



## Minutes for the Community Meeting

Tuesday, April 23, 2024, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Arlington Hills Recreation Center, 1200 Payne Avenue

**Welcome:** Introductions and Review of the Agenda

6:05 pm

### Attendance

**Board Members:** Janey Atchison, Reier Erickson, Seanne Thomas, Lynette Harris, Damian Schaab, Marci Exsted, Rebecca Nelson, Sidney Stuart, Jessica Haley, Justine LaCroix-Martin, Emma De Vera, May yer Thao, Ramona Banks, Patricia Enstad, Julia Wilcox

**PPCC Staff:** Jack Byers (Executive Director), Robin Horkey (Outreach & Administrative Assistant)

**Community Members:** Kevin Brawer, Eric Salinas, Regina Rippel, JLor, Melissa Finnegan, Caty Royce, Liz Curran, Cheryl Peterson, Jose Luis Villasenor, Carley Noyce, Christian Noyce, Athena Hollins, Anne Kakousk, Nick Voss, Amanda Musachio, John Slade, John Stromenger, Breanna Ellison, David Jones, Dan Cronquist, Nate & Pam Postma, Ian & Jess Hounney, Joe Larson, David Schmidt, Whitney Barkley, Michel Taylor, Patrick Connelly, Matt Andery, Bob Ryan, Diane Nauman, Terry Nauman, Rachel Rivard, Jacquelyn Freund, Romi Slowiak, Justene Davis, Megan Myers, Rae Eden Frank, Anne DeJoy, Jeanne Surdo, Martha Boyd, Cheniqua Johnson, Haley Spann, Yvonne Cournoyer, Russ Stark, Mary Foster, Ky'Mari Love, Matthew Kudwe, Kearney Kirby, Chelsea Dearmond, Tia Williams, Telsha Stosle, Tou Saik Lee, Dominique D.C., Garrett, Wanda Classon, Jan B, Celena Davis, Melissa Lorentz, Lauren Dees-Erickson, Gabby Menomin, Vince Wisniewski, Karen Aldrich, Winona Yang, Mai Chong Xiong, Kevin Beralaun, Stephanie Harr, Liz Boyer, Nura Ahmed, Melanie Johnson, Liz Lee, Madison Bailey, Ruben Moore

**Speakers:** Mat Grasky & Chris (Eastside Skatepark Taskforce), Alex Lawton (Lawton Industries)

1. "Get Outta the Gully"/Purple Line Pop-Up Party: We encourage attendees to sign petitions of support before, during or after the meeting. And thank you to our organizing partners at [MoveMN](#), ESABA, D2, D4, and Micah! (Jack Byers, ED)

- Announcement about Geothermal in the Heights - St. Paul 350 event!

### **Business items: 6:10 pm**

2. Approval of minutes from the March 2024 meeting (Marci Exsted, Secretary)
  - May yer motioned, Justine seconded, passed unanimously.
3. Financial Reports for March 2024 (Janey Atchison, Treasurer)
  - Patricia motioned, Sidney seconded, passed unanimously.
4. Annual Meeting Business: Filing of IRS form 990 – Annual statement for non-profits for 2023 (Janey Atchison, Treasurer)
  - Jessica motioned, Seanne seconded, passed unanimously.
5. Annual Meeting Business: Resolution to Approve the MN Attorney General's Annual Report for 2023 (Janey Atchison, Treasurer)
  - Jessica motioned, Seanne seconded, passed unanimously.

6. Grant Acceptance and Thank you: 3M Systems Change Grant (in partnership with D2-Greater Eastside District Council and D4-North End Neighborhood Association)

- Jack - brought grant forward to the board for potential discussion & approval.
- Emma motioned, Lynette seconded, passed unanimously.

### **The Payne-Phalen District Plan: 6:20 pm**

7. Eastside Skate Park Taskforce: Update and progress report: Mat Graske and Chris

- Skatepark activists trying to get a skate park built on the Eastside, will be in Heritage park. Will have other things besides infrastructure for skating. Approved for up to 25,000 feet.
- They have a Facebook page, a survey, plus yard signs w/a QR code for a survey about the park. They need to independently fundraise - any ideas are welcome. After financing - St. Paul Parks & Rec will take over & the taskforce folks will help w/programming. Working on grant through DEED. Park budget is currently around \$1 million.

