

Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
April 10, 2024
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

Commission Members Present:

Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake (GL)
Nick Ousky	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Susan Miller	City of North Oaks (NO)
Andy Nelson	City of Lino Lakes (LL)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

Absent: None

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss (VLAWMO staff), Ed Shapland (CAC), Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS)

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the April 10, 2024 TEC agenda.

III. Approval of Minutes (March 13, 2024)

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Chair Tessier to approve the March 13th meeting minutes as presented.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for April and Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori outlined the April financial report as included in the packet. Highlights included expenses related to the financial audit, watershed management plan, a Lambert Creek wetland retrofit near Whitaker Pond, spent lime study expenses, Tamarack Lake alum treatment, work with carp removal in Pleasant/Deep Lakes, engineering costs for the East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study, and various gully repairs.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the April Financial Report for payment.

B. TEC Report to Board

Administrator Belfiori presented highlights contained in the TEC report. WAV volunteer activities are kicking off and a budget subcommittee meeting is scheduled on April 3rd with the Board, with budget discussions continuing at the April and June Board meetings. A strategic watershed management plan planning meeting will be on April 24th.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve the April TEC Report to the Board.

C. Discussion on TEC alternates

Administrator Belfiori asked the TEC to consider if alternate contacts are available if unable to attend a future meeting.

Huntrods inquired about City approval for alternates. Administrator Belfiori confirmed alternates should be approved.

Nelson inquired about finance approvals in lieu of meeting attendance, Administrator Belfiori explained that due to open meeting laws the bill payments and motions must occur within the meeting in-person.

Administrator Belfiori suggested TEC members send alternate contact information by email if available.

D. Upcoming VLAWMO budget subcommittee meeting

Administrator Belfiori outlined an appointment opportunity for TEC representation at the Board subcommittee. Commissioner Nelson expressed interest to participate.

V. Programs

A. 2023 Annual Report and Monitoring Report with summaries

VLAWMO staff provided a summary of the 2023 monitoring report and annual report. Corcoran identified that the monitoring report includes the sampling data summary for each of the 15 lakes that are monitored. He then presented monitoring program highlights that included Pleasant Lake monitoring and the carp removal program. Also highlighted was the spent lime demonstration study including the monitoring of pH and nutrient sampling. He also explained the Tropic State Indexes (TSI) data and chart of VLAWMO Lakes based on 2023 data.

Voss summarized key pages from the 2023 Annual Report including a summary of the cost share program funding. He then provided an overview of the project highlights section of the report. He noted that the 2023 projects and programs summary table and the 2024 workplan table are the most important for BWSR to review. Voss then presented the 2023 expenditures summary graphic in the report.

Commissioner Nelson noted that these are excellent documents. Chair Tessier thanked staff for their work.

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to submit the 2023 Annual Report and Monitoring Reports to the VLAWMO Board of directors for approval at the April 24, 2024 Board meeting.

B. CB 2024-01 Vadnais Heights Elementary Raingarden Renovation

Voss summarized the Community Blue application to renovate one of the oldest raingardens in VLAWMO which is located at Vadnais Heights Elementary Raingarden. He noted that the applicant, who is pursuing his Eagle Scout badge through the project, will reestablish some turf in the area of invasive Siberian elm. He then explained that the City has assisted with this renovation work including extending an outlet pipe. Staff recommended approval of the application.

Commissioner Ousky asked about the frequency of Eagle Scout Projects overseen by VLAWMO. Voss identified two other completed Eagle Scout projects in the last 7 years, one other project was completed in the City of White Bear Lake. Voss said this current project is the second within a two-year time span. Voss noted how helpful these important programs are for the watershed and continued success of stormwater BMPs.

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve CB 2024-01 in the amount of \$1,000.

C. SHG 2024-01 Scherer Pollinator Garden

Sampedro outlined a proposed pollinator garden effort on the applicant's property which drains directly into Lambert Creek. Multiple planting areas are proposed in the project, and this effort is also a continuation of a 2022 Soil Health Grant. The applicant is within the time frame to apply again per the Soil Health Grant policy. Plant selection is focused on native plant species for open woodland, shade, as well as open sun areas.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve SHG 2024-01 in the amount of \$1,086.38.

D. SHG 2024-02 Missaghi Pollinator Garden

Sampedro presented a proposed pollinator garden project located on 6 acres off of Centerville Road, near Vadnais Heights Elementary. The property also drains directly to Lambert Creek. The project involves removing turfgrass, supplementing with compost/soil, and adding native plants. A detailed planting plan for the project includes 2,250 square feet of planting area. The applicant proposed utilizing sown seeds as well as purchased plants for the project.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve SHG 2024-02 in the amount of \$1,250.

E. LL2 2024-02 Elmwood Park Raingarden

Sampedro presented a proposed raingarden project at Elmwood Park, which drains to Lambert Creek. The Lambert Creek TMDL recommends retrofitting parks with large bioretention areas, which is what this project seeks to accomplish. The project would be

4,500 square feet and include a curb cut, rain guardian pretreatment structure, rock swales, and native plants. Sampedro stated staff propose utilizing grant funding from the BWSR Watershed Based Implementation Funding program for this project.

