



Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
November 17, 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)
Paul Duxbury	White Bear Township (WBT)
Marty Asleson	Lino Lakes (LL)

Commission Members Absent:

Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
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Others in attendance: Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Tyler Thompson, Nick Voss (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Justine Roe (St. Paul Regional Water Service – SPRWS); Kate Winsor (NO TEC alternate); Diane Gorder (NOHOA)

I. **Call to Order** Chair Graham called the meeting to order at 7.30am.010

II. **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Duxbury and seconded by Larson to approve the November 17, 2017 agenda as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Graham and seconded by Larson to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2017 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. **Administration & Operations**

A. Administrator's report – Grass Lake flooding discussion

Previous meetings have brought up some significant flooding issues to the east of VLAWMO in Grass Lake and just north of Grass Lake (e.g. Gramsie Road area). Because Grass Lake wetland and West Vadnais Lake are connect via culverts under Rice Street, VLAWMO has been included in a series of stakeholder meetings. Some short term studies and fixes have been implemented but a lack of storage for stormwater remains a problem. Multiple heavy storm events have made this more difficult. Some of the options being explored involve sending water to VLAWMO, perhaps under certain conditions. Reversing the augmentation flow from Snail Lake (north of Grass) back to Sucker Lake is one option. Sending more water to West Vadnais is another and what it would take to clean water to the point where it could be pumped to East Vadnais is also being considered. Barr Engineering is evaluating and costing out these options for Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District. VLAWMO has cooperated by sharing water quality data for West Vadnais. We'll keep you posted on the direction of these discussions.

V. **Reports**

A. Financial Report for November & authorization for payment of checks.

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

VI. **Programs**

A. Education & Outreach

1. Lake care events summary
2. Watershed Action Volunteers (WAV) event summary

Nick reviewed the outreach events he held this fall to clean up storm drains and provide some education to local residents about how cleaning up storm drains helps keep lakes clean. He will take the experiences of this year and use it towards planning events for next year. He would like to do a drain clean up at Birch Lake. Grisim stated that if it could be done the first Saturday of May, which is when they have their annual Birch Lake cleanup day, residents will already be out and doing activities to help keep Birch Lake healthy so it would be a good tie-in.

3. Review of E & O Plan – first steps

TEC members are invited to contribute to the crafting, critique, and improvement of the Education and Outreach Plan. As a stand-alone document from the VLAWMO comprehensive plan, it is able to be edited and improved annually without official amendments from the Board. This means it is an active, living plan that gets more effective with community contribution. To start, Ed/Outreach (Nick) would like to keep familiarity with the Education and Outreach Plan (EOP) goals. As VLAWMO enters December and January, which are the months focused on annual reports and individual report cards, familiarity with the EOP will allow TEC members to work alongside VLAWMO staff in real time as we shape next year's plan.

Think of the projects, presentations, and topics that have been presented for Ed/Outreach in the last year's TEC meetings. The report card (evaluation) that Nick will fill out for the EOP is on **pages 32-34** of the EOP. The EOP document also contains more details that support the 2017 goals listed below. This document can be found at vlawmo.org under "About"> 2017-2026 watershed plan" or by request. As Nick fills out the evaluation a more concise summary of what's been done throughout the year will be visible. VLAWMO's questioning process in reviewing the EOP, that TEC members are welcome to participate in, goes something like this:

- **Measuring:** How can we measure this goal (what tangible indicator will symbolize that the goal's been met)? What are meaningful, measurable outcomes to you in your communities?
- **Big picture context:** In what ways does ___ goal from the EOP support VLAWMO's larger comprehensive plan? Are activities that supposedly relate to this goal actually relevant?
- **Feasibility:** How is any activity or project repeatable... what support does it have for another round or what tells us it's a one-time deal?
- **Strategy:** How can an activity gain more support and participation? How can an E/O activity lead the public to other projects in VLAWMO such as cost-share programs or volunteering?
- **Problem solving:** What barriers exist for the EOP goals and objectives? How can they be overcome?

EOP Goals (2017):

1. Provide assistance in MS4 permitting
2. Improve city-to-VLAWMO communication in the MS4 permitting process
3. Key personnel (TEC and BOD) will continue to advance their knowledge of water and related natural resources
4. Provide place-based watershed education that applies to multiple age demographics
5. Assist schools in establishing and maintaining educational stormwater best management practices (BMP's i.e. raingardens).
6. Educate community members on VLAWMO water issues and projects
7. Encourage community members to increase their own knowledge as well as act on watershed issues, and provide tools to do so.
8. Build a VLAWMO sense of place that both fosters ecological awareness and provides a space for community reflection.

