

APPROVED



Elgin Math & Science Academy

Minutes

Enviro Work Group Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday January 12, 2022 at 1:30 PM

Location

Multipurpose Room @ EMSA Campus
1600 Dundee Ave, Elgin

Or join via Zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6308835013>

Meeting ID: 630 883 5013

Committee Members Present

C. Flaherty, D. Alexander, G. Swick (remote), K. Kelly, R. Wilson, S. Bennett (remote), S. Said

Committee Members Absent

None

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

K. Kelly called a meeting of the Environmental Work Group--Subcommittee to Master Plan and Facilities Committee of Elgin Math & Science Academy to order on Wednesday Jan 12, 2022 at 1:35 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

G. Swick made a motion to approve the minutes from Enviro Group December Meeting on 12-03-21.

R. Wilson seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Enviro Work Group Items

Committee discussed best times for meetings--will try 9 am on Fridays. Committee identified 3 people to ask to participate and assigned different committee members to ask.

II. Environmental Work Group--Subcommittee to Master Plan and Facilities

A. Ecosystem Education

From our "To Determine" list:

1. Campus map. G Swick reported progress on creation of a map, working with R Wilson to id areas and type of use that is appropriate. Discussed creating videos that would link to the map to provide science info etc for staff and public. Some videos already exist, as does a tape of naturalist Steve Beyers discussing the unique ecosystem. NEXT STEPS:
 1. Locate existing videos and tape--add to a resources page.
 2. Determine areas/subjects that interest teachers and create videos to support that.
 3. S Said is willing to follow R Wilson & C Flaherty around to video explanation of ecosystems.
2. Teacher support on ecosystems, it was discussed to start with staff meetings and plan environmental components based upon staff interests. NEXT STEPS:
 1. S Said will ask K, 2d, 3d grade teachers for best times to meet with her and eco peeps (G Swick, R Wilson, K Kelly)
 2. Review modules for nature connections prior to meetings.
 3. Determine ways to share proactively info about what our environment is (like videos, above)!
3. Partnership with Friends of the Fox--Can we bring them in this winter/spring to deliver hands-on, local nature-based science (they have an excellent stream program that would be great for EMSA)? Mighty Acorns from The Conservation Foundation could also provide similar eco education. NEXT STEPS:
 1. S Said will check with J Willer and staff about when/how this could work.
 2. Committee agreed to allow for less than \$10K to implement this.

3. G Swick can be point person on questions and lining up Friends of the Fox.
4. Friday Field Studies. Agreed to look into the possibilities. NEXT STEPS:
 1. S Said will check on TA/teacher availability & interest in teaching (includes stipend for class and planning time--estimated at \$35/hr).
 2. K Kelly will draft rough budget and benefits of FFS.
 3. Volunteers and other details to be discussed further.
5. Partnership with Forest Preserve of Kane County. The committee discussed how to support/grow this relationship. S Said suggested we invite FP experts to be Passion Project experts on 2/11. D Alexander suggested we help grow native cedars. Discussion ensued. NEXT STEPS:
 1. Invite FP Barb McKendrick to 2/11 (K Kelly)
 2. Invite FP President to visit campus (C Flaherty)
 3. Growing cedars could be Circles Around Us JEDI project--S Said to think on this
 4. G Swick could reach out to FP Exec Dir Monica Meyers
6. Enviro Club. NEXT STEPS:
 1. S Said will see if a staff person wants to run this.
 2. Roots & Shoots--established program created by Jane Goodall
 3. G Swick offered to be a resource--as did other committee members

B. Trails and walkways

Several committee members commented that there was LESS ice on rock portion of the campus trails compared to the asphalted sections. Both sections had been shoveled and rocky portion did not need melting salts. C Flaherty explained a way to stabilize all or portions of the trail using non-polluting bonding agent. He will provide and estimate to use this on the area of the trail that meets the roadway.

R Wilson discussed commencing the Ravine Trail. He and C Flaherty agreed to host a work day to take out invasive species on JANUARY 23 at 10 a.m.

K Kelly inquired about slicing up logs to use as stepping "stones"--this would require some planning and good chainsaws.

C. Native Plantings--Grant Available, anyone interested?

C Flaherty reviewed the native plantings that Green Guerrilla installed around the gym to help with drainage issues. He used native seed and no-mow grass, 1 gal and plug size natives. He created a natural buffer on the hill and reused flagstone in the walkway.

There are 3 native planting grants available, NEXT STEPS:

1. National Enviro Ed--S Said and G Swick will apply (area?)

2. Pollinator Partnership--DO IN 2 DAYS--D Alexander and C Flaherty will apply (area: along south & west sides of elementary building)
3. IDNR--K Kelly and S Said will apply (area: 2d grade pollinator garden--by gym?)

D. Water Runoff--Updates

R Wilson noted a new area of concern at the gym--he, D Alexander, & C Flaherty were to address it right after the meeting.

Elementary School gutter system working well!

Green Guerrilla proposal for storm water mitigation starting at the southwest corner of Elementary School included creation of a dry creek bed and native rain garden along south side of building discussed and supported by the committee.

Green Guerrilla's proposal for a low-cost mitigation to moving water away from the gym building's south and west sides was reviewed and supported.

NEXT STEPS:

1. S Said to seek teacher/student interest in participating and/or learning from the water programs (e.g., 3d grade studies water, 4th grade studies habitat, 5th grade (?) studies natural disasters)
2. C Flaherty to add native plants to elementary building proposal.

E. Playgrounds & Natural Play Areas

S Said wondered where could kids play right now instead of asphalt area by gym. It was recommended that the grassy area just slightly up the hill by the "abandoned K play ground) would be great for right now. Also, S Said will look at the area behind admin as a possibility, keeping in mind the drop-offs would make ball play difficult. Also, the big field is a great option--kids will have to hustle over there but S Said is going to recommend it.

NEXT STEPS:

1. R Wilson to remove bouncy feature from abandoned playground.
2. Consider portapotty for field area.

Creating more play space while respecting nature is one of the Passion Project focus areas. Committee discussed:

1. Letting staff/students start using more areas (per above para) to see what works.
2. Looking at student proposals to help guide planning and design.

F. Chimney Swifts and Other Bird Protections

The chimney caps will need attention twice per year to allow for the chimney swifts. R Wilson knows how to do this.

D Alexander recommends seeking funding to add bird strike prevention per the existing bid. In the meantime, R Wilson can add some temporary strips to lower windows.

The window paintings on the dining hall and dorm are serving the purpose of eliminating bird strikes! R Wilson suggested publishing this success story. S Said volunteered to write a press release. K Kelly has photos.

G. Ongoing Tree Care & Planned Landscaping

R Wilson and D Alexander reported the "huge progress" made by Davey Tree on the highest and most difficult tree work (removing dead branches and trimming above gym) and J & R which took care of easier to reach issues. Next focus: behind the dining hall.

Committee discussed a new mowing pattern at the big field--to be reviewed in the coming months but committee seemed to think it was a good idea.

III. Other Business

A. What else do we need to be thinking about?

Hwy 25 entry signage: K Kelly to ask Rep Moeller for guidance.

S Said is incorporating land acknowledgements in crew, how can the Board do the same?

B. Goal setting/vision of work group

This will take some time--perhaps a special session to set goals/vision. D Alexander provided a description of the committee work to get us started. March or April?

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
K. Kelly

Documents used during the meeting

- EMSA NeilBuildingRainGarden 12.21.21.pdf
- EMSA S&WsidesofGymBuilding proposal 1.6.22.pdf