



The Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
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Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission Minutes  
October 13, 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)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Paul Duxbury	White Bear Township (WBT)
Marty Asleson	Lino Lakes (LL)

**Commission Members Absent:**

**Others in attendance:** Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Tyler Thompson, Nick Voss (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Jeremy Erickson (St. Paul Regional Water Service – SPRWS); Kate Winsor (NO resident); Diane Gorder (NOHOA)

I. **Call to Order** Chair Graham called the meeting to order at 7.30am.

II. **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Grisim and seconded by Larson to approve the October 13, 2017 agenda as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Tessier to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2017 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. **Administration & Operations**

A. Administrator's report

BWSR and the Met Council have been hosting listening sessions partly in preparation for a Governors Clean Water Summit this winter. We co-hosted a 25 by 25 meeting with Rice Creek Watershed District at White Bear Lake City Hall, as part of this effort. We had a good turnout, filling the WBL City Council chambers. What we heard most was that people are saying that they want to see more money towards clean water efforts and want more education to the public. VLAWMO has increased its education efforts but it shows that there is always room for more to be done. Zebra mussel control experiment is moving forward with the with the EcoSoar KRIA ionizer that creates and injects superoxide into the water. The USGS has expressed an interest in it and will be doing lab tests to determine the minimum level of superoxide needed to remediate zebra mussels. They would also design and supervise a field test, potentially in a VLAWMO lake. Depending on expenses, it is possible a grant may be needed to pursue this.

B. Local Water Plan Updates

Last year at this time VLAWMO finished its 10-year Comprehensive Water Plan with approval from BWSR. Under State statute all of the local (municipal) governments have until December 31, 2018 to update their local water plans to be consistent with the watershed plans. It has the positive effect of insisting cities and watersheds talk to each other about water management, clarifying priorities and setting implementation steps and timelines for reaching our common goals. As VLAWMO, a non-permitting watershed, looks to our municipalities to enforce our standards, it provides a chance to talk about where we have updated our standards and how they are going to ensure those protections are in place. VLAWMO is charged with reviewing all six local water plans of the communities within VLAWMO for consistency with the VLAWMO plan. If they are found to be consistent, then the VLAWMO Board will approve them. The first two plans have come in. So by

statute, a 60 day clock started for VLAWMO action. November 4<sup>th</sup> is the deadline. The only regular meeting of the Board is Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>. That's when we hope to approve both plans. Staff has reviewed both the Gem Lake and Vadnais Heights plans for consistency with the VLAWMO plan. Preliminary comments have been provided to both cities. They have an opportunity to respond and possibly make changes. There is one more consideration: both Metropolitan Council and the Counties are also reviewing the local plans concurrently. They have 45 days to forward their comments to VLAWMO and we must consider them in our final review. We don't have those for you at this time; those agencies have until about 4 days before our Board meeting. A final recommendation for Board action won't be available until then. VLAWMO is charged with giving the approval for local plans. Here are a few comments and highlights from the draft local water plans. Your insights and comments are welcome.

1. Gem Lake
  - a. Good comments
    - i. Goals and policies well thought out and consistent with VLAWMO Plan.
    - ii. Implementation includes possible BMP on Hoffman/Scheuneman road and further assessment of problem areas in 2017-18.
    - iii. Gem Lake is being considered for delisting from the Impaired waters list in 2018.
  - b. Changes requested
    - i. Mapping correction on drainage from the Scheuneman Road area which goes west, under 61 rather than east out of the watershed.
    - ii. Two Water standards were rather inconsistent: VLAWMO requires 1.1" of runoff to be infiltrated and construction and reconstruction equal to or greater than 10,000 SF of disturbance rather than 1 acre.
    - iii. VLAWMO has requested to meet with the city regularly (annually) to discuss needs and plan for coordinated activity. VLAWMO also would like the Education and Outreach Plan referenced in their plan if they are looking to VLAWMO for assistance in this area.

We have since received the comments of Met Council for the Gem Lake plan. Met Council felt that more should be added to the implementation table and a clearer explanation for how the City will fund the activities listed.

2. Vadnais Heights
  - a. Good comments
    - i. Very happy to see VH has been and will conduct inspections of structural BMPs and within 5 years of the Permit (MS4) will have inspected all for structural integrity, proper functioning and maintenance needs.
    - ii. There is a comprehensive list of existing and potential water resource issues and concerns.
    - iii. Very good maps and inventory.
  - b. Changes requested
    - i. Lambert Creek language acknowledges VLAWMO as ditch authority but could identify city partnership efforts more consistently, i.e., where the drainage area is wholly within the city the city will partner with feasibility assessments and maintenance. This could aid in addressing TMDL requirements under their MS4 permit.
    - ii. Lambert Creek should be added to their MS4 Permit spreadsheet and pet waste management should be taken off as a BMP.
    - iii. Appendix B Design Standards – VLAWMO requires 10,000 SF as a threshold to triggers the other standards and that the first 1.1" of rainfall must be infiltrated.

## V. Reports

- A. Financial Report for October & authorization for payment.

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Graham to approve the Treasurer's report and October payment of checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## VI. Programs

### A. WCA – Larey – Incidental wetland review

On September 28, 2017 VLAWMO received a report from AMI Consulting Engineers. Betsy Larey hired AMI to review the 2017 delineation report for her property located at 1298 Birch Lake Boulevard, White Bear Lake, MN. AMI was hired to address the incidental wetland argument for the wetland located on the southwest side of the property (wetland 2 in delineation report). AMI concluded that it was their opinion that this wetland should be considered an incidental wetland and was created through manmade activities on adjacent properties, primarily the hydrologic modification of input from the western offsite stormwater pond.

