

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
February 8th, 2022
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

Commission Members Present:

Jesse Farrell	Chair, Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Vice Chair, Gem Lake (GL)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Nick Voss, Dawn Tanner (VLAWMO staff); Connie Taillon (WBL), Justine Roe, Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS), Ed Shapland (Watershed Action Volunteers/CAC). Patricia Orud (NOHOA).

Absent: Treasurer, Bob Larson (North Oaks); Paul Duxbury Board Liaison, White Bear Township (WBT)

I. **Call to Order – 8:00am –Chair Jesse Farrell** called the meeting to order at 8:00am

Chair Farrell acknowledged staff member Tyler Thompson who is departing VLAWMO and going to a new position this week.

II. **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Huntrods and seconded by Tessier to approve the February 8th, 2022 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

Approval of Minutes (December 8th, 2021)

It was moved by Huntrods and seconded by Tessier to approve the February, 2022 meeting minutes, as presented. Vote: all eye. Motion passed.

III. **Administration & Operations**

A. Financial Report for February & authorization for Payment

Belfiori described current payments and activities as presented in the financial records from the February 8th TEC packet.

It was motioned by Tessier and seconded by Huntrods to approve the February Treasurer's Report and authorization of payments. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

B. February 2022 TEC Report to the Board

Belfiori described and summarized the February TEC report as included in the Feb TEC packet. Staff recommended approval of the

It was motioned by Huntrods and seconded by Tessier to approve the February TEC Report to the Board. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

IV. Programs

A. Education & Outreach

1. Community Blue grant application deadlines-

Voss provided a summary of the proposal for timing changes to have two application deadlines to the community blue grant program. The hope is to motivate additional applications to the program and to create additional momentum for the program. .

Ferrell noted he thought was good idea

It was motioned by Huntrods and seconded by Tessier . All in favor and motion was approved.

B. 2021 Cost Share Grant Extensions

Thompson described the four cost-share grants from 2021 that are continued into 2022. This is a common occurrence and extensions have been issues in past years to accommodate for unforeseen circumstances in project installation (weather, market fluctuations, etc.).

It was motioned by Tessier and seconded by Nelson to approve the 2021 cost share grant extensions. Vote: All aye, motion passed

1. SHG Application 2022-01 Keleher Rain Garden/Native Planting, WBL

Thompson described the 120 sq ft raingarden basin and that this application is within the Lambert Creek targeted volume reduction zone, which is eligible for a 75% grant match according to the cost-share grant program policy. Applicant is proposing to do the work herself. Thompson added that the application was complete upon submission and no additional information was needed to be requested.

Farrell commented that the application was a great idea and that raingarden basins pay dividends for a long time into the future.

It was motioned by Nelson and seconded by Huntrods to approve SHG 2022-01 and authorization of payments. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

2. SHG Application 2022-02 Kanne Native Planting/Restoration, VH

Thompson described the application as included in the February TEC packet and past erosion control, native planting, and stormwater reduction efforts this property owner has completed in the past, including a 2021 SHG with VLAWMO. Applicant requesting 75% match due to being in the targeted volume reduction zone in the Lambert Creek subwatershed.

It was motioned by Huntrods and seconded by Tessier to approve SHG 2022-02 and authorization of payments. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

3. LL1 Application 2022-01 Charpenter Rain Garden, VH

Thompson described the application located in a shaded wooded lot that drains to a ditch system without a curb and gutter. Applicant's property takes a combined drainage from 3 properties including his own. The ditch draining from his property connects to Branch Ditch

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#3 which then drains into Lambert Creek. Annual sediment removal draining into ditch system estimated to be 65 lbs/year (MIDS).

Discussion: Farrell commented that the proposal from the contractor needs to be updated to accommodate for changing materials and labor costs. An updated 2022 contract could hold potential for a larger square footage or working with the site's wetland buffer. Interest in doing better to achieve higher infiltration and to make the most of the opportunity.

Thompson and Belfiori expressed that due to the drainage area being flat, the depth for the basin is limited.

Farrell expressed support for tabling application for March TEC meeting with mentioned recommendations. Updated proposal from contractor for materials and labor estimates, ask contractor to look at existing buffer and wetland for potential project enhancements, and to look at whether grading for project is on private property or is a portion on public right of way.

Nelson asked whether the staff recommendation was to approve the project as submitted, Thompson affirmed. Expressed concern that project estimates and design work may already be maxed out for the applicant and the contractor.

It was motioned by Nelson and seconded by Tessier to approve LL1 2022-01 and authorization of payments. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

4. LL1 Application 2022-02 BLP HOA Lamb. Creek Streambank Restoration, WBT

Thompson described this Lambert Creek restoration project in White Bear Township as described in the Feb TEC packet. This project is located near existing VLAWMO Lambert Creek bank restorations at Oakmede lane and upstream from Fox Meadow Park, thus extending the growth and impact of streambank restoration in that area. Thompson recognized that the HOA involved in the project is being proactively involved to fix the erosion issues through this initiative to work with a contractor and submit this grant application.

Thompson also noted that this effort at this location on Lambert Creek holds potential to be a problem area in the future, and that this project helps mitigate that risk.

Discussion: Tessier asked if this is a park that experiences frequent flooding, Thompson confirmed.

Huntrods asked why a large tree removal is in the proposal and why it costs so much. Thompson explained that this big tree is wrapped around a culvert and is right on the ditch, which causes issues. Big trees further away are no problem, but the in this case the proximity to the creek is an issue. In many ditch maintenance efforts tree removal is a big part of the effort. Belfiori commented that according to VLAWMO's drainage authority taking the tree out aligns with VLAWMO's ditch maintenance responsibilities.

