

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission  
Approved Minutes  
March 21, 2008**

**Attending:**

Paul Peterson	White Bear Township, Chair
Neil Franey	White Bear Lake Vadnais Heights
Jim Studenski	Lino Lakes
Paul Emeott	Gem Lake
Chris Mann	North Oaks, alternate

Others in attendance: Kristine Lampert & Stephanie McNamara, VLAWMO; John Blackstone, St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS); Larry Breimhurst, Citizen's Advisory Committee Member

**Agenda** Paul Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:40 am. Franey requests to add discussion regarding White Bear Lake's (WBL) green streets issues that have been in the local paper. Peterson requests to add discussion regarding WBL's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) contributions. It was agreed to include these items under Commissioner Reports. Stephanie requests to add discussion about an education opportunity with Blue Thumb. It was moved and seconded by Emeott and Studenski to approve the agenda as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**Minutes** Emeott notes that he was not at the February meeting but that the minutes state he was present. It will be deleted. It was moved and seconded by Franey and Studenski to approve the minutes of the February meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as amended. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**Old Business**

**A. Storm Sewer Utility recommendations for 2008-2009**

Stephanie asked for discussion about implementing a credit program. She showed an example from the City of Brainerd. Studenski mentioned the difficulty of administering such a program. There is not enough staff at VLAWMO to review single family properties within the watershed. And how do you judge credits if someone has a low spot that water naturally flows to versus someone who has created a large raingarden or uses some other storm water collection strategy? How do you determine what is fair within residential landscapes? Peterson suggests that there should be no credit for residential land use but that commercial and industrial lands could be reviewed on a case by case basis to have their fees reduced by as much as half. Stephanie said that eliminating homeowners from a credit system would greatly reduce the administration of the system. Stephanie said a couple of churches have contacted us stating that they have done many BMPs (best management strategies) and would like a credit to their fees since the

fee is very substantial for them and they never paid anything like this before.

Questions:

If we take out residential, then should we keep everything else in? Yes.

Is there consensus to remove single-family residential from the credit system?

Yes.

What should be the maximum credit? 50% - create a definition for assessing the amount of credit for the type of BMP implemented and have credits assigned for the particular BMP from 20-50% off the annual stormwater fee.

Consensus among the Technical Commission that we include language that a property owner has to reapply every 2 years for credits; that it is not a permanent credit system.

Direction: Staff will create a draft recommendation for review at the April meeting and then brought before the Board in May.

**B. Watershed boundary change with Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) & Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD)**

We have met with Doug Thomas (RCWD Administrator) and Cliff Aischinger (RWMWD Administrator) regarding changes to the VLAWMO border. Any changes to the legal boundary will require an amendment to the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). RCWD and RWMWD planned to have the technical review done within 30 days and then have a consensus line for VLAWMO to approve. Both RCWD and RWMWD have stated that they will go through the petition process with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for official approval. The next item for VLAWMO will be a re-writing of the legal description which will have to be approved by the member communities and amended to the JPA before the next stormwater utility billing. Peterson asked what the cost of generating a new legal description would be. Stephanie said we paid \$1200 the last time we did it and that she would expect it to cost less this time since it is just a change to the description rather than a whole new one. For the boundary that affects the Grass Lake Water Management Organization, we don't have to go through a petition process since we are both WMOs but we will inform BWSR of the changes.

**Reports/Projects/Possible Actions**

**A. Programs & Projects**

**1. Finalize Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant – Report & Spring Work**

The work submitted for the grant was audited and VLAWMO was approved for payment - the \$100,000 should arrive shortly. Stephanie will be meeting with Barb Peichel from the Pollution Control Agency (PCA) about some final reporting through eLink.

Discussion regarding Jay Bros. Construction and whether they will finish the spring work assigned to them. Eli Rupnow (EOR Engineer for VLAWMO) has tried to contact Jay Bros. numerous times and has not gotten a response. It has been mentioned that the company is closing and there is concern whether they will be around to complete the work left on the Lambert Creek winter construction. Blackstone suggests writing an official registered letter requesting to them to respond about finishing the work and give them a deadline (2 weeks) to

respond before VLAWMO can tap into the retainer money to find alternate means for project completion.

Kristine stated that she has requested bids for plants to install at the sites based on the recommendations from Kevin Biehn at EOR.

Peterson asked if VLAWMO can include the streambank on the east side of Oakmede Lane with the spring planting work. Kristine stated that the residents in the townhomes have asked about working together on restoring the shoreline there since it has been eroding quickly. It is currently mowed to the edge. Staff directed to find out how much it would be to restore the streambank in that area along with the other Lambert Creek plantings.

## **2. Lambert Creek Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study**

On March 25, VLAWMO and SPRWS are meeting with Barb Peichel from the PCA to start the process for the TMDL study on Lambert Creek now that it is on the Impaired Waters List for bacteria.

Peterson stated that he went to a presentation at the University of Minnesota about E.coli and bacterial contamination. He learned that it is possible to determine if the E.coli is human or non-human at a 75% rate. He also learned that about 20% of the E.coli levels come from the soil. Peterson said the Professor who spoke would be a valuable resource for VLAWMO. Peterson stated that VLAWMO should make sure the dredging around Whittaker pond and plantings would be a help to reducing E.coli since that is a point where water samples consistently show a larger number of colony forming units (cfus).

## **3. Cost Share Program**

## **4. Monitoring Program**

**5. Public Education Program** – Stephanie discussed needing help on direction for what sorts of Public Education work to do. Franey said he would like to help on this.

