



RAMSEY-WASHINGTON
METRO WATERSHED DISTRICT

**Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
July 3, 2019**

The Regular Meeting of July 3, 2019, was held at the District Office Board Room, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada, Minnesota, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Marj Ebensteiner, President
Cliff Aichinger, Vice President
Dianne Ward, Treasurer
Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary
Lawrence Swope, Manager

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Tina Carstens, District Administrator
Tracey Galowitz, Attorney for District
Viet-Hanh Winchell, Attorney for the District
Nicole Soderholm, Permit Inspector
Dave Vlasin, Water Quality Technician
Paige Ahlborg, Project Manager
Brad Lindaman, Barr Engineering
Simba Blood, Natural Resources Technician

Greg Windsperger, Crestview Addition
Joe and Willie Pralutsky, Twin Lake
Keith and Wanda Cook, Twin Lake Trail
Steve and Mary Bertrand, Twin Lake Boulevard
Burt Johnson, Twin Lake Trail
Matt Gray, Crestview Addition
Angie Malone, Twin Lake
Melissa Elke and Ellen Raushel, Twin Lake Court

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Ebensteiner at 6:32 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tina Carstens suggested moving the Twin Lake and Grass Lake items to follow Visitor Presentations on the agenda.

Motion: Dr. Pam Skinner moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes from June 5, 2019

Manager Swope noted on page five, the statement from Andrea Carly, should read, "...Wetland A is a substantial part of the neighborhood."

Manager Ward noted on page eight, Manager Ward commented on the risk of not pumping..."

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve the consent agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND BILL LIST

Motion: Lawrence Swope moved, Cliff Aichinger seconded, to approve the July 3, 2019, bill list as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

5. VISITOR PRESENTATIONS

Burt Johnson, Chair of the Twin Lake Association, explained that the organization is newly formed with a focus on water quality and bringing the lake to an appropriate surface level. He summarized the comments that he has heard about Twin Lake in the recent public Watershed District meetings. He stated that residents have consistently disputed the information from the Watershed District. He provided information on the lake elevation and the low home elevation, which remains in serious risk. He identified inconsistencies that he believes have been found and information from Barr Engineering that had not previously been made public to the Twin Lake residents. He noted that a previous report from 1993 which predicted the exact situation that is occurring on Twin Lake right now because of the West Vadnais inflow that has occurred. He stated that the residents have organized themselves to protect their interests and will prepare for litigation. He stated that the residents have asked the Watershed District to cooperate with them and ask that the District take action on the recommendations within their own reports from 1993 and 2007.

Greg Windsperger, Crestview Addition, spoke in representation of Matt Gray, and encouraged the District to continue to work on lowering the water levels to get things back to what they were a few years ago so that the park area can be used and they do not have the fear of flooding in their homes. He stated that Mr. Gray continues to have his sump pumps operating all the time. He stated that the water in his own yard continues to move closer to his home and encouraged action.

6. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Twin Lake Emergency Response Management 2019
- ii. Snail, Grass, and West Vadnais Lakes Outlet Permitting

Brad Lindaman noted that some progress has been made in the Grass Lake and Snail Lake areas, noting that the stoplogs have been installed. Manager Swope asked if that is intended to be permanent. Brad replied that the structure in the tunnel is permanent but the stoplogs can be taken out. He stated that they have turned that operating plan over to the city today and the use of that option will depend on the conditions. Manager Skinner asked and received confirmation that the stoplog element is meant to stop water flow.

Brad stated that the overflow swale has been reinforced to stabilize that area. He noted that there was damage to the path, but noted that the overflow going from the lake to the path has reduced to a trickle. He stated that the water is no longer moving towards the tunnel or Wetland A. He stated that the remaining work from the contract is down to punch list items and highlighted those items. He stated that staff is working with the city on an operation plan for the stoplogs.