It was motioned by Farrell and seconded by Tessier to approve LL1 2022-02 and authorization of payments. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

5. 2022-2023 RCSWCD Design & Technical Assistance Agreement

Thompson described the services that RCSWCD provides. The 2022-2023 agreement builds continuity between the years opposed to designing an agreement for a single year. This provides continuity for projects that may require extension after 2022. Additional GIS were also added to the agreement.

Thompson reminded TEC that in 2021 VLAWMO used roughly half its contracted agreement with RCSWCD.

Farrell noted that the County relationship is a major asset to VLAWMO's services.

It was motioned by Tessier and seconded by Huntrods to approve 2022-2023 RCSWCD Design & Technical Assistance Agreement. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

V. Projects

A. Biochar project update

Tanner explained that SEH has made a final determination of feasibility for the biochar filter at the Whitaker Pond site. A site footprint schematic has been provided by SEH for a winter construction goal. Design work is continuing at this time.

Tanner updated the TEC that the settlement offer was accepted by the UMN, a signed letter was received by VLAWMO, and final payment has been sent.

The MPCA is currently preparing a change order to address the new site location for the February, 2022, Board of Director meeting.

Farrell expressed being glad that the UMN invoice has been resolved and that the project is continuing.

B. West Vadnais and Pleasant Lake carp projects for 2022

Tanner described Pleasant Lake's obstacles due to hazardous ice conditions. Tanner corrected the staff memo citing that carp harvest was attempted in 2022, not 2021. Tanner stated that noise and activity on the ice may have disturbed carp aggregations, as they were observed via telemetry to have moved widely throughout the lake and have remained scattered following that harvest attempt. Staff and the carp removal team are continuing to conduct telemetry and sonar to detect when/if carp move back in an aggregated way into an area of the lake that is suitable and prepped for harvest.

Tanner explained the West Vadnais carp strategy with Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District. Because the carp population size has been determined to be smaller than previously measured (likely a result of a recent winterkill), bullhead (documented to be present in high numbers through numerous MN DNR surveys over the years) may be contributing to poor water quality in West Vadnais Lake. An updated fish survey and continued tagging and

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monitoring have been requested by project partners to determine the most suitable next steps for the lake.

It was motioned by Farrell and seconded by Nelson to approve West Vadnais and Pleasant Lake carp projects for 2022. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

- C. 319 grant/Wilkinson BMP project materials to Board
Tanner described the project and partnership between North Oaks Company, North Oaks Farm, and the MPCA. The easement, signed by NOC/NOF and the Minnesota Land Trust, will be brought to the Board at the February meeting with a request for VLAWMO to sign and file the easement with Ramsey County. The MPCA is completing preparation of the Project grant contract that will incorporate the workplan and budget, as approved by the TEC and Board, for the February Board meeting. USFWS was consulted during the fall of 2021 regarding an eagle nest near the project area. USFWS has provided their support and a request for increased monitoring during construction. A memo summarizing findings will be presented to the Board at the February meeting. Cash match invitations will be re-stated to possible project partners identified in the TMDL for Wilkinson, and a meeting with MPCA to determine possible load reduction allocation of credits could be distributed.

Tanner recommended bringing materials to the Feb, 22 Board meeting and to continue pursuing the project as outlined.

It was motioned by Tessier and seconded by Huntrods to approve the easement, 319 grant contract for the Wilkinson BMP project and bring associated documents to the Board at the February meeting. Vote: All aye, motion passed.

- D. MDA invasive species grant awarded
Tanner explained the MDA invasive species grant was funded, as described in the TEC packet, for buckthorn removal at the City Hall wooded wetland.

Farrell stated support for buckthorn removal efforts.
- E. DNR invasive species treatment grant in prep (partnership with BLID)
Tanner explained that staff is partnering with BLID to submit an invasive species control grant application through the MN DNR, due Feb. 21.
- F. Maintenance update: Iron-enhanced filter addition to Natural Shores contract
Tanner updated that Natural Shores is willing to serve as a contractor for maintaining the Birch Lake sand-iron filter.

Farrell commented that Birch Lake Improvement District is a fabulous partner, that project maintenance is critical, and that it is efficient to have a specialist company hired to do the maintenance.

- G. Great River Greening/Vadnais-Sucker Regional Park restoration maintenance JPA update

Tanner explained that a JPA for maintenance is being reviewed and adopted by partners. An update will come back to the TEC when the JPA is received from Ramsey County Parks and SPRWS.

- H. Amelia survey reports in from RCSWCD (posted on VLAWMO website)
Amelia survey information is now available on the VLAWMO website.

Flowering rush checks will continue at Amelia. It has not been detected during the past 2 years. If we can document flowering rush not being present in Amelia for another 2 consecutive years, the MN DNR will allow it to be updated to no longer infested.

VI. Commisioner Reports

None

Farrell updated the TEC that the Vadnais Boulevard trail meetings are underway at the City of Vadnais Heights, outcomes may be up to 10 years away but he noted that strong partnerships with the SPRWS are helping the process along.

VII. NOHOA

Orud updated the TEC that NOHOA has declared invasive species as a prominent theme for 2022. Additional buckthorn removals are scheduled for April, 2022 for Deep Lake. The NEST committee is to look at various planting locations around the City of North Oaks. Multiple planting locations have been washed out due to heavy rains, so NEST is seeking to establish more hardy and durable native vegetation in these areas.

Orud updated TEC that North Oaks NRC updates the City and NOHOA about environmental and conservation research.

VIII. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

IX. St. Paul Regional Water Services

Rowe explained that the year-long pilot plant project will be completed in March.

X. Public Comment

None

XI. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting March 9th, Next BOD meeting February 23rd.

XII. Adjourn

It was moved by Huntrods and seconded by Tessier to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

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Minutes compiled and submitted by Nick Voss.