**a. Website Update** – Kristine reviewed the draft website and informed that it will be public on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**b. Blue Thumb Partner** – Kristine said that VLAWMO is now officially partners with Blue Thumb and that we are listed on their website and will incorporate their logo and information on the new VLAWMO website.

**c. Blue Thumb Billboard** – Stephanie stated that there is an opportunity to work with Blue Thumb on sponsoring a billboard for “The Secret” campaign. The billboard would be a way to generate more traffic to the Blue Thumb website which in turn recognizes VLAWMO as a partner. It could be tied in with a news release to the local press and include the planned raingarden workshops VLAWMO is hosting. The sign would be up for 1 month – mid April to mid May. The cost is substantially lower than a commercial billboard. There are spots along 35E where the sign could be posted but the company will determine which spot we would get. It was moved and seconded by Emeott and Studenski to spend up to \$800 for the billboard, preferably at 35E and Hwy. 96. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Stephanie mentioned that it may be possible to include VLAWMO’s logo on the billboard. It would cost a bit more. Emeott and Peterson think that

it is not worth it – drivers would not see it and don't want a billboard to be too busy. Blackstone suggested that VLAWMO put an article in the papers saying that we sponsored it and include all sorts of information about our projects and other good public relation and public education.

**c. Raingarden workshop request** – Chris Mann would like to work with VLAWMO to host a workshop with North Oaks Home Owners Association (NOHOA) to encourage homeowners to do rain gardens along the lakes. Chris said that we could use a large meeting room at the Presbyterian homes complex. Stephanie said that she and Chris will pick a couple dates and find out if the room is available and if the speakers are available.

## **6. Sustainable Lake Management Plans**

### **a. Birch Lake**

**b. Tamarack** – Kristine described a storm sample collector that she would like to try at Tamarack. It automatically collects a sample in a plastic Nalgene bottle which can be taken straight to the lab. It would be more effective than just going out after a storm event and getting samples. This would collect the first flush of water that comes in. Not sure if the collector bottle can be reused. The description says that it is meant for single-use. Kristine feels this aspect could be wasteful with having to buy many of these special bottles at \$32 each. It seems that the sampler portion of the bottle could just be cleaned thoroughly and used again. Direction: Get 2 storm sampler bottles to install at Tamarack and if they are working well, we can get more for other sites.

## **B. Reports**

### **1. Financial**

a) March Report; Authorization for payment

Stephanie reviewed the report and answered questions about expenses. It was moved and seconded by Franey and Studenski. Vote: all aye. Motion passed. It was moved and seconded by Studenski and Franey to approve payment of March checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

b) Audit update – Stephanie reviewed the status of the audit. A draft report is under review. Franey and Board Member Dan Jones will work with Stephanie on the management letter that is needed for the audit. Stephanie is meeting with the auditor on Monday to go over their findings.

**2. WCA Activity** – No activity in March. Stephanie went to a training regarding wetland mitigation standards. Information could be used in our work with homeowners.

**3. Local Water Plan Updates** - Emeott stated that Gem Lake is asking for an extension from Met Council for their plan. City Comprehensive plans are due to Met Council in June. Emeott asked if VLAWMO has money to help the cities on Local Water Plans. No, it is up to the cities to get this completed and the budget VLAWMO set aside is for technical expertise on review of the completed plans.

Peterson asked if VLAWMO can do anything to help. Stephanie said that we can send out reminder letters to the cities to incorporate VLAWMO's standards and that we would like to have the opportunity to review them.

**New Business –**

**A. Draft Budget 2009**

Whittaker Pond - Money is set aside in the 2008 budget for Whittaker but it wouldn't get done until next winter. The money would have to also be used for engineering for the pond. Money will need to be budgeted in 2009 as well. Peterson suggests to spend the money now on Engineering so as to determine what more may be needed for 2009.

Income questions – Emeott said that the estimated interest accumulation may be high due to the economy trends. He suggested that be reduced.

Franey asked how we plan to use the BATHTUB model since we spent so much money on its development. We plan to use it with Sustainable Lake Management Plans (SLMPs) and to incorporate more information into the model as we gain it with storm sewer inputs and other data.

Franey asked what the \$15,000 slated for Lambert Creek Restoration is for. Stephanie said that it would be for priority sites that need streambank stabilization work.

Franey suggested we partner with SPRWS on any improvements of projects on Lambert Creek.

Studenski asked when the budget needs to be solidified. Stephanie said at the April meeting so that it can go to the Board's May meeting.

**B. Intern**

VLAWMO is looking for a student that could start working in May and work until they have to go back to school. It is full time work. Stephanie reviewed a draft job description. Need to get it advertised for applicants. Direction: The description looks good and move ahead with hiring.

**Commissioner Reports –**

Franey – discussed an article in the paper about WBL's focus on underground pipes shipping water straight to the lakes. The first ½ inch of water is supposed to go into the pipes and then be absorbed into the ground. But there isn't information about how well it works. Franey asked if VLAWMO was aware about this issue. Stephanie said that VLAWMO is aware of this controversy and that it probably gained public attention the Lake Avenue reconstruction. Stephanie stated that a big issue is maintenance of the pipes and where the contaminants go when they are sucked out of the pipes.

There was discussion about MS4s & Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPS) and VLAWMO's position about "green streets". SWPPPs have come more to the forefront in WBL because of the Lake Ave project. Local water plans are the main source of planning and requirements for the Cities. Peterson suggests links on the website to information about these topics.

**Administrator Report - None**

**Public Comment - None**

**Adjourn**

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It was moved and seconded by Emeott & Peterson to adjourn at 9:50am. All Aye.  
Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Lampert.