He stated that all of the items discussed over the past few years have been completed through the contract and it was the understanding of staff that the work of the District is complete in this area. He asked if the Board agrees that the District is at that point where the duties have now been completed and the remainder should be turned over to the city and county. President Ebensteiner agreed that the District has completed the agreed upon actions and it would now be up to the city and county to develop a secondary plan.

Manager Aichinger noted that there are other elements downstream, using the example of possibly lowering the West Vadnais outlet, which could assist in allowing a further decrease of Grass Lake. Tina Carstens confirmed that action would continue.

Manager Ward stated that she would agree that the District is done with what was originally discussed, but did not think that the District is done overall in that area. She stated that Grass Lake is high and further review needs to be done to determine what else could be done in that area related to Owasso, West Vadnais, and Wetland A. She believed that continued work in that area would be consistent with the vision and purpose of the District and would still assist in that area. Manager Aichinger stated that staff continues to work on the possibility of lowering West Vadnais. He stated that there is a potential to comeback to this if West Vadnais could be lowered. He noted that otherwise it would be the responsibility of the city and county.

Manager Ward stated that there was some pumping of the southwest pond and installation of the stoplogs and asked if further pumping should be done. She also referenced the elevation of the northwest pond, which impacts the Crestview Addition, and asked if something should be done there. Brad replied that there was discussion of a possible pipe connection from that pond to Suzanne Pond, where water could be pumped to Suzanne Pond using the pumps in that pond. He explained that the city has acknowledged that and are looking into that possibility next year. Manager Ward asked why the water is not just pumped out. Tina replied that the water has been pumped previously. Dave Vlasin stated that the pond was pumped more than 12 times to an almost dry status and comes back within 24 hours. He noted that the northwest pond also refills, although not as quickly as the southwest pond, because of groundwater. Manager Aichinger stated that until the elevation in Grass Lake lowers, the other nearby basins will be impacted.

Brad clarified that the District would consider the work completed and not look into any further actions until the system drains further. Manager Swope suggested pumping the ponds further now. Manager Aichinger asked where that water would be expected to go. Manager Swope stated that the residents in that area are upset about what is happening to the environment in that area. Manager Ward stated that the District cannot act until the water goes down, but should be doing planning ahead of time. Brad noted that when Grass Lake lowers, the District could then consider pumping the ponds again. He confirmed the consensus of the Board.

Manager Skinner stated that the District has always worked to protect homes, and in this case, this would be protection of open space and therefore she would caution against setting precedent. She stated that perhaps that is the job of another partner, such as the county or city, to pump the ponds once Grass Lake lowers. Manager Aichinger agreed that the job of the District is to protect homes. He noted that protection of other assets could be the job of other partners, such as the county or city, but advised that the District could work cooperatively. Brad noted that there are other homes, throughout the District, potentially at risk using the Atlas 14 figures that the District has been working on. He would note that he would suggest continuing on that list before working on other elements, such as open space. Manager Skinner stated that the District has never gone outside of the protection of homes and if there was going to be a variation in that plan, there would need to be a serious discussion. Manager Aichinger agreed that going outside of protecting habitable structures would not be included in the plan and would not be funded. Manager Swope suggested that perhaps there be a future discussion on the topic.

Brad moved to West Vadnais and the associated overflows, reviewing the current elevation. He stated that staff continues to work towards a lower outlet for the lake and is currently working on the EAW through VLAWMO. He stated that the work should be ready to send to VLAWMO in August for a 60-day comment period, with a record of decision to then be made on whether an EIS would be needed or whether the request could move forward to permitting. He noted that, if approved, the construction could occur this winter. He noted that the purpose of lowering the outlet would be to provide more storage in the West Vadnais and Grass Lake system. He explained that this would be for the purpose of long-term resiliency in the system and would have no impact on the current condition.

Manager Swope stated that his hope would be that the Grass Lake area would eventually be restored to regular elevations and could be self-managing.

