

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
July 13th, 2022
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)
Bob Larson	Treasurer, North Oaks (NO)
Paul Duxbury	White Bear Township (WBT)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)

Absent:

Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
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Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss (VLAWMO staff)

Call to Order

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

I. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve the July 13, 2022 TEC agenda. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

II. Approval of Minutes (June 8, 2022)

It was moved by Commissioner Duxbury and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve the June 8, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for Payment

Administrator Belfiori outlined the July finance table and highlighted the biochar design under the Lambert Creek fund and carp management activities under the Pleasant Charley Deep fund. He shared the biochar project is currently accepting quotes. Staff recommended approval.

It was motioned by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Larson to recommend approval of the July 2022 financial report for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Programs

A. Education & Outreach

1. Bridgewood raingarden update and kickoff event

Voss presented an overview of the Bridgewood Park raingarden and the North Oaks entrance raingarden. He highlighted the outcomes of the Bridgewood Park kick off meeting and presented the signage that was installed at the project. Voss stated volunteers located near the park are interested in assisting with the maintenance of the raingarden. He explained the education and outreach program associated with the raingarden project and its link to the MS4 permit program. Voss noted that he recently presented to the City of Vadnais Heights Parks Commission to explain the benefits of best management practices (BMPs) like raingardens and discuss that what we do during dry times matters and helps set us up for wetter years. He emphasized the importance of enhancing, maintaining, and repairing existing infrastructure during dry times. Voss and Belfiori added that VLAWMO staff can provide presentations to other groups in the community that are interested in environmental management topics.

Commissioner Tessier asked about the Central Middle School bioswale and underground infiltration trench. Voss described the project location and explained how the practices work. Commissioner Tessier asked if the project has been impacted by the construction at the school. Voss responded that he does not believe the project has been impacted. Commissioner Farrell asked about the high school construction work and if there are partnership opportunities. Staff responded that discussions have occurred with the school on possible partnership projects, but the school has budget limitations. Belfiori added staff are always looking for parking lot reconstruction opportunities.

2. Turf and salt maintenance tools

Voss introduced turf and salt maintenance tools and explained how these tools assist with the MS4 permit program. He highlighted the MPCA's Level 1 and Level 2 smart salting workshops coming up later in the year. VLAWMO is partnering with RCWD and RWMWD to host a Level 1 workshop on September 1st. Voss also explained what a water friendly turf maintenance workshop looks like and the highlights of the Sustainable Landcare Academy. Commissioner

Nelson ask about cost of the Academy and Voss responded he would need to get back to him on specific cost, but believes it is \$150.

Commissioner Duxbury asked if staff have had any contact with St. Pius Church on their parking lot project. Voss responded that Tyler had spoken with them and their project scope didn't include a BMP eligible for a grant.

Chair Farrell stated he was curious if private property owners are invited to the MPCA's smart salting workshops since most of them are more focused on reducing their liability and improving safety. He suggested there are opportunities to target large, commercial corporations to get involved with smart salting and asked if staff have ideas. Voss discussed the smart salting legislation process that is ongoing, which would limit the liability of private property owners. He stated that it is difficult to change the mindset of property owners, but communities can support the proposed legislation.

VI. Projects

1. Update on RWMWD's Request for Boundary Change in West Vadnais Lake Drainage Area

Administrator Belfiori provided an update on the request to pursue a boundary change in the West Vadnais Lake drainage area. He provided background of RWMWD's boundary change request, which was first stimulated by the RWMWD Board of Managers. Currently, the West Vadnais Lake subwatershed is within the VLAWMO political boundary, but is hydrologically connected to RWMWD. He explained that the majority of runoff to West Vadnais Lake comes from the Grass Lake subwatershed upstream in RWMWD, which provides much of its pollutant loading. Belfiori discussed VLAWMO is limited in managing the upstream conditions given the lake's upstream watershed and outlet are not in the VLAWMO political boundary.

VLAWMO staff, the City of Vadnais Heights, and RWMWD staff have met to discuss the boundary change request and the VLAWMO Board provided initial support to begin the formal boundary change process with BWSR at its June meeting pending City support and RWMWD filing a petition with BWSR. Belfiori stated the next step is for RWMWD to consider the boundary change responses received from the City and VLAWMO before beginning the formal petition process.

Commissioner Duxbury inquired about potential cost-share efforts for lake improvements between the two watershed entities and when they would take place. Belfiori responded that any collaborations would depend on if the boundary change occurs and would be derived from a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study that would contain proposed

projects. If the boundary change doesn't occur, negotiations to create this TMDL study and outline project plans and cost-sharing would need to take place. Commissioner Duxbury stated it would seem that a boundary change occurring would be in RWMWD's best interest since the outflow of West Vadnais Lake affects them regardless.

B. Update on Biochar Project

Corcoran described the background for the biochar project, outlining the history that it originally was to be constructed at the Lambert Lake wetland adjacent to Lambert Creek. This site proved to be inadequate for the project, and it was re-located to Whitaker Pond in White Bear Township. Corcoran stated that since the last VLAWMO Board meeting, SEH finished project plans that the Board approved, VLAWMO staff coordinated with Township staff and Board to establish a license agreement for the project installation, as well as staff completed the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) process to move forward with the project. Project costs reserved from the Lambert Lake Pond and Meander effort are being utilized to cover part of the cost, in addition to funds from the MPCA 319 grant, and Watershed-based Implementation Funds from BWSR. Corcoran said the remaining balance is \$128,000 and staff anticipate the project will be under budget.

The project is planned for the west side of whitaker pond, and is about 120 long, 15ft wide. It is a biochar "bench" that takes water during high water levels, when the pond water level increases due to a rain event. When the water level recedes, the filter is allowed to dry out. The pond will require dewatering for construction, and is expected to be completed in December 2022.

Corcoran explained VLAWMO is currently evaluating quotes from potential contractors, and will present these at the August Board of Directors meeting. He said one of the next steps is working with the White Bear Township on communications regarding the project.

V. Commissioner Reports

None

VI. NOHOA

None

VII. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

VIII. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None

IX. Public Comment

None

X. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting August 10th, Next BOD meeting August 24th.

XIII. Adjourn

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

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.