgmt - Erica Christ, Black Forest Inn**
  - A couple years ago Metro Blooms received a grant to work on storm water remediation on commercial properties. At this time, the city had required commercial buildings to disconnect from storm water routes. Grant was used to find alternative solutions.
  - Erica Christ consulted Metro Blooms and asked for funding to create rain water routes on smaller properties (such as Black Forest Inn)
  - 50% of cost was covered by Hennepin County grant
  - The rest of the cost was covered by the Whittier Alliance, Metro Blooms, and another small company/artist
  - Total cost approximately \$1200 (exceeded original estimated cost of \$700)
  - Current setup is decorative and equipped for approximately ¾ inch of rainfall (average rainfall in Minneapolis)
  - Since implementation at Black Forest, several issues with pile up, overflow due to above average rainfalls, and vandalism
  - However repairs have been made and it is now fully functional
  - Structure includes dry wells which “re-charge” groundwater and soil underground
  - Keep litter and trash from entering sewers

- Largely self-filtering (keeps rust and other particulates from entering ground and groundwater)
  - City no longer allows direct flow into sewer system. New, indirect system slows down water flow from rain which makes overflow unlikely
  - Erica Christ acknowledges increasingly frequent intense storms due to climate change and suggests future storm water systems be built with this trend in consideration
  - Potential additional storm water structures could be made on Black Forest
  - Current storm water structure most likely prevented the eventual destruction of Black Forest building
  - Rain garden on Black Forest property is around 5 years old with approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  surviving original plants
  - Intersection of 22nd and Garfield identified as a frequently flooding area that could use a similar project
- **Neighborhood Projects - Willow Kreibich**
    - Neighborhood project ideas geared towards engaging more of the community in a hands-on way
    - "Whittier Weeders": create a group of people who are willing and have the resources to weed public and private garden areas in the neighborhood. Would include educating neighborhoods on what plants are considered weeds. Concerns include coordinating with neighbors, creating a friendly narrative to suggest garden improvement, identifying problem areas, and recruiting a capable and willing group
    - Suggestion: working with Soo Line gardens and garden experts

- Suggestion: made of beginning with small public spaces
- Suggestion: made of creating some sort of garden owner-gardener agreement ensuring that the group is not seen as “free yard work”
- Suggestions: made of promoting project through yard signs and at Whittier Farmers Market or National Night Out
- Next steps: solidifying how the project would be carried out and what its purpose should be, spreading awareness of project in neighborhood, forming a narrative for initiating conversation with neighbors who may need help with their gardens, and recruiting interested volunteers to participate
- Abandoned clothing at Whittier Park: large amounts of clothing are being left at Whittier Park to be thrown away.
- More clothing left behind during school year than summer
- Clothing must be washed before it can be donated
- Potentially these clothes could be used for a clothing swap
- Volunteers could be used to wash clothes to be donated
- Clothes could be handed out at Whittier Alliance’s booth at farmer’s market
- Next steps: coordinating clothing pickup from park, find volunteers to wash clothing
- Rain gardens and Master water stewards in Whittier: educational opportunity, hoping to continue raingarden project from last year
- CERTS: “solar power hour” hosted on last Wednesday of July at Insight Brewing (4-5pm)
- Solar energy workshop
- Falls on same day as ESC

- ESC could coordinate attending as a group if there is demonstrated interest
- More information is available on Whittier Alliance facebook
- **Group Updates & Announcements**
  - Greenway Coalition Glow July 29th 7-12pm
  - Kids and adult activities available
  - Artist deadline is 6/29
  - Big Ideas Grant deadline July 14th (information is on Whittier Alliance website)

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ivy Girdwood

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 26