

Minutes for Regular Meeting of Beargrass Creek Alliance on June June 28, 2021, at home of Ann and Dan Siebert.

Attending: Ward Wilson, executive director, Kentucky Waterways Alliance, Linda Gugin, BCA president, Jim St. Clair, BCA secretary, David Rummler, Carol Curtis, David Spenard, Ann Siebert, Dan Siebert, Erin Wagoner, Rick Harned, Hart Hagan, and Barbara Berman.

Linda Gugin, president, presiding.

Topics of discussion

Recent events:

Linda and Jim manned a table at the Mayor's Bike and Paddle Event on Memorial Day, May 31, handing out materials about the organization, and explaining to those who stopped by the table the purpose of the organization and ways to get involved. Also, a large BCA banner, with the assistance of David Wicks, was hung over the old River Road bridge, which was very visible to those passing by in canoes and kayaks. BCA also had a table at the 13th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival on June 17, held this year at the Sauerbeck Family Drive In in La Grange. Some viewed the film online, but attendance was mostly in-person. Ward said KWA made more money than usual and there were lots of non-profit organizations that sponsored tables prior to the showing of films.

KWA:

Ward said that KWA has hired a part-time office manager and continues to seek additional funding in order to hire additional staff, including a watershed manager, to tackle such issues as sewer overflows and stormwater.

Ward reported that he had been contacted by Jackie Cobb, sustainability manager at Schnieder Electric, about undertaking a project to bring back Beargrass Creek so that it would be accessible for fishing and swimming. Ward acknowledged that while this is a worthy goal it will be a major undertaking that will involve many organizations. He noted that the biggest problems are sewer overflows and stormwater. Every time it rains pathogens are released into the creek. He suggested that a public forum involving those most familiar with the creek could spur ideas such as what it will take to get the creek clean enough for fishing and for kids to safely swim in Beargrass Creek. On the positive side, Ward noted that MSD has significantly reduced sewer overflow and is partnering with the Army Corps of Engineers in a \$3 million project to restore the entire Beargrass Creek ecosystem. A lengthy conversation ensued in which people suggested various ways to deal with the issue of sewer overflows and storm water.

Hart said time and energy are being wasted by mowing machines that cut lawns too frequently. He said let the grass grow, adding that taller grass holds more water and thus keeps it from flowing into the creek. He also suggested avoiding using pesticides when possible. David Rummler mentioned the using of permeable plastic pavers for driveways and parking lots that capture storm water.

The discussion concluded with a proposal for Beargrass Creek Alliance together with KWA to form a committee to take the first step in establishing such a forum. Ward agreed to head the committee and David Rummler volunteered to be on the committee. Other volunteers will be invited to join.

Cleaning Up the Creek:

Linda has been in touch with residents in the Newburg/Bashford Manor area who are interested in forming a task force to clean up their portion of Beargrass Creek, which contains several large pieces of trash. Erin of MSD said if those items are creating a large blockage, that would be a big concern, adding that if we could pinpoint the exact site she could have inspectors visit there.

Carol described various strategies that the Ursuline order is doing to motivate young people to get involved in environmental issues like cleanups in Beargrass Creek. It was also suggested to have more screenings of Morgan Atkinson's film on the history of Beargrass Creek and how the creek has deteriorated over the years and ways to clean it up. Linda and Jim noted the film is what prompted them to become involved in BCA. Carol said during the school year she could have students involved in various ecological projects to help in cleaning up the creek.

LDG Development on Hikes Lane:

David Spenard reported on the development of an apartment complex on Hikes Lane by LDG Development of Louisville. He noted that the Planning and Design Commission had approved the rezoning from R4 to R78 with two binding elements. One pertains to blasting and the other is a cap for 276 units, reduced from the original figure of 504 units. However, he said the risk of this development remains and the reduction in size does not end the impact on Beargrass Creek. The next step is for the Metro Council to approve or disapprove the request.

Given the expectation that the Metro Council will approve the zoning change, BCA members discussed what would be the most effective strategy that we could take going forward, in keeping with our main mission to protect and advocate for Beargrass Creek. The consensus was that we could still play an advocacy role when subsequent decisions about the development are made. There will be many decisions by the developer that will still require review and approval. MSD will play an important role as the development plans are implemented. MSD provides plan service reviews. As such, any new development is subject to comply with MSD stormwater regulations and the MSD Design Manual, which includes both water quality and water quantity requirements.

Also, BCA can keep abreast of the flow of information that pertains to development plans and seek to impress on the developer the importance of "doing the right thing" for the neighbors that are affected by the development. Writing letters to the developer would be one way to try to hold the developer's "feet to the fire." We welcome other individuals and organizations to keep us informed of the development plans as they evolve and will continue to play a role to protect Beargrass Creek.

New business:

The next meeting of BCA will be a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. on Monday, July 19 at Hogan's Fountain in Cherokee Park. (More details will be forthcoming)