

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission Minutes  
April 13, 2022  
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers  
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127**

**Commission Members Present:**

Jesse Farrell	Chair, Vadnais Heights (VH)
Gloria Tessier	Vice Chair, Gem Lake (GL)
Bob Larson	Treasurer, North Oaks (NO)
Terry Huntrods	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Paul Duxbury	White Bear Township (WBT)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)

**Absent:** None

**Others in attendance:** Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Dawn Tanner, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss (VLAWMO staff); Patricia Orud, Kristie Elfering (NOHOA), Ed Shapland (Watershed Action Volunteers/CAC), Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS), Connie Taillon (City of White Bear Lake)

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Jesse Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:01 am.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve the April 13, 2022 TEC agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes (March 9, 2022)**

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve the March 9, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

**A. Welcome Lauren**

Administrator Belfiori introduced VLAWMO's new staff member Lauren Sampedro, Watershed Technician and Program Coordinator. Lauren introduced her background experience in grant programs, water planning, MS4 permitting, and construction site inspections.

**B. Financial Report for Payment**

Administrator Belfiori directed the TEC to page seven of the packet to discuss the financial report. He highlighted several portions of the spreadsheet including the Wilkinson BMP, Pleasant Lake carp management, and East Goose Lake efforts. Staff recommended approval of the financial report.

It was motioned by Tessier and seconded by Huntrods to recommend approval of the April 2022 financial report for payment. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

#### C. TEC Report to the Board

Belfiori summarized the TEC report to the Board as included in the April packet. Highlights included working on a ditch policy, development of an RFP for the Wilkinson BMP, a financial audit, the upcoming subcommittee meeting in June, and recent cost-share activities.

Chair Farrell asked about the Whitaker Pond biochar project, how biochar works, and if other entities have implemented biochar. Belfiori explained how biochar captures e-coli bacteria and stated he will provide examples to him of biochar sand filters that other watershed management organizations have done. He noted that Coon Creek Watershed District has installed a similar sand filter.

It was motioned by Commissioner Duxbury and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the April 2022 TEC Report to the Board of Directors. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

### V. Programs

#### A. Education & Outreach

##### 1. Community Blue: CB 2022-01 Good Neighbor Guide

Education and Outreach Coordinator Voss summarized the application materials from two Minnesota Water Stewards Ceci and Ed Shapland and explained that the proposed Good Neighbor Guide is an outreach effort in continuation of the Junior Watershed Explorer program from 2020. He explained the guide is intended to be a print-out for cities, townships, and new residents in the watershed to get a basic, yet comprehensive introduction on VLAWMO and water stewardship. Voss said a professional designer would be used for some of the visuals, which is the majority of the project cost. Proposed topics in the guide include pet waste, adopt-a-drain, sedimentation, smart salting, and other key watershed topics frequented in VLAWMO's education and outreach programs.

It was motioned by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve CB 2022-01. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

##### 2. Community Blue: CB 2022-02 Saint Mary's Raingarden Renovation

Voss summarized the application from Eagle Scout Alex Nelson. The application proposed a raingarden retrofit of a raingarden that was originally installed in 2011. The proposed raingarden renovation work includes a retrofit of its existing basin, weeding and trimming overgrown plants, applying fresh mulch, and planting new native plants as space allows. Voss said Alex Nelson's Eagle Scout troop would help Alex complete the project. Farrell asked for more information on the proposed match for the project and Voss responded the in-kind match from Alex and his Eagle Scout troop is beyond the minimum required match for Community Blue. Commissioner Nelson asked if there is a long-term maintenance agreement for the project. Voss noted that the 10-year maintenance agreement from the original raingarden installation recently expired and the Community Blue program does not require a new agreement, however this project would be a way to continue community connections with Saint Mary's of the Lake and educate their staff on how to continue raingarden maintenance into the future. Nelson recommended including language for the landowner to consult with VLAWMO staff on long-term maintenance to encourage future ongoing maintenance. Farrell also noted it appeared a water standpipe is present in the middle of the raingarden and recommended it be painted blue or at minimum flagged during the raingarden renovation so the Eagle Scouts can ensure the pipe remains clear and accessible.