Brad stated that there is an overflow from West Vadnais that eventually goes towards Twin Lake and identified an existing berm and buffer of trees. He stated that there are some low points within the berm, which has been identified as the primary source of the water. He stated that there is no indication that the low point was intentional and instead had eroded. He stated that this week staff put sandbags in the eroded section to match up with the rest of the berm, which has significantly reduced the flow from West Vadnais to Twin Lake. He stated that once that area dries up, he would recommend restoring that section of berm. He stated that following the last meeting the Board showed support at the possibility of pumping Twin Lake by the City of Little Canada, therefore District staff and Barr assisted the city in drafting permits. He noted that MnDOT and the DNR approved the permits and pumping began on June 11th. He noted that there was good response right away and the city stopped pumping when the elevation reached 873.5. He stated that the DNR does not have an official ordinary high water, but the DNR has stated that they will be setting up a crew to establish that line. He stated that on Monday there was a meeting at the MnDOT office with representatives from DNR, Little Canada, the District, Barr Engineering, VLAWMO and Vadnais Heights. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the pumping that occurred the previous month and a request for continued pumping to a lower elevation. He noted that MnDOT was supportive and the DNR could also see a benefit in pumping to a lower elevation as well. He stated that District staff and Barr have worked with the city to draft amendments to the permits. President Ebensteiner stated that this is a great idea. She stated that there has been a positive outcome of the District working with all the organizations.

Manager Skinner asked and received confirmation that, if continued pumping is approved, the city would continue to do the pumping. Brad reviewed the scenarios that the city will bring to its City Council for review and discussion. Manager Swope stated that he agrees that this is a good example in how the District can provide information and the other partner takes the lead and follows through on the action.

Tracey Galowitz asked if the city is asking for the information or if the District is proactively sharing information. Brad confirmed that the city is asking for information and the District is sharing that information. He stated that another thing the District would like to do is to try to control and divert the overflow from West Vadnais when it does occur. He explained that once the berm section is restored there would be additional permitting needed, but the idea would be to divert that water from the berm into another MnDOT pond rather than going through Twin Lake. He confirmed that this would be a District role.

Manager Ward asked why the water is not pushed downstream from West Vadnais. Brad stated that there is such a larger volume that would increase the risk downstream. Manager Aichinger noted that this discussion is related to summer water levels in the rainy months and this option would divert the water from the berm, rather than attempting to lower the overall lake level of West Vadnais. Brad noted that could be an option for the winter months, but diverting that amount of volume in the summer would increase the risk downstream. He noted that this pumping system would be above ground and similar to the pumping being done by the city. He asked if the Board would support this action, as staff could then prepare for the next overflow event.

Tina confirmed that staff would like to move forward with the permit application. Brad reviewed the steps that the District could take in preparation if directed by the Board. President Ebensteiner believed that it would be a good idea to go forward with permitting and getting things in place. Brad stated that he would be looking for direction from the Board on the continued support to the City of Little Canada and direction for staff to move to the next steps for the diverting around Twin Lake.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to continue to provide support to the City of Little Canada related to their pumping activities and to direct staff to move forward on the next steps for diverting water around Twin Lake from West Vadnais Lake. Motion carried unanimously.

Brad noted that additional options for resiliency will be reviewed including options for the winter months. He noted that Little Canada will likely pursue a permanent high water outlet and will be discussing that with their City Council, noting that the District would continue to provide support as requested. President Ebensteiner confirmed the consensus of the Board in support of those actions.

Dr. Pam Skinner asked if the live data has been put into the models from Barr regarding the high-water levels. Brad confirmed that the models continue to be updated with the current information to provide more accurate flood models.

7. PERMIT PROGRAM

A. Applications

Permit #19-30: White Bear Lake Apartments – White Bear Lake

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to approve Permit #19-30.

Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #19-31: 3108 W Owasso Boulevard – Roseville

Manager Aichinger asked if the applicant was informed of the cost-share program using native planting shoreline restoration rather than riprap. Nicole Soderholm stated that she could inform the applicant of the option. She stated that the Board could approve the permit and she could provide the information to the applicant. Dr. Pam Skinner stated that perhaps a policy be set that when using riprap, staff should suggest an alternate BMP when possible.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve Permit #19-31, with direction for staff to inform the applicant of the cost-share program for native restoration. Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #19-32: St. Paul Urban Tennis Courts – St. Paul

Nicole Soderholm stated that this request was introduced to the Board a few months ago.

Motion: Dr. Pam Skinner moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to approve Permit #19-32. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Monthly Enforcement Report

During June, seven notices were sent to address: install/maintain perimeter control (4), sweep streets (1), implement proper dewatering (1), and protect/maintain permanent BMPs (1).

8. STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

A. Applications

Permit #19-16 CS: Marquardt – Porous Driveway

Manager Ward noted that the cost is above the cap and asked for additional details. Paige Ahlborg stated that the cost of the project is high, but noted this is the only method for treating stormwater on this property. She noted that the removal rate is similar to other approved projects. She noted that the District has exceeded the cap on previous projects. Manager Ward asked if the District would be willing to exceed the cap in every situation where a rain garden would not be possible. She stated that there should be consistent criteria that could be applied fairly. Manager Aichinger noted that the requests still need to be approved by the Board and staff. He agreed that there should be reasons specified as to why a request is approved that exceeds the cap. President Ebensteiner agreed that there should be a reason identified to exceed the cap. Manager Swope agreed that there should be a reason why the cap is exceeded.

Paige noted that there have only been a handful of requests that exceed the cap within the past few years. She noted that there have been previous requests for porous driveways that have been denied and those homeowners have been directed to pursue other BMPs. She confirmed that the applicant would still have additional expenses outside of this request. Manager Aichinger stated that if a porous driveway is the only option for reducing runoff, then the Board could consider a variance to the 75 percent funding level.

Motion: Cliff Aichinger moved, Dianne Ward seconded, to approve Permit #19-16 CS and the variation to the amount of funding as this is the only option to reduce runoff on the site. Motion carried unanimously.

Permit #19-17 CS: Warner – Native Habitat Restoration

Motion: Dr. Pam Skinner moved, Cliff Aichinger seconded, to approve Permit #19-17 CS. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Budget Status Update

Manager Ward asked for details on the approved projects and available budget. Paige provided additional explanation.

9. ACTION ITEMS

None.

10. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Meetings Attended

No comments.

B. Upcoming Meetings and Dates

No comments.

C. My Vacation

No comments.

D. 2018 District Water Quality Summary Presentation

No comments.

E. MAWD Summer Tour

President Ebensteiner stated that she found the tour fascinating. She stated that there were very positive projects highlighted in the Fargo/Moorhead area. She noted that work on the projects began in 1976, but advised that the methodology changed midway through. She stated that she was impressed that, rather than a quick fix, they reviewed the long-term impacts and what needed to be done to create a larger solution. She believed that the District also benefits from that type of approach. Manager Aichinger stated that this has always been the approach of the District and noted that the District has never done things in isolation. Manager Swope noted that the impound areas also attract wildlife.

Tina noted that the summer tours are a good opportunity to see the different water management opportunities in different regions. She noted that next year's tour will be hosted by Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

F. Board and CAC Tour

Tina Carstens asked and received confirmation that the Board would be interested in another tour this year. She asked if there are any areas the Board would like to highlight. President Ebensteiner stated that she would be interested in projects, rather than highlighting future project sites. Manager Skinner noted that perhaps the flooding in the northern portion of the District would be helpful to highlight. She stated that she would prefer to keep the tour under two hours. Tina noted that another option would be to continue mini tours and use the tour

time as time for a retreat. President Ebensteiner stated that she would prefer to have a special meeting or workshop rather than a retreat. Tina Carstens confirmed the consensus to hold a special workshop in place of the tour and instead continue the mini tours.