### **Community Discussion: 6:30 pm**

8. Northern Iron and Machine: Alex Lawton, CEO Lawton Industries, Du Pere, WI  
(owner of Northern Iron and Machine)

- How will Northern Iron achieve compliance?
  - Alex - first wave will be fencing, signage about the foundry, lead testing of materials, different door & window policies. Changes to facility - updated equipment, fixed equipment. Will talk about where they need to be at a production level. Hoping to see updated permitted business operations by the Fall.
  - [does new equipment include remediation + what do changes in hours of operation look like?] Alex - talked about improvements alongside MPCA review. Hours of operation - still figuring this out, will update about whether that's fewer hours/day or /week. Will update by May 22 but keep updates ongoing.
  - [changes to products?] Alex - always willing to look at different products, willing to alter the business within reason. Don't need lead to make the products they make, typically comes from scrap that is melted down to be remade into a part/object.
- What is Lawton Standard's view of the impact of your emissions on our communities and community health?
  - Alex - need to understand more about the community & what health issues might be, what the community might need. [Jessica clarified that she's asking about the air pollution.] Alex - as facts get uncovered, making sure the operations are structured so there aren't issues for the community & then being open to suggestions beyond that about how the business can support community.
  - Lynette - talked about launching community outreach & engagement w/in 10 days to communicate proactive measures. Also, what is the timeline for lead testing?
  - Alex - an initial monitor is hooked up now, unsure if it's operational [it's MPCA's].
  - Courtney from MPCA - it is operational. That monitor's results can be found through Purple Air monitor # 0890. Two monitors - one for particulate matter and one for lead. MPCA is interested in community engagement, reached out to Dept of Health at Ramsey County. Community mtg on May 22nd.
  - Vertical Endeavor's president - monitors are under his lease control. Station hooked up to their signage. One station is on West end, the other looks like it is not hooked into electrical.
  - Ruben w/MN Community Care - talked about community based research, wants to partner. EPA may not see certain effects but we may find additional issues. The desire is to dig into these opportunities.
  - Lynette - also advise a Standard Operations Procedure, accessible online platforms for community. Would like to have testing planning started within 5 days and aim to conduct within 30 days. Would like to see partnership with local healthcare agencies/orgs. Funding should come from Lawton Standard. Looked at 2 investment properties on Forest street, half a block from the foundry - one unit had two sets of

- families with children in gradeschool. Seeing this was upsetting - families & community have a right to live in a clean environment. Lawton has to have known about the issues when purchasing the foundry, MPCA is also at fault due to the timeline of oversight.
- Alex - We have the problem of identifying the nature of emissions while running the business + engaging the community. Asking for a chance on this issue.
- Lauren (community member) - clear timeline of when you expect to be in compliance?
    - Alex - doesn't have an exact date. Some things will also wait on the MPCA's process as well. Aiming for September 1st, may be able to beat that by a month.
  - Patricia - talked about how when Whirlpool left St. Paul it was a big deal, having business in the Eastside is valuable. Wondering what the conversation is w/employees and impacts on their health?
    - Alex - Internally it's usually Silica testing, everyone wears respirators in certain spaces. Have talked about what else should be tested.
    - Tierny (Lawton Standard) - some information is details of the noncompliance weren't available until the current modeling/testing.
  - John (community member) - thanked Alex for clarifying that lead is not a primary result of a foundry. Glad that there is recycling. Is there not some regulation of the supplier of scrap metal to remove lead before going to the foundry?
    - Alex - there are thresholds est. by different bodies. Told suppliers to test and not bring anything over compliance, Lawton is also testing to make sure & will send it back if over compliance.
    - John - if you can't control your source of lead, would the plant close & what would happen?
    - Alex - we believe we can control w/that double testing. If the foundry can't be compliant, yes then it would need to close. Not sure what would happen in the spot, focused on the immediate.
  - Shera (community member) - to MPCA: would recommend monitors North, South, East, & West. Also, mobile units that don't need A/C to run them. Shera was in his foundry? In Wisconsin. [discovered this is a different foundry in a residential area that she was at]. Have you had compliance issues?
    - Alex - it's in an industrial area. DNR checks air similarly to MPCA does here, a lot you have to show about your emissions. The goal for Northern Iron is to mimic that other foundry [in WI].
    - Tierny - work w/US Compliance 2x/year to audit their sites, will put Northern Iron through that process for certification.
  - Joe (community member) - to MPCA: is there a plan for the MPCA to put detectors North of the foundry? Winds are coming from the South. Not sure what .08 means for range of particulates. Is there something available to know what the maximum range could be?
    - Courtney (MPCA): w/monitors we look at data we have, including meteorological data. Can't answer about placing a monitor on the Northside right now, can take that back and talk about whether there will be changes to locations of monitors. Regarding ranges - the MPCA website has the monitoring data. It's color coded, there's a graph & it shows where there would be areas more concerned for health concerns.
    - Damian: asked that she try to come back with answers if people are asking them
  - Benson (community member) - talked about city grants. These are good jobs.
  - Community member asked about the details about the pollution going on, whether scrubbers to clean the air can be obtained.
    - Alex - talked about models, will have scrubbers installed. Doesn't have figures/stats. Knows the permitting needs to be right.
    - Community member - you don't know what your pollution level is?
    - Alex - don't know what the monitors. MPCA has the monitors.
    - Community member - isn't the foundry supposed to know what they say?
  - Community member - would like to have someone help communicate the technical language - like an independent communicator to translate the details. Also curious what the window/door policy looks like? What does it look like to go beyond the basic policies? (e.g. extra steps)
    - Window/door policy is closing up windows & doors to control air flow. This policy will follow along with what it means to be compliant. Going beyond that means trying to

aim for below what the required amounts are. E.g. shifting utility inputs to renewable sources.

