

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
July 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)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)
Tom Reidesel	White Bear Township (WBT) (alternate)

Absent: Jami Philip (WBT)

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

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Agenda

Administrator Belfiori brought to attention an amended agenda with new action item V. C.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve the amended July 10, 2024 TEC agenda. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (June 12, 2024)

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve the June 12, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. July Financial Report and Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori outlined the July financial report as included in the packet. This month VLAWMO received Anoka County Storm Sewer Utility (SSU) fee funds. Ramsey County funds are expected in August. SPRWS provided funds for agreed upon contributions to the Lambert Lake Pond sheet pile effort from 2021 and the MPCA provided reimbursement for the Wilkinson Deepwater wetland project.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the July Financial Report for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Nominations open for 2024 Annual Watershed Awards

Voss provided a reminder to the TEC that the nominations are open for the two VLAWMO Watershed Awards for 2024. He noted that staff is requesting TEC assistance to find nominees that tell a story about a community or individual promoting or leading watershed stewardship. Nominations are due in November.

C. Introduction to MN Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP) mapping tool

Voss introduced the new mapping tool from the University of Minnesota. He summarized a data-based prediction model that the tool uses to help manage resources for resiliency. He explained it can be used to measure hypothetical scenarios or known problem areas. Commissioner Miller asked if the model is predicting that this area was going to get drier overall in the future. Voss confirmed that some pockets identify both drier and wetter conditions, and this becomes further nuanced depending on the time period that is entered into the tool for the models to express. Commissioner Miller stated there will likely be more consideration for water conservation strategies in the future.

V. Programs

A. LL2 2024-03 Three Oaks Smart Irrigation Controller Application Update

Sampedro introduced the grant application for a smart irrigation controller at a 23 acre neighborhood association. The applicant proposed an irrigation audit to support the irrigation controller and received one bid for the audit and two bids for the controller. The Board of Directors approved the application at the June 2024 Board meeting.

Commissioner Ousky asked about how irrigation heads are strategically placed. Sampedro provided that factors such as slope influence irrigation head placement.

B. LL2 2024-04 City of Vadnais Heights Smart Irrigation Controllers

Sampedro introduced the grant application consisting of smart irrigation controllers to place at the Vadnais Heights City Hall and Koehler Meadows Park. She noted this application is building on a 2023 smart irrigation partnership with the City. Two bids were received for the smart irrigation controllers with flow sensors. Staff recommended approval of the application.

Commissioner Miller asked about the scale and size of systems that fit the “smart” classification. Sampedro provided that different brands and systems accommodate a range of

sizes. Some systems are smaller for residential settings with fewer irrigation zones, while some that have been installed most recently at public properties have multiple zones for irrigation on a larger scale.

Commissioner Miller advocated for encouraging small-scale homeowner installations.

Commissioner Ousky provided a comment that the current smart irrigation system allows for a high degree of adjustment regarding seasonal adjustments and precise rain level.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve LL2 2024-04. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. SHG 2024-09 Redding & Lynch Native Plantings

Sampedro presented a grant application that is the new agenda item V.C. The grant application is for native plantings at a property in Vadnais Heights that drains to Sucker Lake. This is a first phase of a larger project, starting with native plantings and continuing to a downspout rain garden next year. The proposed native plantings include plants such as blazing star, ninebark, beebalm, and hackberry.

Commissioner Miller asked about the support of tree species in the grant program. Sampedro explained that in 2023 staff developed a tree guide that lists specific species that are included in the program.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve SHG 2024-09.

VI. Projects

A. Watershed Management Plan update

Tanner explained that the Board authorized the priority issues as recommended by the TEC, that the “initiate” phase of the Plan development has been completed, and the partners at Houston Engineering are continuing into the stage of draft plan development.

B. Spent lime demonstration project update

Tanner provided an update on spent lime loads applied so far. By the end of next week, VLAWMO anticipates that the project will be near completion for spent lime load applied.

C. Wilkinson Deep-water wetland update

Tanner provided an update on project completion and the recent payment made with a final payment anticipated soon. Water quality monitoring is continuing. The eagle chicks have

successfully fledged. With their fledging, the eagle nest monitoring portion of the project is complete. A vegetation enhancement plan is underway with Natural Shore Technologies. That plan will be brought to the TEC at an upcoming meeting.

- D. Wilkinson meander preliminary feasibility scope completed/memo from S E H
Tanner explained that the preliminary feasibility has been completed and that the memo from SEH is included in the packet. Ramsey County SWCD is providing financial support for the phase two scope of work that is also included in the packet. That scope will be completed by the end of the year. This work is in preparation for the next round of funding for the 319/priority small watershed program, depending upon final results of the feasibility and design work.

Commissioner Miller commented that some residents have expressed concern on lake levels of Deep Lake downstream of Wilkinson and asked that potential downstream effects be considered. Tanner responded that flow rates will be considered as part of the scope and in line with DNR guidance.

- E. Birch Lake AIS hand-pulling completed

Tanner provided an update on Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) and Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) removal in Birch Lake, in partnership with BLID and RCSWCD. Eurasian watermilfoil has been greatly reduced in the lake and is now present in sparse patches in the lake and heavier areas in very shallow areas with high cover of native water lilies. CLP expanded this year, likely due to the mild winter conditions. CLP expansion has also been reported in other lakes in Ramsey County. Dive Guys recommended splitting the removal next year into two dates and moving the first day up as early as possible to target CLP and be able to reach remaining EWM areas before the native water lilies have fully grown in.

- F. EWM sampling underway for Charley, Deep, and Pleasant Lake and NHIS database update

Tanner introduced this update as a request from the DNR to help determine which hybrid strains of EWM are present in the lakes. There is an ongoing partnership statewide to document hybrid strains to help inform management actions. These samples will become part of that database. The ongoing partnership involved the University of Minnesota and Montana State University. Samples have been sent to the Montana lab for analysis.

Commissioner Huntrods asked about how invasive species can spread on lakes that have no public access. Tanner explained that boats are still likely moving among lakes, even if they are private boats. Turions are very small and can still have spread from the existing boat activity. Tanner acknowledged the importance of preventing spread and detecting new infestations early.

Commissioner Reidesel inquired about the status of purple loosestrife at Birch Lake. Commissioner Huntrods provided that this is no longer a concern at Birch Lake. Tanner added that the weevil beetle population at Birch is appearing to be healthy to keep the purple loosestrife population down.

G. Meet the goats completed and goat grazing underway

Tanner provided a summary of the recent open house event with the City of Vadnais Heights and Scape Goats including arrival of the goats, a wetland walk, projects for kids and families, treats, and a native plant giveaway. Tanner thanked the City for their partnership in hosting this successful event.

VII. Commissioner Reports

None.

VIII. NOHOA

None.

IX. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

X. St. Paul Regional Water Services

Jeremy Erickson provided an update that copper sulfate is being applied to Sucker Lake for zebra mussel control and the new Highland water tower is open for public tours July 20-21

XI. Public Comment

None.

XII. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting August 14, 2024. Next BOD meeting August 24, 2024.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.