

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
June 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)
Bob Larson	Treasurer, North Oaks (NO)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Paul Duxbury	White Bear Township (WBT)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)

Absent: Gloria Tessier - Vice Chair, Gem Lake (GL)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss (VLAWMO staff); Patricia Orud (North Oaks Home Owner's Association), Ann WhiteEagle (Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation District) Justine Roe (Saint Paul Regional Water Services).

I. Call to Order

Chair Jesse Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

Administrator Belfiori proposed agenda item Wilkinson project V. B. to no longer be an action item.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve the June 8, 2022, TEC agenda as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (May 11, 2022)

It was moved by Commissioner Duxbury and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve the May 11, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for Payment

Belfiori outlined the June finance table including stormwater utility budgeting, the current monitoring season, education and outreach activities, biochar project, and the Sucker/Vadnais subwatershed. Belfiori recommended approval of the bills for June.

It was motioned by Commissioner Larson and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to recommend approval of the June 2022 financial report for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. TEC Report to Board

Belfiori highlighted upcoming activities including quotes for solicitation for the White Bear Township biochar project and a stormwater utility increase for the 2023 budget. He stated VLAWMO is also engaging in discussions with the City of White Bear Lake regarding Adaptive Lake Management (ALM) for East Goose Lake, creating a public drainage policy, and coordinating the Wilkinson BMP 319 project. Staff recommends approval of the TEC report to the Board of Directors.

It was motioned by Commissioner Duxbury and seconded by Commissioner Larson to recommend approval of the June 2022 TEC report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

V. Programs

A. Public drainage policy recommendation

Corcoran introduced the proposed public policy for public drainage systems Ditch 13 and 14. The policy is to provide guidance for future Board decisions on public drainage management activities and procedures. Items include public drainage inspection, minor routine maintenance implementation, major repair implementation if/where needed, and a process outlining the creation of partner requests for drainage system projects.

The draft policy was brought to the VLAWMO Board on April 27, 2022. The next step is to bring a final draft to the Board for the June 22, 2022 meeting, which would be implemented in conjunction with a Watershed Management Plan amendment in fall of 2022.

Chair Farrell mentioned that it is a useful effort to clarify roles. He noted that current efforts have been showing progress; in the spring of 2022, after a series of heavy rains, there were no calls about high water levels to the City of Vadnais Heights.

It was motioned by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Larson to recommend approval of the public drainage policy recommendation. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Introduction to FY '22-23 BWSR WBIF grant proces

Sampedro introduced the BWSR Watershed-based Implementation Funding (WBIF) program for fiscal year 2022-23. Sampedro provided an introduction and background on

the WBIF program and its purpose. BWSR has allocated \$6.5 million to the metro area for the current funding cycle. LGUs such as VLAWMO and its member communities are eligible to pursue projects based on their specific watershed's local priorities. The VLAWMO watershed area was allocated \$75,000 for partners to spend on clean water activities. If funding is secured, projects will require a 10% match.

The process to complete a funding request to BWSR requires a prepared decision-making committee including one representative from VLAWMO, two representatives from local municipalities, one representative from the counties with approved groundwater management plans, and one representative from each Soil and Water Conservation Districts; holding at least one convene meeting with partners; and choosing a convene meeting facilitator/coordinator. Representatives have voting ability, and representatives must be chosen prior to holding convene meetings.

Staff invited the TEC to choose two municipal decision-making representatives. Chair Farrell and Commissioner Nelson volunteered to be convene meeting representatives.

Staff suggested the TEC considers VLAWMO to serve as convene meeting coordinator and asked for TEC input. The VLAWMO TEC recommended VLAWMO staff to serve as the convening meeting coordinator.

Sampedro discussed the proposed WBIF program timeline including holding the first convene meeting in July or August and submitting proposed grant activities to BWSR between July and November 2022.