It was motioned by Commissioner Duxbury and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve CB 2022-02. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

### 3. Community Blue: CB-2022-Mini-Grant-01

Voss summarized the pre-approved Community Blue Mini-Grant application received from Sara Svir, principal at Vadnais Heights Elementary. Vadnais Heights Elementary has proposed to treat the invasive sibirian elm that have invaded and surrounded their existing raingarden. This agenda item served as an educational update and didn't require a TEC motion or vote per VLAWMO Community Blue mini-grant policy on pre-allocated pre-approval.

## B. Cost-Share Program

### 1. SHG 2022-03 - Scherer

Voss summarized the application for a proposed native plant restoration in a priority zone of the watershed including the addition of alternative ground cover, pollinator plantings, and native shrubs and trees that are targeted to replace invasive buckthorn. Voss recommended the cost share application for approval.

It was motioned by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Farrell to approve SHG 2022-03. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

### 2. SHG 2022-04 – City of White Bear Lake

Voss summarized the application for a native plant restoration at the Rotary Nature Preserve and explained that it is phase one of three total phases projected into 2024. He

also noted the education and outreach benefits of the project due to its high visibility to the public and stated it is a good opportunity to continue a partnership with the City of White Bear Lake. He recommended approval of the application. Connie Taillon of the City of White Bear Lake noted the important partnership with the Rotary Club of White Bear Lake and highlighted the overall restoration goals for the project, including the removal of several invasive species. Commissioner Tessier asked for clarification on the park's location and Taillon and Commissioner Huntrods provided directions. Huntrods also noted that the Birch Lake Improvement District is excited about the project and have supported it independently with the City of White Bear Lake.

It was motioned by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Larson to approve SHG 2022-04. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

### 3. LL2 2022-01 North Oaks HOA

Sampedro introduced the application submitted by NOHOA for a proposed filtration basin at the south entrance of NOHOA off of highway 96 and Pleasant Lake Road. The proposed basin is about 2,308 square feet. It is proposed as a filtration basin with an underdrain as opposed to an infiltration basin due to the presence of two adjacent wetlands and a higher water table in the area. Sediment and nutrient reductions from the filtration basin are projected to benefit the longevity of the two adjacent wetlands as well as Sucker Lake. The filtration basin is also replacing an existing pavement area. Elfering represented NOHOA as the applicant and affirmed that the project is in accordance with NOHOA's natural environment philosophy, and that the high public visibility of the area makes it a high priority for continued maintenance.

Chair Farrell asked about the pavement reclamation associated with the project and added that some of the most effective stormwater treatment includes pavement removal.

It was motioned by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve LL2 2022-01 to the Board of Directors. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## **VI. Projects**

### A. Wilkinson/319

Tanner summarized recent efforts and activities regarding the Wilkinson 319 BMP, including consulting with the MPCA and announcing the project to the community in the April 2022 North Oaks News edition. The April edition of the newspaper included an additional article and graphic that discussed the long-term focus on natural environment by North Oaks Company (NOC) and highlighted NOC's contribution to the project. These submitted related news items were contributed by NOC. The engineering request for proposals (RFP) for the upcoming project is currently being developed by VLAWMO staff. A recently completed analysis and soil borings, by Barr Engineering, is helping to advance design and inform the RFP.

Commissioner Duxbury clarified that the method and design strategy for the project are not known yet. Tanner affirmed.

**B. Vadnais/Sucker Park Buckthorn Removal Update**

Tanner summarized the history of the buckthorn removal effort at the Vadnais/Sucker Park at the trail access parking lot off Vadnais Blvd. The effort included a buckthorn removal, smothering with geotextile fabric, and re-seeding. She added that native plant re-establishment is currently underway and initial buckthorn removal is complete at the site. Ramsey County has supported the effort by contributing geotextile fabric and removing several piles of buckthorn. The remaining piles will be allowed to degrade on-site. This effort complements the upcoming wetland restoration effort with Great River Greening, anticipated to start in Fall 2022. Tanner also provided an update that a sentence-to-serve crew has been removing buckthorn at the Vadnais Heights City Hall, which is part of a grant-funded invasive species control effort through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Chair Farrell stated buckthorn removal is important for the community and thanked the crew and volunteers.

**C. Carp update**

Tanner provided an update that WSB Engineering and Carp Solutions are both working to complete carp removal this spring.

**VII. Commissioner Reports**

Vadnais Heights: Chair Farrell noted that the City of Vadnais Heights has three upcoming project locations that include a potential wetland enhancement project at Bear Park. Implementation is aspired for 2023.

**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 11th, Next BOD meeting April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Tessier and seconded by Commissioner Larson to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.