

**City of Falcon Heights
Environment Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2012**

Present: Diane Ross, Brian Goodspeed, Peggy Hall, Ethan Wagner, Mayor Peter Lindstrom, Deb Jones (Staff). Guests: Gary Reuter of the University of Minnesota Bee Lab, Falcon Heights Resident Deb Alexander

Absent: Rebecca Montgomery, Jeff Connell, Nina Semmelroth, Stan Sveen

1. The meeting was called to order by the Chairs a few minutes after 6:30 p.m. The April minutes were approved.
2. **Beekeeping.** Gary Reuter, a scientist the University of Minnesota's Bee Lab gave a most informative presentation about bees and answered many questions from Commissioners. Some of the things the Commission learned were:
 - Honey bees' pollination of crops is worth over 14 billion dollars a year to U.S. Agriculture
 - Bees provide honey, a nutritious alternative to sugar. Consuming local honey can help reduce seasonal allergies
 - Most stings are not from honey bees but from wasps and hornets
 - With the proper equipment and handling, bees should not be problem for nearby neighbors.
 - Honey bees are not aggressive, but people should be discouraged from invading their "fly way"
 - Solid and vegetation 6 feet high can steer backyard bees up to overhead fly paths
 - Bees need a good water supply nearby. If one is not provided, they will go for water wherever they find it, including outdoor faucets and wading pools.
 - Honey bees are already all around us, but we may not notice them until there is a hive nearby and we are looking for them.
 - Interest in beekeeping is growing. The UM Extension class is very popular.

Commissioners expressed interest in pursuing this topic and asked staff to provide the model ordinance from the Minnesota Hobby Beekeepers' Association for the next meeting.

3. **Mercury Standards.** Mayor Lindstrom reported that he is one of over 90 U. S. mayors to sign a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency expressing strong support for the recently issued Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for Power Plants. Copies of the letter were provided to the Commission.



4. **Prairie Gardens.** Staff Liaison Deb Jones reported that the Council tabled the prairie garden ordinance and asked the Planning Commission to take a look at it for zoning and comprehensive plan implications. Due to a very full agenda, the Planning Commission had not been able to get to the topic at their May workshop and had to postpone to June.
5. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.