

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization**  
**Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes**  
**March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**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)

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

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

**III. Approval of Minutes (Feb 8, 2023)**

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the February 8, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

**A. Financial Report for March and Authorization for Payment**

Administrator Belfiori highlighted page 9 of the TEC packet for the finance summary and the request for approval of March's invoices and payments. He noted that February and March is the annual audit season and anticipates a final report from the audit at the August Board meeting. Major expenses for the month pertained to the Wilkinson BMP project.

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

**V. Programs**

#### A. Cost Share Packet Preview

Sampedro previewed new hardcopy site visit packets for the Soil Health and Landscape Level grant programs. The packet is intended to complement a site visit with education resources and tools to get started. Sampedro noted a new brochure focused on project planning and new guides for using VLAWMO's mapping tools and creating a project plan. Sampedro noted that one major benefit of using the folders is that it allows the impact of the site visit to be extended beyond the timeframe of the site visit itself. They also add a resource for VLAWMO affiliates to disperse the information.

Chair Farrell asked about what the significance of the native plant priority zone is. Sampedro provided that the map layer is informed by MN DNR native plant community data as well as habitat range for the Rusty-patched Bumblebee. Tanner noted that VLAWMO staff has a license to view the species of concern DNR database, and the TEP includes a DNR representative who also uses the database and evaluates projects with respect to species of conservation concern. Sampedro also provided that the DNR native plant community information that VLAWMO uses is public data. Tanner explained the plant community data shows the plant types from pre-European settlement that are expected to still be present today and need protection.

## VI. Projects

#### A. Update on Wilkinson BMP

Tanner referred to the project design map included in the packet. She described that the wetland exemption has been approved through WCA and the USACE has provided guidelines regarding the general permit.

Other recent initiatives on the project include VLAWMO staff presenting at a joint NRC/NEST meeting in February about the project, which was recorded. An updated article was published in the March issue of North Oaks News, announcing an in-person community meeting that is scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>. An April issue to the North Oaks News is being planned, focused on the 60% design status. Overall, the funds and timeline are tracking well.

#### B. Amelia SLMR Recommendation to the Board

Tanner outlined the difference between Sustainable Lake Management Plans (SLMPs) and Sustainable Lake Management Reports (SLMRs), noting that SLMRs compile information known to date, and project development is conducted in a more updated partner-focused way watershed-wide. Tanner shared some interesting notes that were learned through engagement with residents living around Amelia Lake including a watershed connection to Aldo Leopold, a legacy of conservation with multiple landowners on the lake, and the discovery of an infestation of invasive flowering rush that is planned for treatment in 2023. Planning for that treatment was a direct result of SLMR development and meeting with residents.

Staff are asking for TEC support for BOD authorization of the Amelia SLMR because it is the last installment of VLAWMO's SLMRs.

Commissioner Nelson noted that the report was excellent and that the history, landuse, survey information, and planning is convenient to have in one spot.

Commissioner Huntrods inquired about what comes next. Tanner noted that the importance is on keeping the plans updated with current information, such as monitoring data, so that they can be provided to stakeholders as needed and maintained with updated information. Annual updates are planned for the now-completed set of SLMP/SLMRs to keep them current, avoid loss of information, and have a readily available resource specific to each lake.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to recommend to the VLAWMO Board the authorization/finalization of the Amelia SLMR and inclusion on the VLAWMO website. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. Recognition of completion of 15-year SLMP/SLMR completion

Tanner explained more about the history of the SLMP/R effort that started in 2009. Plans are organized by lake because this is how VLAWMO organizes its work and how stakeholders tend to consider lake resources. Tanner explained that planning locations and strategic locations for prioritized, targeted, and measurable projects are important for grant funding, and the work that has been done to prepare these SLMP/SLMRs compile this information and help VLAWMO to be prepared for new projects and grant proposals. Tanner provided examples of recent grant-funded projects that have resulted from this process, highlighted how the 10-year plan has structured this process, showed where to find these documents on the VLAWMO website, and mentioned that the locations will be changing as the website update is completed.

D. Update on White Bear Township Smart Irrigation Grant Application

Sampedro provided an update on the in-progress grant application by noting White Bear Township submitted the Landscape Level 2 grant application and the application was brought to the February 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting due to timing.. She highlighted the bids received as included in the TEC packet and shared the Board of Directors approved the application at 90% funding of the total cost of the project.

E. Update on City of Vadnais Heights Smart Irrigation Grant Application

Sampedro provided an update on the in-progress grant application by noting the City of Vadnais Heights submitted the Landscape Level 2 grant application and the application was brought to the February Board meeting due to timing. Sampedro noted this project will compare soil moisture-based and weather-based smart irrigation controller systems. She highlighted the bid received and shared this application was approved at the February Board of Directors meeting at 90% funding of the total cost of the project.

Chair Farrell noted that Vadnais Heights councilmembers are supportive of the effort and that it had been discussed with support at the Vadnais Heights City Council meeting.

F. Update on Westfield Park Bioswale Grant Application

Sampedro provided an update on the in-progress grant application by noting the City of Vadnais Heights submitted the Landscape Level 2 grant application and the application was brought to the February Board meeting due to timing. She described the proposed bioswale that will include a dry creek bed, rock checks, and native plants. She shared the Board approved the grant application at the February Board meeting at 50% of the total cost of the project.

Commissioner Tessier inquired about the location of Westfield Park. Chair Farrell noted that it's just south of Highway 96.

Chair Farrell commented that the project can serve as a demonstration for other municipalities. He noted that ideally there would be several projects of this type per year, but acknowledged budget and staff time constraints. Sampedro thanked the City for its partnership and noted that it's valuable to be working on these efforts that go above and beyond requirements but improve the overall Lambert Creek system.

**I. Commissioner Reports**

Chair Farrell provided an update on a possible project at Vadnais Blvd, which would be a new trail corridor. Ramsey County may pursue this for 2028. He noted that due to the current road conditions that a road construction effort may need to be included, and this brings numerous water quality protection opportunities. He noted that the high priority location near East Vadnais Lake would bring together many partners such as the Saint Paul Regional Water Services, Ramsey County, VLAWMO, and others. Administrator Belfiori noted that the trail vision is included in VLAWMO's 5-year strategic plan with budgeting that has been approved by the Board. He noted that this is a basic analysis with supporting data to then use in the pursuit of grant funds and partnerships.

**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 April 12<sup>th</sup>. Next BOD meeting April 26<sup>th</sup>.

**XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Tessier to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.