G. CAC Meeting Update

Manager Swope asked about the idea of District staff producing talking points for CAC members on Nextdoor. Manager Aichinger stated that the original idea was that the District would provide items that the Managers or CAC members could post on Nextdoor.

H. Master Water Steward Program

Manager Ward stated that she believes that this should be a formalized policy in terms of funding the projects for the Master Water Stewards.

I. 2020 Budget Discussions

Tina stated that she sent the information this morning. President Ebensteiner stated that it appears that the programs are working and will remain consistent. She believed that it is important to keep the rainy-day fund for flood events. Tina stated that there are still things in the works that will influence the budget for 2020. Manager Aichinger stated that he has not yet read the information but will review prior to the next meeting when he assumed further discussion would occur. Tina stated that if the Managers identify any red flags, they can contact her to further discuss the item. She provided a brief overview of the proposed budget thus far.

J. Boundary Change with Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization (VLAWMO)

President Ebensteiner stated that she would like to see projected costs as the water body is impaired. She stated that she does not see a positive value and it does not appear VLAWMO would like to give up the water body. Tina stated that if the organization is interested in a joint meeting, that could be helpful just to gain additional information.

Manager Aichinger stated that in his opinion people view boundary changes as more significant than it is. He stated that development of a joint management plan could accomplish the same goals without the District having to fund those improvements on its own. He believed that would be an easier approach that could start implementation much faster. Manager Skinner noted that increasing the boundary to include this lake would not increase the tax base but would increase the area the taxpayers have to support.

President Ebensteiner believed that staff could handle the discussion without a joint meeting of the Boards. Tina noted that a joint meeting could be a good opportunity to discuss the EAW as well. Manager Aichinger stated that perhaps the joint meeting has a few Board members from the District and a few members from the VLAWMO Board along with staff from both organizations. President Ebensteiner agrees with Manager Aichinger that the District should be working with VLAWMO to see what can be accomplished together. Tina stated that if the desire is to jointly manage a water body, a joint meeting would be helpful at some point. She stated that she would prefer to have the meeting proactively rather than await the decision on the EAW. The consensus of the Board was to direct staff to continue to work on the EAW and with VLAWMO staff and not hold a joint meeting at this time.

6. PROJECT AND PROGRAM STATUS REPORTS (Continued)

A. Ongoing Project and Program Updates

- i. Twin Lake Emergency Response Management 2019
- ii. Beltline Resiliency Study
- iii. FEMA Flood Mapping
- iv. Snail, Grass, and West Vadnais Lakes Outlet Permitting
- v. 500 Year Atlas 14 Modeling
- vi. Auto Lake Monitoring Systems
- vii. Maplewood Mall Monitoring

- viii. Spent Lime Pond Research Project
- ix. Kohlman Basin Test Weirs
- x. Wakefield Park/Frost Avenue Project
- xi. School, Commercial, and Faith Based BMP Retrofit Projects
- xii. Willow Pond CMAC
- xiii. Cottage Place Wetland Restoration
- xiv. Aldrich Arena Site Design
- xv. CIP Maintenance and Repair 2019 Project
- xvi. New Technology Review – Bio Clean: Watergate Automatic Retractable Screen
- xvii. Natural Resources Program
- xviii. Education Program

Dave Vlasin provided an update on the alum plant, noting that the plant is currently down while the PH alarm is being updated. He noted that the Maplewood Mall cistern is not operational currently either and advised that the broken part is on order and once replaced that will be operational again.

Manager Aichinger commented that the restoration work around Wetland A is amazing.

11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

No comments.

12. REPORTS OF MANAGERS

No comments.

13. ADJOURN

Motion: Dr. Pam Skinner moved, Lawrence Swope seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Pam Skinner, Secretary