

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) 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)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)

Absent: North Oaks Commissioner (unassigned)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Dawn Tanner, Brian Corcoran, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss (VLAWMO staff), Susan Miller (North Oaks Home Owners' Association), Julie Hupperts (NOHOA), Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS)

I. Call to Order

Chair Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:03 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve the February 8th, 2023, TEC agenda Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (January 11, 2022)

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the January 11th, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for February and Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori outlined the structure of the financial report for new TEC members. Notable expenditures include SSU funds from the end of 2022, Watershed Partners, and Spent lime on Oak Knoll Pond. Administrator Belfiori noted that the budget is where it needs to be for the month of February.

Chair Farrell asked Administrator Belfiori to explain how the SSU is collected. Administrator Belfiori explained that the Board of Directors sets the approved budget rate for the year and identifies the necessary SSU income to meet that budget. The Board approved SSU information from the budget is then sent to Ramsey and Anoka counties who administer the change. The income to VLAWMO comes in 3 installments Counties (approximately in June, Nov, Jan). This serves as VLAWMO's primary local income

source. Belfiori also noted that the parcel charges in the SSU are based on an average stormwater runoff coefficient based on the size of the parcel and land use type. The charge is meant as a general representation of how much runoff is generated from that type of landuse.

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve February financial report and authorization for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. February TEC Report to the Board

Administrator Belfiori outlined the February TEC Report to the Board. Highlights include the spent lime demonstration project in Oak Knoll Pond in White Bear Lake, inspections on the public drainage system, website renovation, and cost-share program projects beginning. Current efforts also include the 2022 audit.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the February TEC Report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. Revisit appointments and officers

Administrator Belfiori outlined the role of the treasurer, which is a role that reviews and fields questions on the treasurer report before it gets submitted into the TEC packet. Chair Farrell facilitated a discussion about the format of the TEC meetings including a space for questions, inquiry, and learning. He outlined the current roles and discussed a long-term vision of rotating through TEC roles.

It was moved by Commissioner Farrell and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to confirm the 2023 Technical Commission officer appointments. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

V. Programs

A. Spring event calendar preview

Voss presented the spring 2023 activity calendar including webinars and in-person workshops. He also summarized recent MS4 partners efforts that were dispersed to VLAWMO's member communities, including resources for MS4 related newsletters, infographics, preparing for City clean-up days, and tools for promoting VLAWMO's spring workshops. No action item was included, item serves as informational.

B. Website update

Voss provided an update regarding the VLAWMO website renovation. VLAWMO and web consultants at HDR have completed a review of the old (existing website) and are

currently shaping a wire frame mock-up webpage. The first phase of the renovated website is expected to launch in 2023.

Chair Farrell inquired about how hardcopy educational material is distributed to all of the cities and Township. Voss provided that hardcopies are delivered to most municipalities in person annually. Voss added that the City of Lino Lakes delivery has not been within this regular annual distribution but this is available by request.

Commissioner Nelson inquired if VLAWMO workshops are open to anyone. Voss responded that the workshops are open to everyone, but staff promote them more locally.

C. Cost Share updates

Sampedro provided an overview of three new potential Landscape Level 2 grant applications. Sampedro provided an update on the new efforts to establish a pilot demonstration project for smart irrigation in Vadnais Heights. Options include the Vadnais Heights City Hall/Fire Station or the Commons Park. A soil moisture controller and a weather-based controller will be used to analyze how irrigation water use and cost savings adjust based on the system's adaption to weather conditions. A second smart irrigation controller pilot program is also in progress in White Bear Township at Polar Lakes Park, the Township's administration office, and Columbia Park. Staff anticipate recommending a grant funding level of 90% for consideration at the February 22nd Board meeting.

Lastly, a Landscape Level 2 grant application is in progress for a bioswale at Westfield Park in Vadnais Heights. Sampedro provided the proposed design consisting of a 3,500 sq ft bioswale and 2,915 sq ft of native plants. Pending bids, staff anticipate recommending a 50% grant funding level for consideration at the February 22nd. Board meeting. Staff recommended support of these three projects moving forward to the Board meeting.

Chair Farrell inquired about how the irrigation controller pilot program might continue to other future projects. Sampedro provided that VLAWMO aspires to target more communities to expand the program, but is primarily focused on large spaces and systems for the time being.

Commissioner Nelson provided that it may be of interest to utilize Met Council Resources if individual residential property owners are to be targeted in this effort. He noted that in Lino Lakes the demand is quite high and creates a need for Lino Lakes to diversify its resources to provide them. Sampedro added the Landscape Level 1 grant program now allows residents to apply for smart irrigation projects, which can be another option.

Commissioner Nelson asked about the hybrid plant varieties in the proposed Westfield Park planting plan. Sampedro referred to Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division's design practices of implementing certain cultivar species to support practical maintenance in public park spaces.

Chair Farrell commented that from his City perspective, robust irrigation controls would be valuable. He noted that Vadnais Heights' water use is generally quadrupled in the summer compared to winter.