VLAWMO reviewed the AMI report as well as Mike Schumann from the RCD and Ben Meyer from BWSR. After additional review, it is the TEP's professional opinion there is still significant evidence from aerials provided that wetland signatures are present within the delineated area and no evidence of incidental wetland. VLAWMO sent a memo to AMI explaining our decision.

### B. Education & Outreach

Nick provided an update on E & O activities

#### 1. Drain care events

Two drain cleaning events are planned for this fall on 10/28 in White Bear Lake and 11/11 in Vadnais Heights.

#### 2. Lambert Creek video

A video is now posted on Lambert Creek as a tool for VLAWMO to address topics of wetlands and drainage. It can be found from the home page by clicking the red 'play' logo just beneath the homepage photo slideshow, or here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSKilid60nCSdf3vC6UDLug/videos>

#### 3. Whitaker Pond outreach & signage

A sign for the Whitaker Pond treatment project is in the works. Nick is gathering quotes for the printing and installation for the sign.

4. Slideshow of outreach efforts that have taken place in the last month, including raingarden clean-up and of the tour Stephanie provided of recent projects.

## VII. Projects

### A. Project Updates

#### 1. Sucker Channel

Work is supposed to begin on this project imminently. SPRWS will be vacuuming out zebra mussels on October 17. If you an opportunity to stop by and check it out, it is pretty interesting to watch.

#### 2. Whitaker treatment wetland work

Brian showed a few pictures of the installation work. Construction began last week. It is expected that this treatment system should last about 25 years before any replacement work would be needed. We will be sampling and testing the different layers within the treatment system to test how well it is working to remove nutrients. The installation work is expected to be completed by the end of October.

#### 3. Lambert Creek maintenance and survey cost estimates

Estimates for both survey work and maintenance from the Koehler flume to Lambert Lake have been received. VLAWMO received 2 estimates for both the survey and the debris removal. Estimates below:

#### Ditch Cleaning

Bolander - \$53,530

Outdoor Labs - \$34,547

Survey Work:

Lake and Land Surveying - \$6,000

E.G. Rud - \$4,490

Separate from the work above, the City of Vadnais Heights has submitted an application for permit to the DNR electronically through MPARS, with the assistance of VLAWMO staff, to perform maintenance of Branch Ditch #5A to restore drainage flow and capacity of the system. Maintenance includes the mechanical removal of vegetation root mass within the original footprint of the Branch Ditch, but **does not** include ditch repair by excavating a channel into sediments below the root mass. The project is roughly 1,300 feet in length. VLAWMO's lawyer, Troy Gilchrist, has given his opinions regarding this issue. Some of his comments include:

“My view is that the WMO is more directly responsible for the repair and maintenance of the accepted ditch system than it is over other waterways in its area. As such, I recommend the WMO work to program some funds into its Plan for future work as it determines is appropriate... With the more direct duty comes a greater risk of liability if an alleged failure by the WMO to maintain the ditch results in damage to property.

That is not to say the city in which the ditch is located cannot, or should not, assist with keeping the ditch maintained...those benefited (including local governments) from such work need to pay their share of that work... It strikes me that a conversation should occur between the WMO and the city as part of developing a future amendment to the Plan to provide funding for ditch projects on ways the WMP can city can cooperate to get the work done.”

The VLAWMO Board will be discussing this issue at length at Board meeting this month and our lawyer will be present to hopefully come to a consensus for how we will proceed with ditch maintenance.

VH has gotten quotes for cleaning out part of Branch 5 of the system and will be doing the work this winter. The quotes ranged from \$95,000 to \$100,000. The City will be using their storm sewer utility fees to pay for this.

VLAWMO will be working on a plan for ditch maintenance and will have to amend the Water Plan to address how we will approach these issues and how we will fund them.

#### 4. Capstone Project

Diane Gorder stated that a tour was given to the grad students who are working on this project. Jeremy Erickson arranged for the students to see the inside of the gate house which houses the technological equipment for managing the lake levels. Erickson stated the students are eager and are requesting lots of information and seem very interested in putting together a very good project.

### VIII. Commissioner Reports

Graham stated that the DNR has filed an appeal for the White Bear Lake decision so we will be keeping an eye on this and keep reporting on any updates we receive.

Grisim stated that the Birch Lake Improvement District completed an annual report and asked if it could be shared at a future TEC meeting.

Asleson stated that Rice Creek Watershed has begun to draw down Peltier Lake to try to control invasive vegetation. They wanted to do it last year but there was so much rain in the fall that it didn't work.

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

This weekend, the Highland Water Tower will be open to the public.

Creating a Canada Goose management plan for the area by the Vadnais Lake gate house and in the Sucker Channel park area. The geese excrement is becoming a safety hazard for E.coli exposure. As part of the plan, they need to come up with non-lethal options. The utility is looking at the option of removing young in the spring as a method for reducing the numbers.

### X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

**XI. Public Comment**

**XII. Next Meetings**

TEC: November 17; Board: October 25

**XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Tessier and seconded by Asleson to adjourn at 8:37am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.