

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
April 14, 2017
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Lakes Room**

Commission Members Present:

Mark Graham	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Jim Grisim	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Bob Larson	North Oaks (NO)
Jim Lindner	Gem Lake (GL)
Tom Riedesel	White Bear Township (WBT)
Marty Asleson	Lino Lakes (LL)

Commission Members Absent:

Others in attendance: Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Tyler Thompson, Nick Voss (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Justine Roe, Jeremy Erickson (St. Paul Regional Water Service – SPRWS)

I. **Call to Order** Chair Graham called the meeting to order at 7:26am.

II. **Approval of Agenda**

It was requested that agenda item V.A.3. Vegetation Survey Proposal for Wilkinson & Charley Lakes be added to the agenda and item V.A.4. RFP for Wetland Delineation at Pennington Place.
It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Larson approve the April 14, 2017 agenda as amended.
Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Larson to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2017 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. **Administration & Operations**

A. Administrator's report

A tour of the SPRWS plant is being held for VLAWMO at 5:30 PM, April 26th. TEC members are invited but should RSVP to Nick as space is limited. The Board meeting will follow the tour with food served before the meeting. The annual audit is wrapping up and will be highlighted for the Board for their approval at the meeting.

B. 2018 Budget

Stephanie has begun working on the 2018 budget and will have a draft at the May TEC meeting. Bob Larson and Mark Graham will be providing guidance at the Finance committee meeting in late April. The final budget must be approved by the Board at the June 28th meeting. There were large cuts that were made in order to keep the SSU raise at a minimum, however that means we will need to find funding for the projects indicated in the Water Plan through partners and grants if we want to get them completed.

V. **Projects**

A. Project Updates

1. Wilkinson & Goose Lakes Project Study

Due to the need to gather more information from the City of White Bear Lake, Barr and Young Environmental Group will not have a presentation ready for the April TEC meeting. They WILL be at the April 26 Board meeting to make a presentation and will come to the May TEC as well to go over their findings and what they feel the next best steps will be. Staff from VLAWMO and White Bear Lake met with Greg Wilson from Barr to go over specifics about the Goose Lake subwatershed and to visit some sites to discuss possible BMPs. The City sent over all the information they had regarding storm sewers and other technical information to assist with the analysis of what the next steps should be. It is likely that their findings will recommend some additional studies to clarify current information along with potential BMPs that they feel would provide the best benefit, based on the information they have had to work with.

2. Birch Lake BMP Assessment

Greg Wilson from Barr is working on the analysis of the 4th & Otter Lk Rd site. The City of White Bear Lake approved \$6,000 to go towards this work so this will offset what VLAWMO had budgeted. WBL engineering staff surveyed the storm sewers and culverts that lead to the project area to assist with the efforts. Greg has indicated that the drainage area is likely larger than we anticipated and sent us information for where he thinks the actual drainage area includes. Kristine and Tyler did some field investigation and have provided information to Greg that will hopefully give him what he needs to incorporate those areas with his analysis. Additionally, Kristine has contacted Ramsey County to see if they would willing to help with costs for this project since Otter Lake Road is a County Road but was told there was no available budget at this time. Kristine and Tyler will continue conversations with the County in case funds become available or if they could participate in the installation portion of the project.

3. Vegetation Survey Proposal for Wilkinson & Charley Lakes

As part of our 2017 studies for the watershed, we planned to do vegetation surveys on Wilkinson and Charley Lakes. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) has already gone out to do the bathymetry survey for both lakes and have submitted their proposal to complete the vegetation survey. For Wilkinson Lake, the survey will cost \$2992 and for Charley, it will cost \$1998. We have these studies budgeted and have enough funds to cover these costs. Staff recommends approval of this proposal.

It was moved by Graham and seconded by Grisim to approve the RCD vegetation survey proposals with a cap at \$3000 for Wilkinson Lake and \$2000 for Charley Lake. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

4. Wetland Delineation Proposal for Pennington Place development in Vadnais Heights

The Board directed staff to conduct a wetland delineation for a neighborhood that has contacted the watershed and the City numerous times due to wet yards. The houses are adjacent to a wetland. Brian sent out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to do the delineation. Four proposals were submitted. Estimates ranged from \$1300-\$3536. Sambatek is the lowest bidder and we will be recommending the approval of their proposal to the Board. We have worked with them in the past and been satisfied with their efforts. The report should be

completed this spring-summer. Graham discussed complaints are often made by property owners who live near wetlands or drainage areas. Anything built before the early 1990's was done before the Wetland Conservation Act was enacted and therefore they may experience issues that are natural but that may mean they have wet yards. At this particular location, the houses are set up high so the homes are not being damaged but their yards are basically in a floodplain and it is hard to get them to understand that it is natural and while it may not be ideal to have wet backyards, it likely isn't best to manipulate the area at all. The homeowners want to bring fill into their yards to raise them up and have more useable space. The delineation will determine the edge of the wetland and therefore what space would be allowed for this sort of activity. Wherever the delineation line is placed, there is a 30' buffer requirement past that as well.

The homeowners have also brought up the idea of dredging the channel but at this time, staff does not feel this would be the proper action. While it is likely the channel has gotten silt in it over the years, all visits to the area show that the water is running smoothly and freely with no back ups noted.

It was moved by Linder & seconded by Graham to recommend the Board accept the proposal from Sambatek to perform the wetland delineation. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VI. Programs

A. Landscape Level 1 Considerations

There are 4 LL1 applications this month:

2017-02 is a project with Ramsey County Parks at Tamarack Nature Center. They constructed infiltration basins as part of renovations at the nature center and seeded them last year. Their grant request is to install native plants in these basins which goes above and beyond water quality requirements. The native plants would provide beneficial habitat for pollinators and the deeper roots would allow for more infiltration in the basins. The total cost is \$3500 and they are requesting \$2000.