9. Grow a volunteer base that is empowered to lead and learn.
10. Foster a water-focused congruency between local community groups.

B. 2017 Report Card

In addition to the E/O Plan review, we are also TEC help with looking at how well we accomplished our major 2017 goals of the overall watershed Plan– your perspective, your opinions and your direction is critical. Did we get done what we said we would get done? How well was it done and are there lessons learned? What does this year’s work tell us about our new goals for 2018? Keep in mind that the staff is probably too close to much of the work to be totally objective. That’s where you are needed in this year-end task.

We’re going to try to keep this simple and start with a quick online survey for you to fill out. It should only take 5-10 minutes – there won’t be that many questions. Answers will be multiple choice although there will be areas for comments. I’ll bring the results of the survey to an upcoming meeting for all of us to discuss. If you open up last year’s annual report to page 27 you will see the Goals and project/program areas that VLAWMO identified in its Water Plan and made more specific in the 2017 Work Plan. There is a lot of nitty gritty that we probably won’t get to unless you want to explore it further. The Survey Monkey will show up in your inbox by the end of next week. **Reply Deadline: Dec. 4th.**

Here are the areas that will show up in the 2017 VLAWMO Work Plan Survey: *(hint: lots of background/reports are on the website for you to check out!)*

- 1. Major Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)**
 - a) Sucker Channel Restoration
 - b) Whitaker Treatment Wetlands
 - c) Lower Kohler restoration channel
 - d) Feasibility studies – Goose Lake alum / spent lime treatment & Birch Lake – 4th & Otter treatment options
- 2. Grant Programs (Cost-share)**
 - a) Landscape 1
 - b) Landscape 2
 - c) Community Blue (education oriented)
- 3. Education & Outreach**
 - a) Workshops and Community events
 - b) WAV & Citizen Science
 - c) K-12 – youth
 - d) Media & communications
 - e) MS4 – municipal partnerships
- 4. Monitoring**
 - a) Regular lake and creek monitoring
 - b) Targeted monitoring & partnership monitoring
- 5. Administrative operations –**
 - a) Regulations – Standards reviews & WCA
 - b) Budget-Storm sewer utility- HR
 - c) Planning and evaluation – Charley Lake SLMP & Annual Report

C. Landscape Grant Program Summary – 2017

A total of \$29,029.59 was awarded to 17 projects in 2017. As of 11/6/17, \$22,052.26 has been paid to 12 projects. Of the 5 remaining projects, 2 are supposed to be completed and will be submitting their reimbursement requests by the end of the year. Therefore, \$4500 will be carried over to 2018 to cover the grants for the 3 other projects.

Rainbarrel Grants

3 awarded for total of \$154.59

1 in White Bear Lake; 2 in Vadnais Heights

Maintenance Grants

1 awarded for a total of \$425.00 in White Bear Lake

Landscape Level 1 Grants

12 awarded for a total of \$18,450 – 3 will be carried over to 2018

4 in North Oaks; 4 in Vadnais Heights; 1 in White Bear Township; 4 in White Bear Lake

Landscape Level 2 Grants

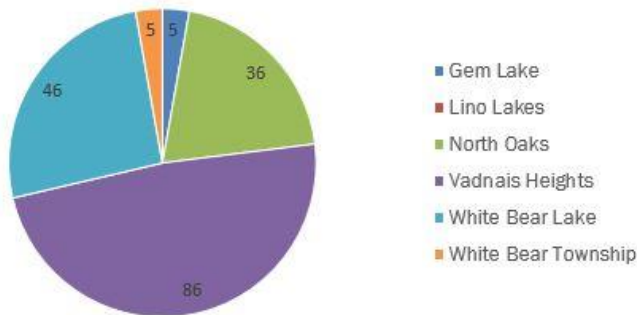
1 awarded for a total of \$10,000 in North Oaks (The Pines of North Oaks)

Since the cost share grant program began in 2007:

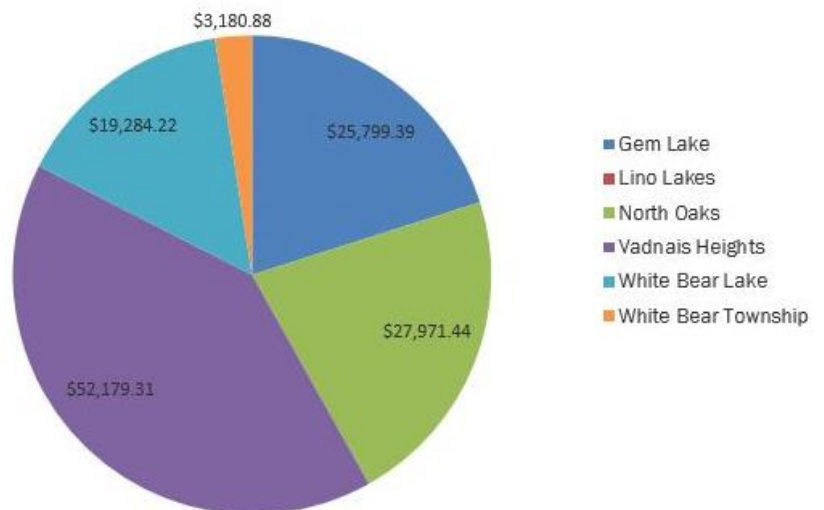
83 rainbarrel grants have been awarded for a total of \$4987.38