- Liz Lee (representative) - clarification on timelines for action, since there's a 30 day clock. What is the Labor Day timeline in the framing of other violations?
  - Alex - plant made changes in previous years that should have been permitted. Question he was answering was about permitting. Compliance is something they have to get to within the 30 days.
  - Liz - when will you start taking actions, what does that look like?
  - Alex - Foundry is operating, immediate changes were before orders. Started testing for incoming lead. Closing up vents (e.g. doors/windows), will toggle production levels while they upgrade the building & equipment.
  - Liz - will you/MPCA be testing w/in the 30 days or wait until after?
  - Alex - two monitors up include one testing Lead. Yes, testing for lead will occur during the 30 days.
- Janey - are there tours of the foundry? Also, is the app from MPCA available in any other language than English? It's hard to figure out even as an English language speaker.
  - Alex - tours would be a part of stakeholder engagement & building out a taskforce
- Winona - how many of your clients are from the Eastside? How close do you come to the lead threshold? Also asked about PFAS forever chemicals?
  - Alex - not sure about the PFAS output, can return to this. Have some local customers, suppliers are much more local. [didn't really answer lead question]
- Community Member - knows on Westside they're concerned about a metal shredder coming into the neighborhood. Works for Eastside Neighborhood Development. Have tested lead for children for many years. Most concerned about children & pregnant mothers. If you want to find out if your family is impacted, we can do that testing. MN Community Care also does testing. Encourage pregnant people you know to have testing done.
- Kevin (Community member) - feels that community testing should be funded by local government (e.g. the legislature, Ramsey County Health Dept). To the MPCA, why for 15 years was the foundry not permitted? Also, with PFAS - places like Oakdale have known about this issue but didn't admit it until found out. MPCA should be held accountable. Also feels the MPCA's website isn't accessible. The MPCA shouldn't be pushing for the 5/22 meeting, they should be prepared for this meeting.
- Nate (owner of Vertical Endeavors) - is this the first meeting about this?
  - Janey - the MPCA has come & presented a couple times, gave them questions & they came back a few times.
  - Nate - has only been running VE for 31 years. Have had more complaints from customers & staff about particulates accumulating on cars. They have to go through the carwash multiple times. Is the MPCA going to find out what that is? I'm a chemical engineer, worked for 3m, have been involved in lead testing in the past. There is no acceptable level of lead. Are you aware of where the source of the lead is coming from? Is it just the melting down of materials?
  - Alex - no lead in the production of products themselves, only thing they can think is the scrap being melted
  - Nate - lead is vaporized during the melting process, then. One last question, are you aware of any other (arsenic, mercury, ect) particulates in the scrap? Are we testing for those?
  - Alex - focused on lead based on the modeling
  - Nate - to the MPCA - will you be testing for those?
  - Courtney (MPCA) - plugged their May 22nd meeting again, order to Northern Iron means that they are under open enforcement - making it difficult to answer these questions. Representatives from the MN Dept of Health, EPA, and Ramsey Health will also be there.
  - Nate - does the MPCA track or monitor cancer cells?
  - Courtney (MPCA) - has to defer to the public health dept, MPCA doesn't track cancer cells.
- Liz (representative) - important for polluters to pay when they pollute our community. We asked Dept of Health, Ramsey Health to do these things but it is also important that polluters need to pay the price to polluters because otherwise the price gets shifted back to us through

our taxes.

- Reier - fines laid against them should then come back to the community
- Community member - are you trying to imply that what is being put out is not as bad as lead?
  - Alex - just trying to imply that lead has not traditionally been a foundry issue. Thinks the products they produce can be produced safely.
  - Community member - it's not safe because they have to wear protective gear, there's no safe way to do that. Will there be any remediation efforts in the ground around you? Other environmental impacts, like green spaces to pull chemicals out of the ground?
  - Alex - wouldn't be against it, focused on getting to compliance but from there anything could be on the table. Has seen remediation work.
- Alex - stated that he would be happy to join for another community forum
- Lynette - we were told that they weren't told details before they purchased. For Lawton to say they weren't privy to information, it seems untrue. We have to think about the quality of health for the community - this is not a witch hunt. Just thinking about everything said tonight and not said.

**ADJOURN 8:00 pm**

➤ **Next PPCC Community Meeting:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Arlington Hills Recreation Center, 1200 Payne Avenue

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