

Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
April 10, 2015
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Lakes Room

Attending:

Paul Peterson	White Bear Township (WBT), Chair
Jim Grisim	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Mark Graham	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Marty Asleson	Lino Lakes (LL)
Jim Lindner	Gem Lake (GL)
Chris Mann	North Oaks (NO)

Others in attendance: Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Kimberly Murray (North Oaks Homeowners Association – NOHOA; Justine Roe (St. Paul Regional Water Service – SPRWS); Bob Larson, Diane Gorder (NO Natural Resources Committee)

I. Call to Order Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

Kristine requested the addition of an item under to discuss a possibility of working with the City of WBL to do curb cut raingardens in conjunction with road improvements in 2015.

It was moved and seconded by Graham & Mann to approve the April 10, 2015 agenda as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes

It was moved and seconded by Lindner & Graham to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2015 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Annual Report

Vanessa is finishing the annual report and the Board will approve it at their April 22 meeting.

B. Water Plan Update

It is time to get the process started for updating our Comprehensive Water Management Plan. A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been sent to 8 consulting firms that do environmental planning and have done this type of work before. We are expecting proposals by Monday, April 13th and plan to interview the most likely candidates to develop a recommendation for the April 22nd Board meeting. There will be meetings and workshops throughout the year for the plan. The Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) will also be renewed at the same time. This will be a big effort to work on. Lindner said that the Board had directed the TEC to “think big” about future projects. Stephanie said that we can think big and also include smaller projects in order to meet the needs of the watershed. Stephanie said we will have to think about how we will fund these projects. Mann stated that the Board wanted projects that wanted visibility and the TEC has always tried to find projects that give us the “biggest bang for the buck”. Stephanie said this will be part of our discussions as we work on the next plan.

C. Admin Report

IT Update: Stephanie said we have been dealing with IT issues and our server will need to be replaced soon. Stephanie said that she has talked to the IT people (Metro INET) who manage the City of Vadnais Heights and got a proposal. The price is higher

and it will go up even more next year. Metro INET manages communities and other watersheds/WMOs. Stephanie will ask for a proposal from our current provider. We currently have used IT help on an “as need basis” but this is hard to budget for – especially when we have had to deal with needing help recently. Stephanie will probably have a proposal for the TEC to consider next month. Graham stated that Metro INET has been very valuable for the City and has been a good service and worth what has been spent.

Stephanie also reported that there will be a Budget Committee meeting on April 29 to start working on the 2016 budget.

V. Projects

A. Project Updates

1. East Goose - Bullheads

Brian stated that the commercial fishermen are doing their last round of netting. As of right now, we are approaching 25,000 pounds of bullhead removal. They reported that they aren't finding small bullheads now which means that the predators are helping keep the population in check.

2. Birch Lake Chloride Program

Brian stated we were asked to do more extensive chloride sampling since this lake receives more salt than other lakes. So we will be collecting samples throughout the year (including the winter) and taking other readings. We will be following the protocol that the PCA used for a metro chloride study.

3. Sucker Lake Channel

Kristine has sent over a draft JPA to Ramsey County Parks for review by their attorney. The draft that was sent over was agreed upon between VLAWMO and the SPRWS. Once we get input from Parks, we can come up with the final draft and get signatures from the partners.

VI. Programs

A. Grants

1. Landscape 1

There is 1 application this month. Application 2015-03 is for a raingarden project located in Vadnais Heights. The property has some historical reference for Vadnais Heights. It was a farmstead built in 1895 and it was owned by the 2nd Mayor of Vadnais Heights in the 1950's. The farm itself has been built up with homes but the house remains. The homeowners would like to install a raingarden on the property. The received a grant for rain barrels last year. One of the homeowners is a biology major and has done a lot of planning for how putting the raingarden in a proper spot and making the sure the soil will allow water to infiltrate. They are working with Out Back Nursery and Landscaping which is a good native plant business. They are requesting the full \$2000 grant for this project and plan on having it complete this summer. Staff recommends approval.

