

Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes
June 14, 2023
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Council Chambers
800 County Road E East, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

Commission Members Present:

Nick Ousky	Vadnais Heights (VH) (Alternate)
Andy Nelson	Lino Lakes (LL)
Gloria Tessier	Gem Lake
Jami Philip	White Bear Township (WBT)
Susan Miller	North Oaks (NO)

Absent:

Terry Huntrods, White Bear Lake (WBL)

Others in attendance: Phil Belfiori, Brian Corcoran, Lauren Sampedro, Nick Voss, Dawn Tanner (VLAWMO staff), Jeremy Erickson (SPRWS).

I. Call to Order

Administrator Belfiori called the meeting to order at 8:01 am.

A. Selection of Meeting Chair

Administrator Belfiori called for nominations of a meeting chair. Vice Chair Tessier volunteered to serve as Chair.

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the June 14, 2023 TEC agenda Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. Election of Officers

Gloria Tessier: Chair
Susan Miller: Vice Chair
Andy Nelson: Treasurer
Terry Huntrods: Liaison to the Board

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the 2023 officer roles as outlined: Gloria Tessier (Chair) Susan Miller (Vice Chair), Andy Nelson (Treasurer), Terry Huntrods (Liason to Board). Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. Approval of Minutes (May 10, 2023)

It was moved by Commissioner Nelson and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the May 10, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

V. Administration & Operations

A. Financial Report for June and Authorization for Payment

Administrator Belfiori outlined the financial report as included in the May TEC packet. Notable items included revenue from a 50% match with the City of White Bear Lake for the spent lime project at Oak Knoll pond and lab and engineering costs for the Wilkinson deep-water wetland project.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the June financial report and authorization for payment. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

A. TEC Report to Board

Administrator Belfiori presented the June TEC report to the Board as included in the TEC packet. Notable items include consideration at the June Board meeting of a construction contract for the spent lime project at Oak Knoll Pond in White Bear Lake. He also noted that public drainage gullies are being inspected with Ramsey County. The deep-water wetland effort at Wilkinson Lake is set to move into its final stages of design and consideration of solicitation of bids at the June Board meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the June TEC report to Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VI. Programs

A. SHG 2023-01 Charley Lake Condo Association Turf Replacement

Sampedro presented an overview of the proposed project near Charley Lake in North Oaks. Maps and photos were included of the location to be converted into a pollinator meadow/prairie. The seed mix for the effort was adjusted to include more native species, and this is the cause for having two cost estimates in the grant materials. Sampedro highlighted the “revised” cost estimate that reflects the new seed mix.

Commissioner Miller commented her appreciation for the townhome association’s project and hopes that this becomes common for homeowner’s associations across the watershed.

Chair Tessier asked about ongoing maintenance. Sampedro noted that the maintenance is combined with hiring and volunteering, and she noted that there is a sense of enthusiasm among the community for the project.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve SHG-2023-01 Charley Lake Condo Association Turf Replacement. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. LL1 2023-01 Wendland Vegetated Swales

Sampedro described the background and details of this project which converts existing ditches to vegetated swales. Sampedro noted that the neighborhood was included in a 2015 stormwater retrofit analysis report that recommended converting the ditches to vegetated swales and raingardens post-development.

Commissioner Nelson asked about the proposed plant species that are cultivars and if the species should be fully native for the grant. Sampedro noted that those species are extra edible plants that are not included in the grant but will be planted at the same time.

Chair Tessier asked about what happens if the property transfers to new ownership. Sampedro noted that VLAWMO doesn't have a policy to carry over the grant contract to new property owners through recording the project to the property, but the current property owners have a 10-year agreement for maintenance.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve LL1 2023-01 Wendland Vegetated Swales. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

C. LL1 2023-02 Olinger Permeable Pavers

Sampedro outlined this project proposal near Black Lake in North Oaks. Sampedro noted the potential for using the project as a neighborhood spotlight. She noted that the applicant is motivated to reduce stormwater impact on their property.

Commissioner Miller asked whether VLAWMO has approved grants for permeable pavement in the past. Sampedro responded that VLAWMO has.

Commissioner Nelson asked if the 10-year maintenance plan applies to this project as well. Sampedro confirmed that this is accurate for this project and that the maintenance procedure was discussed in detail prior to the application including the use of specialized equipment to remove accumulated sediment and debris from the pavers.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve LL1-2023-02 Olinger Permeable Pavers. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

D. LL1-2023 -3 NOHOA Shoreline Restoration on Pleasant Lake - Walk-up Application

Sampedro described the proposed project site, which consists of a steep bank that contains bare and exposed soil that is beginning to erode. The effort includes stabilizing

this slope and introducing shade-tolerant native groundcover species. All trees will be left remaining except for one declining ash tree.

Commissioner Miller noted that NOHOA is excited about the possibility to partner with landowners adjacent to Pleasant Lake. She commented that buckthorn and erosion is a large concern around the lake, and she noted appreciation for VLAWMO for offering a venue to help the process along.

Commissioner Philip inquired about other ash trees in the area and whether they'll be in decline as well. Sampedro noted that NOHOA has a tree survey that manages these decisions beyond this project site.

