

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission (TEC) Minutes  
October 9, 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)
Terry Huntrods	City of White Bear Lake (WBL)
Mike Grochala	City of Lino Lakes

**Absent:** Jami Philip, White Bear Township (WBT)

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

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Tessier called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Grochala and seconded by Commissioner Huntrods to approve the October 9, 2024, TEC agenda. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**III. Approval of Minutes (September 11, 2024)**

It was moved by Commissioner Ousky and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the September 11, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IV. Administration & Operations**

**A. October Financial Report and Authorization for Payment**

Administrator Belfiori summarized the October financial statement as included in the Packet. Notable items included payment to ScapeGoats, website development with HDR, Tamarack alum project preparation, and Landscape Level 2 HOA partnerships. Staff recommended approval of the bills for October.

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

**B. October TEC Report to the Board of Directors**

Administrator Belfiori summarized the TEC Report to Board as included in the packet. Notable items included continuing work with the City of Vadnais Heights on resiliency grant proposal partnerships, a grant project moving forward including 5 raingardens part of the

City of White Bear Lake street reconstruction program, wrap-up of water quality monitoring season, increased WCA reviews, and continued work on the Watershed Management Plan. Staff recommended approval.

It was moved by Commissioners Huntrods and Miller and seconded by Commissioner Tessier to approve the October TEC Report to Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## **V. Programs**

### **A. LL1 2024-01 Schwarz Vegetated Swale**

Sampedro presented about the project as included in the packet. The grant application was from landowners in the City of Vadnais Heights. The site has high visibility and is located in a large drainage area. The project will act as a curb cut rain garden, and the site was highlighted in the East Vadnais Lake resiliency study. The project includes a 1,285 square feet vegetated swale that replaces turf grass. The design was completed by Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD). The project includes native forbs with varying bloom times for pollinators. Five bids were received. The lowest bid was from Landbridge Ecological.

Discussion: Chair Tessier asked why there was such a wide range in bids received. Sampedro responded that the high bid was provided by a company that was not as interested in the project so they increased their cost. Commissioner Miller asked about Landbridge Ecological's experience. Sampedro responded that Landbridge Ecological has completed similar work before and is equipped for a native restoration project like this.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ousky to approve LL1 2024-01. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

## **VI. Projects**

### **A. Watershed Management Plan Update and Consideration of Approach for Review of Draft Sections**

Tanner presented the Watershed Management Plan is in progress and is currently in the draft portion of the BWSR-required update process. She discussed that the TEC is the official plan review committee. As sections are completed, they will be brought to the TEC for review and feedback. Houston Engineering completed drafts of Sections 1 and 2 of the Plan, as included in the packet. Staff are still providing comments on these sections, but these will be provided again to the TEC for a more detailed discussion at the November TEC meeting, which will be the first TEC+ meeting.

Tanner discussed that staff are engaging plan review authorities as part of the TEC+ meeting to allow for comments throughout the process. Staff anticipate having 3-4 TEC+ meetings held at 9:00 am after the normal TEC meeting and will include invitations to additional partners representatives and local and state review authorities. As draft sections are ready they will be provided 1 week before the meetings for time to review and consider comments

beforehand. Staff request written comments 1 week after the TEC+ meetings. Staff hope to present key draft sections at the Board of Directors' meetings and anticipate that the draft process will be completed by June 2025.

Administrator Belfiori added if TEC meetings are completed earlier than the TEC+ meetings, snacks and coffee will be provided for TEC members.

It was moved by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Grochala to approve the TEC+ draft plan review process. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

B. Tamarack Lake Alum Project Update

Tanner provided an update that the contractor wasn't able to complete the project yet due to high winds that caused a shift of the contractor's projects. Phase 1 is now scheduled to occur next week from October 14-16. She said staff hope Phase 1 completion and photos will be ready for the next TEC meeting.

C. Wilkinson Deep-Water Wetland Project Update

Tanner presented native plant enhancement work with Natural Shore Technologies is underway. Their staff are treating reed canary grass and retreating some of the buckthorn this week. Tanner described an experimental submergent plant transplant effort that was permitted by the MN DNR and completed with VLAWMO and RCSWCD staff, which involved transplanting Gem Lake aquatic plants to the Wilkinson deep-water wetland. A vegetation survey of the wetland will be completed next year to confirm how the plants have established.

D. Hybrid EWM Sampling Pleasant, Charley, Deep Results

Tanner discussed the MN DNR requested data on the Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) in Pleasant, Charley, and Deep lakes because the intermediate characteristics did not allow conclusive ID between EWM, native, and hybrid watermilfoil. Deep Lake wasn't previously listed as infested for EWM. Hybrid watermilfoil is also invasive. The new infestation is now recorded with the MN DNR, in addition to providing more information about the known infestations in Pleasant and Charley Lakes. She added that the lab partnership updates an EWM/hybrid map that is available to the public. The Milfoil Mapper will be updated with 2024 data by the end of the year to include Pleasant, Charley, and Deep Lake data.

The Milfoil Mapper can be accessed here: [https://thumlab-msu-watermilfoilapp.shinyapps.io/milfoil\\_app/](https://thumlab-msu-watermilfoilapp.shinyapps.io/milfoil_app/)

E. Vadnais Heights City Hall Summer Goat Grazing Complete

Tanner presented that the goat grazing work has been completed. ScapeGoats provided comments to staff that they were impressed with the buckthorn removal results. Tanner stated that now (this fall and winter) is a perfect time to add native seed mix that will help outcompete the buckthorn as the native plants get established.

Commissioner Miller said she is interested to see if overseeding can outcompete the small buckthorn plants. She said the the project area is transformed compared to when the project started. Commissioner Huntrods asked if the goats are selective with what they eat. Tanner responded that ongoing maintenance will still be needed, utilizing volunteer and student groups, and that the goats will eat everything that they can reach, especially by browsing. Goats are best applied to areas with high coverage of invasive plants because goats will eat native plants too. She added that smaller planted areas within the project area were fenced off to prevent goats getting to them.

**VII. Commissioner Reports**

None

**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 November 13, 2024. Next BOD meeting October 23, 2024.

**XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Huntrods and seconded by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 am. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled by D. Tanner.