

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission Minutes
June 10, 2016
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Lakes Room**

Commission Members Present:

Paul Peterson	White Bear Township (WBT)
Jim Grisim	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Mark Graham	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Jim Lindner	Gem Lake (GL)
Chris Mann	North Oaks (NO)

Commission Members Absent: Marty Asleson – Lino Lakes

Others in attendance: Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Tyler Thompson, Nick Voss (VLAWMO); Kimberly Murray (NO Homeowners Association); Bob Larson (NO alternate)

- I. **Call to Order** Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.
- II. **Approval of Agenda**

Add under projects V.2. – update to Water Policy; remove item VI. D. 1 – Goodwill Proposal due to the fact that they did not get their proposal in yet.
It was moved by Graham and seconded by Grisim to approve the June 10, 2016 agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.
- III. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Linder and seconded by Mann to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2016 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.
- IV. **Administration & Operations**
 - A. **Water Plan Updates**

Stephanie reported that the response to comments from the 60 day review will be sent today. Kristine is completing the revisions to the Water Plan. The executive summary of the Plan was available at the meeting for review. At the June 22 Board meeting, a public hearing will be held for the Plan and the Board will vote to approve the final draft which will then be sent to BWSR for a 90 day review. Stephanie said that the Water Policy and the Education and Outreach Plan are also being updated right now and will be brought to the TEC for review and comments as the updates progress.
 - B. **Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and Boundary Change Petition Update**

We have gotten 2 of the official approvals for the JPA. The other 4 municipalities have plans to present it for approval to their Councils within the next 2 weeks. At this time, we foresee all the communities approving the JPA. Once it is approved, it is in effect for through 2026. The boundary change petition has been received by Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and they plan to have it go to their Board for approval at their August meeting.
- V. **Projects**
 - A. **Project Updates**
 1. **LCCMR Grant – Whitaker Wetlands**

Brian stated that the funding has been approved by the Legislature and signed off by the Governor. The LCCMR will meet to give official approval in July.

2. Water Policy Update

Brian has been pursuing an update to the Water Policy. VLAWMO's infiltration rates are far below the standards of other agencies. Our standard is 0.5" infiltration but most other agencies are at 1.25". Our standards regarding wetland buffers also need to be updated to be in line with other watersheds. The Policy & Personnel Committee met last night and stated that the TEC should recommend approval to hire an engineer. Stephanie discussed an update to the Water Policy. The goal is to have standards that meet or exceed current state standards.

It was moved by Graham and seconded by Mann to approve the hiring of Burns & McDonnell to provide assistance for the VLAWMO Water Policy update for \$3000. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VI. Programs

A. Grants

1. Landscape Level 1 Applications

There are 3 grants to consider this month. 2016-06 and 2016-07 are neighboring properties in North Oaks in the new Charley Lake Preserve development. These two homes share the stormwater pond that is next to Charley Lake. The homeowners are working with Prairie Restorations to install a large native prairie around the storm pond. In total, there will be about 20,000 square feet of land turned into prairie. Prairie Restorations have also included 3 years of maintenance for the project and have already talked with the homeowners about maintenance beyond 3 years in order to have a healthy prairie. Buckthorn removal in 3 areas of their properties is also included but they may hold off on that due to the already high costs of the prairie restoration. Each homeowner is asking for \$2000 for their grants. There will be a contingency for these grants that the homeowners need to wait until the City signs off on approval of the stormwater pond because it appears to be undersized and the contractor may need to come in and fix it. 2016-08 is for the first phase of a shoreline restoration on Birch Lake. They are working with Nelco Landscaping to remove grass and weeds, install a biology along approximately 20 feet of the shoreline and plant 207 native perennials and a river birch tree. The contractor has planned 3 different planting zones – aquatic, transitional, and upland. The total cost is estimated to be about \$2850.

Staff recommends approval of all three grants. If these grants are approved, there will be \$4800 left in the grant budget.

It was moved by Mann and seconded by Lindner to approve grants 2016-06, 2016-07 (with the above referenced contingency), and 2016-08 for \$2000 each. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

2. Community Blue – 2015 projects update

Nick reported that the Heritage Estates CB grant applicants have decided to withdraw their grant application for the time being. From a series of meetings, they have decided that the original grant they applied for was too ambitious for their realistic time commitments and organization. They are interested in applying again in the future, and have reorganized their priorities to develop the community's relationship with the garden this summer. These immediate summer activities include coordinated garden maintenance and hosting a master gardener workshop with the U of MN, both of which don't require any cost. We believe that this re-organization time will allow a future grant to be more structured and feasible.