2017-03 is a shoreline restoration along a stormwater pond in Vadnais Heights. The homeowner worked with VLAWMO last year to install a floating wetland as part of a study project. Currently, there is no buffer along the shoreline, other than lawn grass. The project would restore 65 linear feet of the pond shoreline for a total of 1300 square feet of native plantings. They have plans to continue the restoration along the rest of their property after they complete this year's work. The estimated total for this portion of the project is \$4300 and they are requesting \$2000.

2017-04 is for a 165 square foot permeable paver patio at a home in Vadnais Heights that drains towards Sucker Lake. Staff has asked for additional information from the contractor to ensure the project will be done correctly but feels comfortable allowing for approval at this time. Funds aren't dispersed until a project is completed and approved by staff and will work with the homeowner to receive the information showing the project is being done correctly. Total project price is \$6000 and they are asking for \$2000.

2017-05 is for a raingarden and restoration along a tributary to Lambert Creek for a property in Vadnais Heights. The property has a ditch linking to Lambert Creek and there is significant erosion which is now undermining a shed on the property. They are working with Nelco Landscaping on a

design to capture runoff with a raingarden as well as shore up the side of the ditch to prevent erosion. Total project price is estimated to be \$8000 and they are asking for \$2000.

Staff recommends approval of 2017-02, 2017-03, 2017-04, and 2017-05 for \$2000 each.

It was moved by Grism and seconded by Larson to approve LL1 grants 2017-02, 2017-03, 2017-04, and 2017-05 for \$2000 each. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Education & Outreach

1. Adopt-a-Drain

Nick has a kit and information packet ready for the program. He hopes to have a dozen participants this year.

2. Stormdrain Stenciling

Nick worked with a group of Allina Nurses marking drains in the Oakmede area in White Bear Township. They went door to door to let folks know about the program and VLAWMO. They also cleaned out the drains.

3. Raingarden workshop

Kristine and Nick held a raingarden workshop this past Wednesday night. 17 people came to the workshop and they were very engaged. Feedback results were very positive.

C. Monitoring Report Part 3 – Birch, Gem, Goose, & Tamarack

Brian gave a summary of 2016 findings for Birch, Gem, Goose, and Tamarack.

Birch Lake: Phosphorus (TP) and Chlorophyll A (ChIA) has excellent water quality and has never had high levels since our monitoring program has begun. The trend shows TP going down. The one hiccup was the final sample of ChIA which came back abnormally high. We aren't sure where that comes from and it may have been a sampling error. The Chloride readings are below state standards (230 mg/L), although it is the highest levels for VLAWMO lakes. The highest reading was 85mg/L.
Gem Lake: Average TP was 30mg/L which is below state standards. Gem went on the State Impaired List in 2010 and the PCA is now looking at removing it from the Impaired List.

West Goose: Average TP was 187mg/L and East Goose was 291mg/L. These are our unhealthiest lakes in the watershed. It shows a trend of TP going down but it is still far above standards. The fish removal hasn't shown a big reduction. Vegetation surveys on the lakes show a large vegetation population on West Goose and hardly any on East Goose. The vegetation is mainly Curlyleaf pondweed. That plant is now spreading to the east basin.

Tamarack: Average TP of 187mg/L with a trend going up slightly. The floating island showed signs of nutrient improvement this year. It was the 4th year of sampling. We will see if there is continued improvement. The island was undersized for the water body but if we continue to see improvements, that is hopeful.

VII. Reports

A. Financial Report for April 2017 & Authorization for Payment

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Grisim 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 by and seconded by to approve the TEC Report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VIII. Commissioner Reports

-Asleson stated that LL has received a concept proposal for a development on the east side of Amelia Lake. It would be a multi-use site, including senior housing.

-Grisim stated that Birch Lake has its 10th annual lake clean up on May 6 where they clean up trash along the shore and roads. The City comes around and picks up the trash bags.

-Riedesel stated that a bridge for Water Gremlin over Lambert Creek will be starting soon. Also, they have an applicant for the TEC position and will be voting on it at the Township's Board meeting on Monday.

-Brian and Tyler attended a meeting about the proposal to augment White Bear Lake. This proposal was directed by the Legislature and is strictly a concept plan at this point. There is no funding or owners for this project. The proposal shown would cost \$40 million and includes a pump house at the corner of Garceau and Edgerton and send it to White Bear Lake. The proposal also discusses the ecological concerns and questions regarding this idea. Larson attended the meeting as well. He stated the DNR made it very clear that they are not advocating for augmentation of the lake; they are doing what was directed by the Legislature. SEH created the proposal – no other firms wanted to take on this part of the project. They were at the meeting, along with the DNR, and Joe Bischoff from Wenck to discuss the concept plan and answer questions. Annual operating costs are estimated to be over \$400,000/year.

-Larson attended a Met Council – Environmental Committee meeting and said he met Maria McCarthy who represents District 10 which includes North Oaks. She wasn't too familiar with the watershed but said she was eager to learn more. Larson also brought up the grant programs offered through Met Council and stated that it should be a funding source we consider for our projects. Staff indicated that they were aware of those funds and would definitely pursue them once our potential projects are ready for that step.

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

They will have "drinking water week" and an Open House on May 11th.

X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

They are planning more forums and are hoping to have a big one about climate change this fall. Paul Gardner has resigned as a Commissioner so they will be advertising for a replacement. Behrens also stated that the League of MN Cities will be hosting a meeting with representatives from Met Council on 5/18 6:30pm and said it was open to everyone if we were interested in getting to know more about this group and spreading the word about the watershed.

XI. Public Comment

XII. Next Meetings

TEC: May 12; Board: April 26

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Graham to adjourn at 8:46am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.