It was moved and seconded by Lindner & Mann to approve Cost Share Grant 2015-03 for \$2000. Vote. All Aye. Motion passed.

2. Community Blue

Stephanie reported that Vanessa has been talking with potential applicants and will hopefully have a couple applications, possibly from Heritage Estates the White Bear Center for the Arts, and/or Tamarack Nature Center.

3. City of WBL Road Improvement/Raingarden Install Possibility

Background: The City of White Bear Lake is updating 2 sections of road that are within the Goose Lake subwatershed. One of the streets drains to Goose Lake and one drains to Oak Knoll Pond. The City has requested a variance

because, while they are not increasing the amount of impervious surface with this project, they will not be able to meet our current water standards on site. They would like to mitigate by providing more infiltration at a park outside of this drainage area and the Board will consider this variance request at their April 22 meeting.

We would like the TEC to discuss and consider the possibility of providing some infiltration via residential curb cut raingardens on the streets that will be worked on to compensate for the variance. VLAWMO has expressed interest in working with its communities to partner with them when road improvements occur so that the possibility of curb cut raingardens could be considered. Research has shown that properly placed curb cut raingardens provide much more pollutant removal than raingardens that only collect water from a particular property. White Bear Lake has said they are open to providing the curb cut for a raingarden where these street updates will take place, if a homeowner would like one. Kristine visited the area and found that there could be opportunities to install raingardens if the homeowners are interested. Kristine found 2 sites on one of the streets (Midland Ave) and 4 possibilities on the other street (Auger Ave).

Questions to consider:

- Is the TEC interested in VLAWMO pursuing these homeowners about putting in a raingarden? The City of WBL will be sending letters to the property owners along these streets to inform them about the improvements that will be occurring and if we wanted to approach those few owners about a raingarden, it could be included with this letter.

- If so, do we only provide them with information about our upcoming raingarden workshops and cost share brochure? If a homeowner has not heard of raingardens or shown interest, then it is unlikely that they will want to put one in, especially if they have to pay for it because they did not plan on investing in something like this and are already paying the assessment for the road work. Last year we went this route with the City of White Bear Lake and got no interest from property owners.

- Should VLAWMO offer to put in the raingardens for them but ask that they sign an agreement to do the maintenance for the next 5 years? VLAWMO could work with a design/install contractor or perhaps work through RCD to do the design and then hire a contractor to do the install. This is similar to what the City of Maplewood has done and have had good success overall. If Kristine gets a willing homeowner (or more than one), she could invite them to come to her spring raingarden workshops for free to learn more about raingardens and understand how to take care of them. The TEC would need to determine a cost limit per raingarden if we go this route. We could set a limit of \$2000 per raingarden so that we aren't investing more than we would via the regular cost share program. We would just not require a 25% cash match. If the TEC wanted to allow for more to be spent, a different cap could be considered.

- How many raingardens would VLAWMO be willing to fund? Ideally we could get 1 raingarden on each of these streets to capture most of the runoff. The TEC should consider what we should do if we get more than one interested homeowner. If 2 or 3 people on the same street are interested, do we offer to put all the raingardens in?

- Funding is available for these raingardens could come from either

6.4.6 Impaired Water Implementation

6.4.5 Additional Water Quality Improvements

6.3.4 Financial Incentives (Cost Share Program)

My recommendation at this time would be to allow me to pursue working with the City of WBL to see if we can get any willing homeowners to put in a curb cut raingarden and set a budget limit (perhaps up to \$10,000 total?) from one of the budget areas mentioned in my memo. I can also ask RCD to help me model pollutant reductions for the properties whose owners show interest. Finally, I would recommend that the TEC recommend to the Board that staff work on developing a draft policy for working with its communities on road reconstruction and curb cut raingarden installation partnerships. Perhaps it is something that can be fully fleshed out and incorporated in our next generation 10 Year Water Plan, which we will begin working on this year.

