

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE – FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, May 9, 2018**

1. Call to Order

Vice President Spence called the May 9, 2018 regular board meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Forest Lake City Center, 1408 Lake Street South, Forest Lake.

Present: Vice President Jon Spence, Secretary Wayne Moe, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz, Assistant Treasurer Jackie McNamara

Absent: President Jackie Anderson

Others: Mike Kinney, Jessica Lindemyer, Erin Edison (CLFLWD staff); Greg Graske, Meghan Funke (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners); Tom Hixson, Beth Fischer, Erika Bjorkman, Quinn Whiting, Evan Host, and Courtney Pelissero (University of St. Thomas); Ann Erickson and Tracy Fredin (Hamline University Global Center for Environmental Education).

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager McNamara. Upon a vote, the motion carried 3-0.

3. Public Open Forum

No comments were made.

4. New Business

[Manager Moe arrives.]

a) Permit 17-016: Birch Lake Estates

Engineer Graske recapped that at the October 2017 regular meeting, the Board of Managers approved Permit #17-016 for development at this site. He explained that afterward, the applicant, Sherco Construction, worked with the District to complete the remaining permitting requirements for the center lot, but did not submit the required additional permit fees. The permit was never issued, but the applicant built the house on the middle lot indicating that the applicant thought approval had been completed. The applicant, Sherco Construction, changed its development plan to include 5 lots instead of 3. The applicant has requested that the District approve a permit amendment based

on the present development plan. The District has requested that the permitting fees be received prior to consideration at the May 9th Board Meeting and that no further work be performed prior to full permit issuance.

Engineer Graske recommended that the Board approve the permit amendment subject to the Recommendations set forth in the District Engineer's May 3, 2018 memorandum, and that District Engineer and staff work with the applicant to finish those items. He also recommended that the District follow up with Chisago City to make sure it doesn't issue building permits until the required watershed district permit has been issued.

There was discussion about remaining conditions to be completed and the erosion and sediment control measures that have been used for the unpermitted home construction..

Manager Moe moved to approve the amendment to permit 17-016 subject to the Recommendations listed in the May 3, 2018 engineer's review memo.

Discussion: There was discussion about future coordination with other regulatory agencies in order to prevent unpermitted work from occurring. Manager Schmaltz suggested that the motion be amended to also direct that staff apply extra vigilance to ensure that the applicant completes all required conditions for permit issuance and does not perform further work until the permit is issued.

The amendment was adopted by unanimous consent. Upon a vote the motion carried 4-0.

b) Permit 18-006: City of Scandia

Engineer Graske described the project which is partly in CLFLWD and partly in Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District. The project will reclaim approximately 4 miles of roadway without changing the footprint of the existing roads. Two rules are triggered: Erosion Control and Watercourse Crossing. The project includes culvert replacement which crosses an unnamed watercourse at Oakhill Road. Two submittals remain: a maintenance agreement for the watercourse crossing and confirmation that a DNR permit is not required for the unnamed watercourse crossing.

Manager Moe moved to approve permit 18-006 subject to the Recommendations listed in the May 1, 2018 engineer's review memo. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Kinney noted that the City hopes to start construction tomorrow. Legal Counsel Holtman explained that the permit cannot be issued until each of the three Recommendations has been fulfilled. It was clarified that the City has the maintenance agreement in-hand and just needs to add an attachment and execute the agreement.

c) UST Environmental Science Senior Research Presentations

Tom Hickson, Chair of Geology at the University of St. Thomas, provided some background on the Environmental Science Program. Students work with organizations on a project as if they were a consultant, wherein they apply their education to real-world problems. The two projects on which students will be presenting are: *Lidar-based Characterization of Drainage Patterns for the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed and Integration into an ArcGIS Story Map for Public Education* and *Development and Deployment of an Open-Source Groundwater Level Monitoring System for Shallow Wells in the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District*.

The first of the two was presented by Erika Bjorkman and Quinn Whiting and entailed using ArcGIS to create an educational story map for the Comfort Lake subwatershed. Mr. Whiting explained that a story map is comparable to a self-guided PowerPoint presentation using ArcGIS spatial locating capabilities. The story map contained elements such as historic aerial photographs and present-day LIDAR data that characterize drainage patterns. Vice President Spence mentioned the Board's past discussions about altered drainageways in the District and how this tool would be useful in addressing questions like those. Ms. Bjorkman explained how different lidar resolutions were used in order to more accurately model drainage paths in the subwatershed. Different scenarios could be created in the model to illustrate the effects of various modifications such as culvert installations. Engineer Graske explained how this tool is similar to methods the District currently uses. He suggested that the students could use some of the District's old models to help them refine their own model. There was discussion about future iterations of this course and potential improvements to the story map.