90 BMP grants have been awarded for a total of \$154,729.79. This funding has helped transform over 225,000 square feet of land into raingardens, native gardens, and shoreline restorations.

Total Grants by Municipality 2007-2017



Total Grant Payments by Municipality 2007-2017



VII. Projects

A. Sucker Channel Fall Work

The restoration work along Sucker Channel has been progressing. The early cold weather has hampered some of the activities. The channel edge has been cleared of any old asphalt and debris and lined with some rip rap. Additionally, coir logs and erosion control blanket have been installed. SPRWS would like to have more rip rap installed along the channel edge and Ramsey Parks wants more class V put in behind the retaining walls at the fishing plaza so hopefully the extra funds we have available in the budget will cover those costs. The fishing nodes have been built. The bituminous trail has been poured. The planting areas have been graded and they plan to have the split rail fence installed before they are done for the season. They should be done with all 2017 work by the end of November. Pictures and more information is on the VLAWMO website.

B. Whitaker Treatment Wetland Work

The work is finishing up for the year on the treatment wetlands. Media has been installed in the three treatment cells, pipes and pumps are in, shed is built and grading is complete. Due to the freezing weather testing of the treatment cells and plantings will be done in the spring as well as installation of the solar panel. Pictures and more information is on the VLAWMO website.

C. Lambert Creek Maintenance

Per direction from the Board at the October 25th 2017 meeting, VLAWMO contacted the Institution Community Work Crew (ICWC) which is part of the Minnesota Dept. of Corrections, for the possibility of using their services to do the debris removal on the roughly 1 mile stretch of Lower Lambert from Koehler Rd east past Pennington Place. Current bids for that work are costly, 35K to 60K. VLAWMO spoke with Scott Miller, ICWC Supervisor, and looks as though this may be a cost effective option to the ditch maintenance. If this service is the option used, it would have to be decided if the debris removed from the ditch will be side-casted or removed completely. If removed VLAWMO would have to coordinate with a partner for trucks, dump site and with residents for access to the creek. Brian met with Scott last week and he felt confident that a crew could complete the work within a 3 day period. A crew of 10 would cost \$750 per day. They would have chainsaws and other equipment to complete the job. If we wanted them to address buckthorn removal, we would have to provide the buckthorn stump treatment.

The TEC feels this is a good option to pursue. Brian will bring this to the December Board to determine how to proceed.

Shoreview has an ongoing contract with them to do work every year. They have also done work in White Bear Township.

Grisim/Duxbury – recommend to the Board to move forward with working with ICWC for this project.

D. Capstone Project

Gorder stated that the students working on this project have asked for additional data and are working diligently on the Pleasant Lake study.

VIII. Commissioner Reports

Larson stated that NO has identified some areas with purple loosestrife and would like to explore the use of beetles to help with control. He asked if it was worth pursuing. Grisim and Tyler both said it is worth looking into and staff could provide some information to help them with the process. Larson also stated that the City has a new conservation award program to encourage homeowners to engage in best use practices of our natural resources.

Asleson said the City of Lino Lakes Local Water Plan Update is being worked on and it will be coming to VLAWMO for review in the near future for review.

Graham stated that there was a VLAWMO Policy and Personnel Committee meeting last night.

Graham also stated that a salt workshop will be held at Ramsey County Public Works on Tuesday November 21, in partnership with VLAWMO and Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District.

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

Roe stated that SPRWS is in the middle of a plant upgrade and have been working on electrical improvements.

X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

Behrens stated that she isn't aware of anything happening at the RCD office, that they had a Board meeting in October, and will meet again in January. She also stated that the League of MN Cities will be having a meeting on November 30 in White Bear Lake at Rudy's Red Eye Grill. David Schultz, a political professor at Hamline University will be the speaker at the meeting.

XI. Public Comment

XII. Next Meetings

TEC: December 8; Board: December 13

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Grisim and seconded by Larson to adjourn at 8:45am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.