Discussion:

Graham stated that in regards to the variance, he is supportive of that because it is hard to work within the confines of the area in order to meet standards and they are making efforts to mitigate. Brian asked if it would be worth putting in curb cuts even if they aren't interested right away.

A motion was made and seconded by Mann & Linder to direct Kristine to work with the City of White Bear Lake in pursuing raingardens with residents on the streets indicated and set a budget cap of \$10,000 from Budget line 6.4.6 to provide funding for any projects. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Education & Outreach

1. Tour of SPRWS Water Treatment Plant

A tour of the SPRWS Treatment Plant will be on Wednesday, April 22nd at 5pm. Justine Roe will conduct the tour. The Board will hold its scheduled meeting at the SPRWS facility after the tour.

2. Spring Shallow Lakes Forum

A Shallow Lakes Forum will be held again on April 25th from 8:30am – 12:30pm. It is again at the MN Arboretum in Chanhassen. Vanessa is working with people to hopefully host one on the east side of the metro. Possible topics that could be discussed: Chris Mann suggested sediment build up in shallow lakes. Grisim asked about AIS in shallow lakes. Gorder mentioned shoreline restoration. Larson mentioned phosphorus content in shallow lakes.

3. Water Resource Expo

The City of White Bear Lake is hosting a Water Resource Expo at their City Hall on Saturday, May 2nd from 9am-noon.

4. Raingarden & Maintenance Workshops

Kristine will conduct her annual spring workshops again this year. A workshop to learn about raingardens, how to design and install them will be on Wednesday May 6th from 6-8:30pm. This class will be a combination of 2 separate classes in previous years. The Maintenance class will be on Wednesday May 13th from 6-7:30pm. Both classes will be held in the Training Room at the Fire Station, across the parking lot from Vadnais Heights City Hall. Gorder said we could get it in the North Oaks newspaper – the deadline is this Wednesday.

C. Plan Reviews/WCA

A complaint was made about activity on the shoreline of Gilfillan Lake on NOHOA property. A resident had taken it upon themselves to “restore” the shoreline by

clearing away the vegetation that was there, laying down plastic tarps and filling in the area with mulch and wood chips. Brian met with Mike Roberston from the City, Kimberly Murray from NOHOA, the residents, and a representative from a landscaping company called Refugia, whom NOHOA has worked with to do shoreline restoration around Pleasant Lake. The resident has learned that this activity cannot continue and NOHOA will be working with Refugia to come up with a proper plan for fixing the issues there.

VII. Reports

A. Financial Report for April 2015 & Authorization for Payment

It was moved & seconded by Lindner & Graham to approve the treasurer's report and April payment of checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. TEC Report to the Board

It was moved and seconded by Lindner & Mann to approve the April TEC Report to the Board.

VIII. Commissioner Reports

Graham asked for some input regarding a letter from a resident in Vadnais Heights who would like to do some algae treatment in a pond on part of his property. He's asked neighbors to help pay for the treatment. Graham wanted input from VLAWMO or the others about it. Mann said they should try to do it naturally with native vegetation. Asleson asked if a storm drain entered into it. Graham said it did. Asleson said to tell them all to quit washing their cars because that drains to the pond and drives up the phosphorus. Graham said he will check into the company and possibly go with Brian and Kristine to look at it.

IX. St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) Report

The head of the EPA was in town and did a tour of the SPRWS facilities and did a press conference from there.

X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

Next meeting will be this Monday. Interns are starting and new employees starting.

XI. Public Comment

Larson said he was at a car wash yesterday and saw a sign saying they are recycling the water and wondered if that was something that is common now. It is becoming more prevalent.

XII. Next Meetings

TEC: May 8; Board: April 22

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Lindner to adjourn at 8:56am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.