VI. Projects

A. Deep Lake MOU with NOHOA and scope of work with NST

Tanner outlined that the current MOU is authorizing work that is resulting from recommendations provided in a prior prioritization study done by Natural Shore Technologies for the North Oaks Home Owners' Association (NOHOA). This study provided priority areas and cost estimates for restoration around Deep Lake. From it, VLAWMO selected wetland areas that VLAWMO can support in partnership with NOHOA. VLAWMO is recommending 50% (\$15,000) in support, which will be reimbursed to NOHOA following completion of the authorized scope. NOHOA is the lead in the effort. This MOU was approved and signed by the NOHOA Board in January.

Chair Farrell asked if NOHOA is exemplary compared to other organizations. Tanner explained that NOHOA does an excellent job, as do others with a similar focus in the metro and statewide, and that understanding the need to budget for and provide maintenance is critical in successful restoration over time. NOHOA understands this, does an excellent job of maintaining prior restoration projects, and is planning for long-term maintenance of this project over time as well.

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to recommend to the VLAWMO Board for authorization of the Deep Lake MOU with NOHOA at the February 22 meeting of the VLAWMO Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Wilkinson-Tamarack Lakes feasibility to treat internal load

VLAWMO staff worked with Barr Engineering to obtain a feasibility study, including sediment analysis, to determine if internal load treatment is advisable and cost effective for Wilkinson and Tamarack lakes, which are both impaired for nutrients. Tanner stated that this contract is consistent with the approved 2023 VLAWMO budget. Both lakes are priority areas for the small, priority watershed grant program. Internal load treatment may be recommended as a possible upcoming project.

Chair Farrel inquired about the depth and boat use of Wilkinson and Tamarack lakes. Tanner provided that the lakes are shallow. Wilkinson has an average depth of 3 feet. Tamarack has a maximum depth of 10 feet. Both vary somewhat by year. Wilkinson has limited paddling access and no motor activity. Tamarack has no boating nor paddling.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to recommend to the VLAWMO Board authorization of the Barr Engineering scope of work

at the February 22 meeting of the VLAWMO Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. Rotary scope of work and MOU with the City of White Bear Lake for prioritization plan for wetland restoration

Tanner provided a hard-copy, updated and final version of the MOU that was provided in draft form in the packet.

Tanner outlined the effort to work with the City of WBL to obtain a prioritization plan for wetland restoration work. This plan will provide recommendations for restoration of wetland areas and will include a timeline to begin after current upland and buffer restoration is scheduled to be completed. VLAWMO is planning to pay for prioritization study, consistent with the VLAWMO budget in 2023. Partnership wetland restoration work, expected to be cost shared with the City is tentatively planned to begin in 2025.

Commissioner Huntrods inquired about how this effort focused on the wetland area relates to the upland restoration and amur maple removal in other areas of Rotary Park.

Tanner explained that the City is independently working on upland areas, with some financial support from VLAWMO in the wetland buffer area, but the efforts are adjacent and complimentary.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to recommend to the VLAWMO Board recommendation from the TEC to the VLAWMO Board for authorization of the MOU and scope of work at the February 22 meeting of the VLAWMO Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

D. Wilkinson 319 update

Tanner provided a project update. An upcoming joint NRC/NEST meeting is coming up on Feb. 13, 2023. That will be presented on Zoom.

Memos are currently in prep by Houston including a preliminary design memo for the VLAWMO Board at the Feb. 22 meeting; a joint application for the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA); and a memo for permitting by the City of North Oaks for excavation, grading, erosion control, and a SWPPP. The preliminary design memo will be brought to the TEC in March. A community meeting is currently in planning stages and expected to happen in late March. An article announcing that meeting and providing a brief project update is approved for submission to North Oaks News on Feb. 14, a day after the official submission deadline.

E. Spent lime February 1st community meeting update

Tanner provided an update that 13 residents attended the Feb 1st spent lime community meeting with Greg Wilson of Barr Engineering in White Bear Lake. VLAWMO is now working to acquire temporary easement access from property owners with legal counsel preparing documents. Barr is continuing to hone in on an appropriate range for the spent lime dose, and working on remaining feasibility items in preparation for the project.

Chair Farrell commented that he admires the slow and careful approach to this effort.

F. Vadnais-Sucker Lakes Regional Park restoration update

Sampedro updated the TEC that Great River Greening has contracted with MNL and project work has begun in January 2023. A press release was submitted to Vadnais Heights Press and postcards were distributed to residents adjacent to the park.

I. Commissioner Reports

Chair Farrell noted that roughly half of the Vadnais Heights public works staff attended a recent Smart Salting training. A result that came from the training is an update on city snow plow blades to include rubber bushings. The City hopes that it will be an improvement in performance, a reduction in plow-related damage to infrastructure, while also providing water quality improvements.

II. NOHOA

None

III. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

IV. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None

V. Public Comment

None

VI. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting March 8th. Next BOD meeting February 22nd.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Chair Farrell to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.