C. Soil Health Grant: SHG 2022-08

Voss provided an overview of the grant application. He noted that structural components of the bee lawn project will be self-funded by the landowner. He summarized the project plan sheet, which was included in the packet. Commissioner Nelson recommended that natural netting erosion control blanket be added to the plans for the project. He discussed the negative impacts of erosion control blankets that use plastic and recommended VLAWMO considers changing its cost share policy to always include erosion control blankets made with natural material. The TEC agreed to add the condition. Chairr Farrell asked if staff had an example of what bee lawns look like when they mature. Voss provided an example photo of what a completed bee lawn may look like and explained the common species used in bee lawns. The TEC members discussed the results of No Mow May and ways the program could be improved in the future through more deliberate strategies, such as targeting key areas to convert conventional turf grass into bee lawn and providing signage so the effort is clearer to residents.

It was motioned by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve SHG 2022-08 with the addition of natural erosion control blanket. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

D. Website renovation

Voss provided a short summary on the website evaluation process. He invited the TEC to participate in the survey linked in the TEC packet. Commissioner Duxbury asked for clarification on the recommended TEC action. Voss recommended the TEC provide a recommendation that the TEC's feedback on the survey be provided to the Board to help inform the website evaluation process, and staff will work with HDR on the scope of work and budget for the website renovation process.

It was motioned by Commissioner Duxbury and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to recommend the TEC's website survey results be provided to the VLAWMO Board of Directors for the June 22, 2022, Board meeting. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

E. Update on Education and Outreach program

Voss updated the TEC on several education and outreach events including the Bridgewood raingarden kickoff meeting on July 12, 2022. He also noted planned communications related to the North Oaks entrance raingarden, the St Mary's raingarden, and MS4 tools and resources development with partnering communities. Voss also provided an update on the AFSA service day on May 27th.

V. Projects

A. Maintenance JPA Sucker Vadnais Park

Tanner described the upcoming activities on the Vadnais/Sucker park restoration and agreements outlined for ongoing maintenance.

It was motioned by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve adding VLAWMO's signature to the Vadnais/Sucker Park restoration JPA. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Wilkinson BMP project update

Tanner described that three bids have been received for the Wilkinson BMP project, a consensus recommendation was provided to the sub-committee, and the sub-committee is providing a recommendation to the Board for the June 22, 2022 meeting.

C. Carp update

Tanner described the spring carp removal efforts as a success and ongoing effort, with ~15,000 lbs harvested so far. The average fish is about 23 lbs, which is above (four times) the average carp size in the metro. The project has a goal of reaching a threshold of 100 kg/hectare. A follow-up biomass survey and updated PIT tagging effort is planned for this summer to allow staff and consultants to understand what has been accomplished so far and inform the ongoing removal process. That scope of work will be brought to the Board at the June 22 meeting as a consent item.

D. Notification of acceptance of EWM treatment grant for Birch Lake

Tanner shared that VLAWMO was notified by the MN DNR in May that the grant proposal for Eurasian watermilfoil treatment in Birch Lake was selected for funding by the MN DNR. The grant provides support for treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil for two years, led by the Birch Lake Improvement District (BLID) and supported by VLAWMO.

Chair Farrell inquired about the DNR lottery system and grant approval rates and Tanner explained that above 70% of applications were likely funded this year.

Commissioner Nelson inquired about the chemical used for the treatment and Tanner stated that she thought Aquathol will be used. Midwest AquaCare will be conducting the treatment.

VI. Commissioner Reports

None

VII. NOHOA

Patricia Orud said NOHOA completed a beetle release for control of invasive purple loosestrife. Follow-up reports indicate that the beetle population is doing quite well.

Buckthorn and garlic mustard removal was conducted this Spring, 2022 focused on the area around Mary Hill Park. Further buckthorn removal is targeted for the perimeter of Deep Lake. An arbor month event took place on Arbor Day in May, in conjunction with the North Oaks Natural Resources Commission, and 400 trees were given to residents.

VIII. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

Ann WhiteEagle said the SWCD is looking forward to working with VLAWMO and partners on the WBIF program and thanked Dawn Tanner for her work on the Vadnais Sucker maintenance plan.

IX. St. Paul Regional Water Services

Justine Roe announced St. Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) will have an open house July 16-17th from 9-5pm at the Hyland water tower.

She also provided an update that Jim Bode is retiring from SPRWS after 36 years of service. A celebration is occurring on June 16th at 4pm at Crooked Pint and all are invited.

X. Public Comment

None

XI. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting July 13th, Next BOD meeting June 22nd.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.