

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
August 14, 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)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

Absent: City of Lino Lakes (Vacant), Jami Philip (WBT)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Lauren Sampedro, Brian Corcoran, Nick Voss, Dawn Tanner (VLAWMO staff), Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS), Jennifer Morris & Craig Ordal (Villas of Wilkinson Lake HOA)

I. Call to Order

Chair Tessier called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

II. Approval of Agenda

Administrator Belfiori presented an amended agenda with the following changes:

- Addition of V. C and D
- IV. A and B are updated to action items
- HR Personnel announcement: Nick resigning from VLAWMO

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the amended August 14, 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 July 10, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. August Financial Report and Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori summarized the August financial statement as included in the Packet. One notable item is the Wilkinson Deep-Water Wetland Restoration grant funding came in from the MPCA.

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

B. August TEC Report to Board

Administrator Belfiori summarized the TEC Report to Board as included in the packet. Notable items include the Polar Lakes Park water re-use in White Bear Township as well as early feasibility design for a flood reduction project behind the Vadnais Heights City Hall. Watershed Management Plan chapters are currently in development and will be ready for TEC review soon. The 2025 stormwater utility (SSU) rates will be presented at the August Board meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Chair Tessier to approve the August TEC Report to Board. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

V. Programs

A. LL2 2024-05 Villas of Wilkinson Lake HOA Smart Irrigation Controllers

Sampedro presented the Landscape Level 2 grant application from the Villas of Wilkinson Lake HOA for TEC review. The HOA has completed an independent irrigation audit which recommended the use of smart irrigation controllers. This application proposes to install three smart irrigation controllers.

Commissioner Miller noted that data on water savings would be of interest to VLAWMO. Sampedro provided that the irrigation audit has provided a baseline and that the grant terms include required water usage monitoring.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve LL2 2024-05. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

B. City of White Bear Lake Curb Cut Raingarden Project Update

Sampedro provided an update that the City of White Bear Lake is currently pursuing five curb cut raingardens to accompany a street renovation project in partnership with VLAWMO and Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division. VLAWMO expects to receive a Landscape Level 2 grant application from the City to support the effort and staff propose to utilize the BWSR Watershed Based Implementation Funding program for the project. She said she expects the project will need to go to the Board meeting on August 28th due to construction timing, but will provide another update at the next TEC meeting.

Commissioner Ousky inquired about the cost savings of doing multiple raingardens at a time. Sampedro acknowledged that cost savings are likely due to bulk orders and less transportation needs from soil, mulch, and plant orders.

Commissioner Miller noted that multiple raingardens being completed at the same time creates a more uniform appearance in the neighborhood.

C. LL2 2024-06 City of Gem Lake Smart Irrigation Controller

Sampedro presented the Landscape Level 2 grant application for smart irrigation at the Heritage Hall in Gem Lake. White Bear Township is the applicant on behalf of the City of Gem Lake, as the property owner. The City is installing a new irrigation system and is requesting funding for a smart irrigation controller.

Chair Tessier asked where the irrigation will be directed on the property. Sampedro outlined the area on the map noting it would exclude the area of the existing raingarden.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve LL2 2024-06. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

D. LL2 2024-07 Pine Meadow HOA Smart Irrigation Controllers

Sampedro presented the Landscape Level 2 grant application from the Pine Meadow HOA in Vadnais Heights and noted an increased demand for smart irrigation controllers. The HOA's existing irrigation system is 26 years old and the HOA is concerned about increasing water usage and the inability to control the system. The application proposes upgrading the existing irrigation system with two smart irrigation controllers.

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve LL2 2024-07 . Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

VI. Projects

A. Spent Lime Demonstration Project

The spent lime applications at Oak Knoll Pond have been completed as of July 2024. Monitoring will be ongoing over the next few years to assess if and how long the applications provide water quality improvements. An initial memo regarding results of the application so far is in preparation by Barr Engineering and anticipated for the Oct. Board/Nov. TEC. A final request for payment has been received from Erosion Works and approved by Barr Engineering. Payment approval is requested, pending completion and receipt by VLAWMO of the IC 134 form.

Commissioner Miller asked about the need for long-term reapplication rates for the effort. Tanner explained that spent lime may turn out to be an appropriate strategy for smaller-scale applications. Commissioner Miller asked if the spent lime costs less than alum. Tanner explained that the costs of alum are comparable due to the cost of multiple trips for transport and application. Commissioner Miller and Tanner noted that residents around the pond have been curious and supportive of the effort.

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the spent lime project payment pending receipt of the IC 134 form. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

B. Wilkinson Deep-Water Wetland Project

Tanner provided an update that a request for payment is expected for the August Board meeting. Site enhancement plans have been prepared with Natural Shores Technologies, not to exceed a total of \$20,000. The plan includes buckthorn retreatment and seeding on channel slopes, reed canary grass treatment and addition of native plants in project wetland areas, temporary fencing to keep geese out while native plants establish, and a focus of forbs along the hiking trail for visibility and to support pollinators. The effort starts with a fall treatment on reed canary grass and buckthorn with planting to occur fall 2024 and spring 2025.

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the bid with NST for the Wilkinson Deep-Water Wetland enhancement. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

C. Tamarack Lake Alum Project Update

Tanner explained a change in the protocol for the alum project because no bids were received from the first request for quotes that was sent out earlier this year. The new protocol specifies use of alum only with continuous monitoring instead of applying a combination of liquid alum and sodium aluminate buffer. Site prep with liquid chemicals and site maintenance/pumping were logical challenges in the earlier protocol. The new protocol will be simpler to apply but may extend the time it takes to complete the project. The protocol and site considerations have been addressed through a process of discussions and a site visit with a potential local contractor, Ramsey County Parks, Barr Engineering, and VLAWMO staff. A new request for quotes has gone out, anticipating submissions before the August Board meeting, which could allow the project to initiate this fall.

D. 4th and Otter Road Project Update

Tanner outlined the history of the project starting in 2018 with a photo slideshow beginning with a buckthorn thicket, progressing to a site with understory invasives, and now, in the current year, with a high diversity of native forbs and grasses. This summer the site includes successful establishment of American Bellflower, Jacob's Ladder, Coneflower, Bottlebrush Grass, and Canada Wild Rye. She noted that the results are an exciting vision and learning

experience for future sites such as the Vadnais Heights City Hall site that will be seeded this fall.

E. **Amelia Lake Invasive Flowering Rush Treatment Update**

Tanner outlined the effort for treating flowering rush with collaboration with Ramsey County in a wetland adjacent to Amelia Lake. Tanner showed photos of the project process including, a 2023 herbicide treatment and hand-pulling in 2024 (both by Ramsey County SWCD). The effort is currently ongoing. Flowering rush is an invasive plant that was introduced to the U.S. from infested areas in Canada.

VII. Commissioner Reports

None

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 September 11, 2024. Next BOD meeting August 24, 2024.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.