Commissioner Nelson inquired how the VLAWMO grant funds are dispersed and whether they're first come, first served. Sampedro confirmed this is accurate and that is routinely part of the discussion and introduction as applicants approach VLAWMO.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve LL1 2023-03 NOHOA Shoreline Restoration on Pleasant Lake. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

D. Website renovation: Mock-up approval

Voss provided a summary of the website renovation. He noted that the project is entering the final stage with the consultant HDR. He also stated that the project is in two stages: this stage 1 is coming to an end and is being summarized today. HDR provided 10 web page mock ups, interchangeable calendar features, and several other updated formats to the VLAWMO website. Voss then presented several graphics that demonstrated what the new webpages would look like in the proposed renovated layout. Commissioner Miller asked if someone is interested in a particular lake, can they go into the website and find all the documents for that lake? Voss answered yes, everything related to that waterbody will be under that lake page on the site.

It was moved by Commissioner Philip and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the website mock-up. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

E. Field Days and irrigation campaign update

Voss provided a short summary of the field days that recently occurred at the Rotary Nature Preserve in the City of White Bear Lake. The two-part field day was held in collaboration with Birch Lake Elementary School and presentations were given to several grades of students. VLAWMO, the City of White Bear Lake, and Rotary members led outdoor activities for students. He noted the high level of interest and fun of the students involved. The Rotary volunteers were outstanding in their participation with the effort.

Voss then provided a summary of the smart irrigation and water conservation campaign that is presented on the VLAWMO website, June newsletter, and in the White Bear Press. He thanked the staff from the City of Vadnais Heights and White Bear Township for their partnership.

F. 40th Anniversary Campaign update

Voss summarized the ongoing 40th anniversary campaign. The events associated with this campaign include an August 24th joint celebration at Vadnais Sucker Lake Regional Park with the Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD) and three neighborhood cost share program tours. He invited TEC members to attend the joint celebration and presented the coaster that will be used as reminder for the campaign and for prizes during the event.

VII. Projects

A. Pleasant/Deep Lake carp update

Tanner provided a recap of current carp activities. She explained approximately 10,000 lbs of carp were successfully removed from Pleasant lake this year.. A 5-year plan with Carp Solutions is being prepared this summer and will be brought to the TEC and Board at an upcoming meeting. This plan will provide planning and budget guidance for continuing the carp removal program.

B. Wilkinson deep-water wetland restoration update

Tanner presented that Houston Engineering has provided a bid package for the next stages of the Wilkinson project. A supplemental agreement, that was highlighted as a need in the MOU with North Oaks Company, is ready for Board signature. The bid package and supplemental agreement will be presented to the VLAWMO June 2023 Board meeting.

C. Pleasant and Birch Lake surveys with RCSWCD

Tanner provided a status update on aquatic vegetation surveys in Pleasant Lake with RCSWCD staff. Discussions are scheduled with the MN Department of Health regarding potential future chemical treatment of invasive Curly-leaf pondweed.

Tanner noted that the efforts for Eurasian watermilfoil treatment in Birch Lake have been successful. VLAWMO is working with BLID and Dive Guys to coordinate this effort, which focuses on hand removal of the invasive species. Tanner thanked BLID for their assistance and is looking forward to future partnership efforts.

D. Alum feasibility for Wilkinson and Tamarack update

Tanner described recent field sampling for the internal loading treatment feasibility study that is ongoing this summer with Barr Engineering for Wilkinson and Tamarack Lakes.

E. Munch Bunch arrival at VH City Hall

Tanner provided a status update for the partnership project with the City of Vadnais Heights to continue buckthorn removal in the City Hall wooded wetland. The Munch Bunch goats are currently on-site. They will be back later this summer/fall.

Commissioner Philip commented that, from personal experience with goats, she knows how effective they are with land and plant management.

Commissioner Ousky commented that the goats have been well received by City staff and the public and have been part of a broader conversation on conservation.

F. Spent Lime project update and quotes for Board

Tanner presented VLAWMO is working with Barr Engineering to obtain quotes for the spent lime project at Oak Knoll pond. One bid was received and Barr staff recommended moving forward with it. It will be brought to the Board for recommendation at the June 2023 meeting.

I. Commissioner Reports

None

II. NOHOA

None

III. Ramsey Soil & Water Conservation Division

None

IV. St. Paul Regional Water Services

Jeremy Erickson provided an update that SPRWS staff will be on Sucker Lake this summer regarding zebra mussels. A product called Earth Tech will be used to strive to lower the zebra mussel population. The application will be applied at the Pleasant Lake gatehouse and monitored weekly at Sucker Lake. Sediment and macroinvertebrate communities will be monitored as part of this effort.

Erickson noted that the safety risk that the zebra mussel presence poses is significant and that the SPRWS hopes to reduce the time spent in the confined space water conduit leading into the Sucker Lake channel beneath highway 96.

He also noted that a 10-year SPRWS lead service line replacement effort is taking place and it's currently in its second year.

V. Public Comment

None

VI. Next Meetings:

Next TEC meeting July 12th. Next BOD meeting June 28th.

XIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by Nick Voss.