Additionally, Nick is in the process of improving the Community Blue application process. A new grant application guide and application form are being planned with consultation from neighboring watershed districts. Nick has met with Ramsey Washington as well as Capital Region Watershed.

B. Education & Outreach

1. 2015 Annual Report Summary

Nick completed the summary for the 2015 Annual Report. It is ready to go out for printing. A copy was available at the meeting for review. The infographic describing what VLAWMO does which was on the front page of the summary last year has been taken out and updated and will be its own handout.

2. Website Updates and contract request

Tyler and Nick have come up with a list of updates for the website. A new web contract with HDR was needed to continue to support VLAWMO's webpage. While the contract is set for a year, VLAWMO expects it to last much longer due to our ability to use very few hours of the contract per month. With the previous contract lasting a year longer than expected, VLAWMO is expecting a similar trend with this contract.

The scope of services includes modifications to homepage graphics, required upgrades, optimization, web hosting, and the development of a blog page. The contract also includes a bank of hours for troubleshooting, which roll over beyond the contract's timeframe if they are unused. Nick will be facilitating the blog in conjunction with other social media efforts. The total cost for the new web contract is \$4,990.

Mark Graham suggested that we include this item in the annual budget in the future since it is something that is a constant need.

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Mann to approve the contract with HDR for \$4990. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

3. Community Events

Stephanie and Nick were at the North Oaks Community event last Saturday. We gave away a rainbarrel. Upcoming events include the Taste of Vadnais and Marketfest. Nick was able to obtain two water drop costumes for staff to wear to attract more attention at these events.

C. Monitoring

1. Automated Sampler

Brian showed the automated sampler to the TEC. Brian is waiting for confirmation from Gary Eagles (North Oaks Company) to install it in the creek located on the farm property south of the lake.

D. WCA

1. Goodwill Mitigation Proposal Recommendation

Removed from the agenda.

2. Jordan Storage De minimus Exemption

Brian presented information regarding this property. The site is located in Vadnais Heights. A total of 580 square feet of wetland will be impacted for development on the property. The rules for this type of wetland can have a De minimus exemption for up to 1000 square feet. Staff recommends approval. It was moved by Graham and seconded by Mann to approve the De minimus exemption for the Jordan Storage site. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

3. Oakcrest Drainage Question

After several conversations with a property owner on the west side of a large, 80 acre wetland (Basswood lake), Mark Graham, Kevin Watson, City administrator and Stephanie McNamara, went out the view both the back

yards and the outlet of the wetland. The homeowners and their neighbors were concerned about what they characterized as rising water levels. No blockage of the outlet was found in the field. Water appeared to be flowing normally. Aerial photography suggests the eastern outlet ditch disappears long before it reaches the excavated pond on the west shore of Basswood Lake. The homeowners were not convinced that there might not be a blockage somewhere in the wetland. Stephanie suggested the excavated pond has been slowing filling in since it was dug in the late 1970's. Water is expanding to the flat areas in the neighborhood back yards. If this pond was excavated to drain back yards enough to use and provide a view of open water, it may be losing its effectiveness. WCA Rules would prevent re-excavation of the pond as it would be considered changing the cross-section of a wetland. The only remedy available to the homeowners to raise their back yards above the wetland line, perhaps add a berm and preferable naturalize the buffer.

VII. Reports

A. Financial Report for June 2016 & Authorization for Payment

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Grisim to approve the treasurer's report and June payment of checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. TEC Report to the Board

Stephanie stated that the financial numbers for the TEC Report will be added in before the Board meeting.

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Grisim to approve the TEC report to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VIII. Commissioner Reports

Grisim stated that the harvester will be out cutting lake vegetation soon. Graham stated that nothing has changed regarding the augmentation of White Bear Lake. Graham testified at a Legislative Committee regarding it. Vadnais Heights hired a lobbyist and will provide any updates he receives. Graham also stated that he will not be present at the July TEC meeting.

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

X. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report

There will be a raingarden maintenance workshop on June 21 at the Roseville Library.

Kristine sent information to past cost share recipients and some have said they are coming.

Margaret also stated their monthly meeting will be this upcoming Monday.

XI. Public Comment

XII. Next Meetings

TEC: July 8; Board: June 22

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Lindner and seconded by Mann to adjourn at 8:30am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.