

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
May 8, 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)
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)

Absent: None

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Lauren Sampedro, Dawn Tanner (VLAWMO staff), Ed Shapland (CAC)

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve the revised May 8, 2024 TEC agenda. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes (April 10, 2024)

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the April 10th meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for May and Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori outlined the May financial report as included in the packet. Highlights included expenses related to the Lambert Lake loan, spent lime demonstration project, a potential Wilkinson meander project, payment to Houston Engineering to look at retrofitting the experimental wetland at Whitaker pond, and SRF design work for the East Vadnais Lake resiliency study. Staff recommended approval.

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

V. Programs

A. SHG 2024-03 Christopherson Turf Replacement

Sampedro presented a proposed turf replacement project located in Vadnais Heights. The project would involve planting lo mow/no mow fescue across the entire property. Staff recommended approval.

Commissioner Miller stated that it is good the homeowner is doing this while construction of the yard is underway and recommended advertising the project in the local newspaper. Commissioner Philip echoed Miller's comments.

Commissioner Miller asked if this is consistent with city ordinances and Sampedro confirmed and stated the City of Vadnais Heights adopted a new Managed Natural Landscapes ordinance that allows these types of projects. Commissioner Nelson added the State of Minnesota passed a new statute that requires cities to allow natural landscaping that supersedes city ordinances. He asked if there is any erosion control or cover type on the property. Sampedro noted she was aware of some straw erosion control in the neighborhood, but was not sure about this property.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Philip to approve SHG 2024-03 in the amount of \$1,000. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. SHG 2024-04 Westerlund Pollinator Garden

Sampedro presented a proposed pollinator garden project located in Vadnais Heights. The project would involve adding native pollinator plants to five different areas on the property. This is the first phase of the project. Staff is recommending approval of the application.

Commissioner Miller asked if the property owner would do the work and Sampedro responded that she would be hiring Prairie Restorations to complete the work. Commissioner Nelson asked if the City reviewed the project and Sampedro confirmed City staff have reviewed the proposed project. Commissioner Nelson noted that there are some portions of the zones within the City right-of-way. Sampedro noted she discussed that issue with City staff and will be informing the property owner that plants could be potentially removed by the City in the future if the City completes work within those areas.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve SHG 2024-04 in the amount of \$1,242.75. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VI. Projects

A. East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study Report

Sampedro presented a summary of the East Vadnais Lake Subwatershed Resiliency Study Report. She highlighted the overall goals of the study and provided the results of stormwater modeling, which was summarized on flood inundation maps of the area. She identified the proposed BMPs in the report would remove properties and structures from flood areas for both the 100-year and the 10-inch flood events. The proposed BMPs would also reduce the duration of flooding by generally 40-80% and significantly improve water quality.

Sampedro summarized some of the next steps for implementing the proposed BMPs from the report, including additional data collection activities and discussions with permitting agencies. If the projects are still viable and feasible, then the study partners may apply for relevant grant programs. She also noted the City of Vadnais Heights will be constructing a street project on Garceau Lane next year, which is in the study area and a good opportunity to directly implement recommendations from the study.

Commissioner Miller identified this study is very important to work to protect the number of properties identified in the report. Commissioner Huntrods asked if the City is aware of the recommendations in the study and considerations for their street project. Commissioner Ousky replied VLAWMO has been keeping City staff regularly informed during the study process.

B. Spent Lime Project Update

Tanner provided an update that VLAWMO has been working closely with the White Bear Lake water treatment plant. Prior to its closure this year, two applications of spent lime were completed. The treatment plant went back online on April 29th. Staff have been working closely with Barr Engineering to manage the project. It has been raining often, which has not been great for applying the spent lime. Now that there are drier conditions, Erosion Works is planning to be out today and tomorrow to apply more spent lime loads.

C. Tamarack Alum RFQ Update

Tanner said Barr Engineering has completed the RFQ documents and the request has been sent to potential contractors. She said three contractors have received the documents and staff are waiting to hear back. Staff intend to bring the quotes forward at the June Board meeting.

D. Watershed Management Plan April 24 Meeting Update

Tanner provided an update that the Watershed Management Plan initiate meeting was held on April 24th and thanked Chair Tessier and Commissioner Miller for attending. Tanner said there was excellent participation, including representation from the MPCA, MDH, BWSR, the City of White Bear Lake, NOHOA, and several members from the public. Houston Engineering led presenting the results of the Plan's community engagement process at the meeting. The meeting minutes and priority issue identification will be brought forward to the June Board meeting.

E. Pleasant Lake Carp Removal Update

Tanner announced carp activity has increased and she has been working frequently with Carp Solutions. Carp Solutions found many bigmouth buffalo fish gathered at the barrier between Pleasant Lake and Deep Lake. She said it is easy to assume they are carp because they look similar, but the dorsal fin and mouth shape are different.

Commissioner Miller asked if the bigmouth buffalo are native to Minnesota. Tanner confirmed and said they spawn at different times than carp. She said they are currently trying to go to their spawning sites. Carp Solutions has opened the carp barrier to allow the bigmouth buffalo to go through and closed the barrier again to not allow carp to pass. Carp will be spawning shortly after the bigmouth buffalo.

Tanner said Carp Solutions found that carp have been trying to get into the culvert area by Pleasant Lake Beach. A temporary barrier will be added to the culvert today. She announced that 147 carp have been removed so far, which is about 3,000 pounds.

F. Wilkinson Deep-Water Wetland Project Update

Tanner presented that ongoing eagle nest monitoring has been occurring and two chicks are in the nest and being cared for by the adults. She said staff are providing load reduction data to Houston Engineering so the MPCA can receive it as part of the Wilkinson deepwater wetland project closure process.

G. Birch Lake: BLID Article Sharing

Tanner announced a Birch Lake article was published in the White Bear Press and asked if Commissioner Huntrods could share the article with BLID. Commissioner Huntrods confirmed and asked if there is a date for more Eurasian watermilfoil removal. Tanner replied a pre-survey will occur in mid May and removal is expected around mid June.

Chair Tessier stated she noticed the Birch Lake picture post has been knocked down. Commissioner Miller said the picture post program is no longer active and is wondering if the picture posts should be removed. Tanner said Nick Voss has been coordinating the program and staff will check with him.

VII. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Philip stated White Bear Township is hosting a hazardous waste clean up day this weekend and next weekend and hopes the public takes advantage of these opportunities.

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 June 12, 2024. Next BOD meeting June 26, 2024.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Chair Tessier to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.