THE CROSSINGS OF ANN ARBOR
SUMMARY FACTSHEET FOR
2020 RAIN GARDEN PROJECT

Background

The Crossings of Ann Arbor is a 64-unit condominium complex on the north side of Ann Arbor. Members of the community began a number of environmental initiatives when new people joined the board of directors in 2017. We first addressed the use of herbicides and pesticides on our landscaping and were able to reduce the quantities used and switch to products that are less toxic. We also participated in an advisory committee of the City of Ann Arbor as the city explored the expansion of curbside compost pick-up to include multi-family dwellings. When that expansion was implemented, we acquired compost carts and began to educate more of our members about composting.

In the spring of 2019, we began to discuss the possibility of planting rain gardens on our three-acre property. We contacted Catie Wytychak, the Water Quality Specialist at the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission. Catie was kind enough to meet with two members of our board, discuss the benefits of rain gardens and walk the property with us to identify areas where rain gardens might be usefully installed. She also encouraged us to apply for membership in Washtenaw County's Community Partners for Clean Streams (CPCS) and Waste Knot programs. We were delighted to be admitted to both of those programs.

Project Description

With Catie's help, we developed a proposal to install a rain garden in a location on the property that experienced routine pooling after rains and in periods of thaw after snowfall. This area is directly downhill from a large parking lot, so much of the runoff from the parking lot went directly into this location, bringing with it the toxics from motor fuel, etc. We submitted this proposal to our landscaping company, Greenview Services, and requested an estimate for the work. Greenview's estimate (dated 9/9/2019) is attached to this Summary.

Our board approved this estimate. However, due to that late date in the season, Greenview was not able to locate a source for the plants we had selected. The board decided to postpone the installation of the garden until the following year. We also decided to apply for a CPCS grant. The following spring, our grant proposal was submitted and accepted.

Prior to the installation of the garden, we discovered a new issue that prompted us to consider relocation from the original site. In the spring of 2020, significant pooling from a downspout located about 50 feet from the original site made us realize we could capture even more water for the rain garden if we placed it in that alternative site and channeled the water from the original location to the new one. We worked with both Catie and Greenview to finalize this relocation plan. Greenview managed the channeling of the water with installation of a tile from the original to the new location. The new location receives much less direct sunlight than the original site, so we also changed the mix of plants. The plant list suggested by Catie and acquired by Greenview is attached.

The rain garden was installed by Greenview in September 2020. The invoice for that work is attached. It is consistent with the original estimate. Our grant request for $1,400.00 was approved for this work. The invoice total was $1,421.20. Several photos of the garden are provided here, one of which shows two of the Greenview crew who worked on the project. The rain garden was installed in one day.

Future Plans

One unintended benefit of this project has been the great enthusiasm it has created with our landscapers, Greenview Services. They have been eager to learn more about rain gardens and their potential benefit both for the beauty and viability of residential properties in this area and for the health and sustainability of our water systems. Greenview will be our partner moving forward as we maintain our existing rain garden and install additional gardens in seasons to come. The Crossings Environmental Committee is committed to the health and maintenance of our grounds as we implement more sustainable methods of managing our property.