Commissioner Miller inquired about plant watering on the site. Sampedro and Commissioner Ousky confirmed that the contractor installing the raingarden is also on contract for 3 years of maintenance, which will include watering. Outside of the 3-year maintenance contract, the City will utilize a watering truck and/or conduct maintenance as needed.

Commissioner Ousky expressed gratitude to VLAWMO staff for the collaboration and partnership.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve LL2 2024-02 in the amount of \$30,064.05.

VI. Projects

A. Barr Feasibility Study for Water Reuse at Polar Lakes Park

Corcoran outlined the effort with White Bear Township to reuse stormwater for Polar Lakes Park irrigation. The fields in the park of focus use about 1.6-6 million gallons of water per year. In 2023, the VLAWMO board approved a Landscape Level 2 grant to pilot a smart irrigation system in the park. The proposed reuse system would continue this water conservation strategy. An existing constructed mitigation wetland would be the source of irrigation supplement. The study's findings revealed that the wetland storage can supply up to 2-4 weeks of water, depending on demand and variable water usage in the park. Corcoran outlined the two concept options that the study provides. The concepts are outlined in the powerpoint linked from the TEC Packet, and the powerpoint compares these concept options, with a range of costs, estimated phosphorus removals, and estimated water offset in gallons, among other variables. The effort is within a FEMA floodplain and would require permitting as well as State Wetland Conservation Act permitting among others.

The conclusion is that water reuse is feasible for the irrigation at Polar Lakes Park, with the potential to offset 1.9-4.3 million gallons per year of groundwater for irrigation.

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve to the Board the 3/17/2024 Barr Engineering Polar Park Stormwater Reuse Feasibility Study.

B. Update on East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study

Sampedro reiterated the study purpose is to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and protect drinking water in the East Vadnais Lake subwatershed. Various potential BMP locations have been selected for consideration through the study, and the study completion is expected by the end of May.

Staff have been working with SRF Consulting Group ("SRF") and study partners on moving the East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study forward. Since SRF started working on

the study, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling of the subwatershed has been completed. This data was used to create flood inundation maps with potential BMP locations that would provide some flood reduction and improve water quality downstream. SRF completed an initial draft of the study that included these maps and additional maps projecting the potential BMPs' impact with future storm events, which was reviewed at a stakeholder meeting two weeks ago. VLAWMO and partners provided comments and look forward to receiving the next draft for review.

C. Spent Lime demonstration project update

Administrator Belfiori described the continuation of the spent lime study at Oak Knoll Pond/Wood Lake. Up to 14 applications may be added in 2024 depending on continued monitoring results.

Temporary easement extensions have been received. VLAWMO received 8/10 of the original easements. Barr has communicated the parcels with permission to Erosion Works. Project communication and coordination is ongoing. The water department will be doing regular maintenance during the week of April 22. VLAWMO is waiting for the contractor to provide their earliest available date for an initial spring application.

D. Tamarack Lake alum project update

Administrator Belfiori explained that a Tamarack Lake alum effort may be completed as soon as Fall 2024. Barr Engineering is preparing RFQ documents for authorization at the April Board meeting. The temporary access agreement with Ramsey County Parks/RCSWCD has been completed, signed by Ramsey County, and received by VLAWMO.

E. Birch Lake AIS removal preparation

Administrator Belfiori presented VLAWMO staff are working with partners including MN DNR (permitting), BLID (payment of Dive Guys), Dive Guys (handpulling/reporting), and RCSWCD (pre/post surveys) on the ongoing AIS removal effort in Birch Lake. All partners have been contacted to make sure the project is ready to resume in the spring. The project may need to start early depending upon spring conditions.

Commissioner Huntrods acknowledged and expressed gratitude for Dawn Tanner's article on Birch Lake in the White Bear Press.

F. Update on Watershed Management Plan Progress and Invite

Administrator Belfiori invited the TEC to participate in the April 24th special Initial Planning meeting. Noticing has been completed, and preparation is ongoing for this special Initial meeting.

The 60-day letters received will be presented to the Board at the April special meeting. The 60-day letters were included in the TEC packet for reference.

There was 100% participation from the TEC on the TEC/CAC/Partner survey. Administrator Belfiori thanked TEC members for their participation.

G. Wilkinson Deepwater Wetland Restoration Minor Update

Administrator Belfiori stated eagle monitoring is ongoing. A final pay request is expected this spring/summer from the contractor. Vegetative establishment is the last required step before the project can be closed. Staff continue investigating options for the next round grant project.

H. Pleasant Lake Carp Removal Update

Administrator Belfiori provided an update that the second carp barrier is fully constructed and in operation. A double barrier is being used in 2024 due to the complications of carp learning and eluding the single barrier. The project is ready for removal when the carp migrate. He stated carp have not started moving yet.

Commissioner Miller confirmed that carp were not migrating as of yet.

VII. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Ousky expressed gratitude for VLAWMO's presence in the SRF resiliency study.

VIII. NOHOA

None.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None.

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

None.

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting May 8, 2024. Next BOD meeting April 24, 2024.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Lauren Sampedro