The second project was presented by Evan Host and Courtney Pelissero. The project entailed implementing piezometers with continuous data loggers, which is a low-cost, low-power, option for groundwater level monitoring. The devices were installed in the Bixby Park wetland complex and took continuous measurements on the groundwater level fluctuations throughout the past few months. Mr. Host described the technical specifications of the monitoring equipment in detail. Ms. Pelissero explained how the equipment was installed in the field, and the associated challenges.

d) Interactive Watershed Display Presentation

Tracy Fredin gave a presentation on the Center's interactive watershed display. He described the Center's philosophy on communicating with the public in fun and interesting ways in order to educate and interest people in watershed issues. The interactive display is a large-format (55"), multi-touch, ultra high-resolution (4K) table-top computer kiosk which displays highly detailed maps and compelling stories told through high-definition video, photo galleries, and immersive photography. He demonstrated several different capabilities of the display including some of the maps, videos, and photo galleries that the Center has put together. Ann Erickson described some of the places where the unit has been used including museums, breweries, frozen

yogurt shops and other various public spaces. The unit has versatile settings and positions so it can be used for a wide variety of locations and audiences.

Manager Schmaltz inquired about cost information. Mr. Fredin indicated that the units can be purchased for a cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The Center can lease the units out for \$100/day. However, the Center can be flexible in order to create a payment program that works for the District. Mr. Kinney asked if the \$20,000 cost would include design work. Mr. Fredin indicated that it would include the initial basic design, but it would cost more for the Center to create additional customized features for the District. However, District staff could create the content themselves and work with the Center to implement it on the device, which would be less costly than hiring the Center to create the content. There was discussion about options for customization and methods for addressing lost or damaged units.

[Manager Moe departs.]

e) GIS Conservation Grant

Mr. Kinney described the grant that the District received in order to purchase ArcGIS software licenses at a heavily discounted rate. This allowed the District to purchase a much more advanced license than it would have without the grant. Staff will now be able to use ArcGIS for a variety of purposes such as educational story maps and tasks related to the permitting program.

f) District Office Options

Mr. Kinney noted that the District's office lease expires on November 30, 2019. He requested that the managers begin to think about whether the District should renew the lease for another 5-year term or seek other office space options. The District needs to renew by September 1, 2019 if the renewal option is chosen. He explained that Washington County is in need of a trailhead location (e.g. parking lot, restrooms, etc.) for the Hardwood Creek Trail that runs behind the District's current office location. There is a vacant property adjacent to the current office building. The Board may want to consider building an office on this lot, in collaboration with the County, which would serve the dual purpose of office and trailhead location. Other local organizations such as the school district may be potential partners as well, thus creating a multi-purpose community building. Mr. Kinney clarified that a new building may not necessarily be a less costly option compared to the current lease, but it would be a more appropriate layout for an office space as well as an opportunity for community engagement.

Manager Schmaltz asked that Mr. Kinney create a 4-year projection for District staffing needs. Mr. Kinney noted that staff capacity is entirely dependent on the budget, so if the budget remains relatively flat then staffing should not increase. It was clarified that if the District wishes to renovate the current rental office space, it would bear those costs. Mr. Kinney explained that if the lease will be renewed then some renovations are necessary. If the option of creating another building, or otherwise not renewing the lease,

is pursued, then the renovations may not be necessary. The sooner the District makes a decision, the more options it will have available.

Manager Schmaltz and Manager McNamara volunteered to do an initial review of office options. Manager Schmaltz indicated that he will meet with Mr. Kinney initially, then talk with Manager McNamara about possible next steps.

g) District Logo & Branding

Mr. Kinney noted that the District boundary changed in 2017 and the logo no longer reflects the correct boundaries. Mr. Kinney explained that the logo is also fairly out of date with regard to graphic design standards. Manager McNamara expressed the importance of the relationship between the logo/District brand and its overall education and outreach approach. She described her past experience with organizing a community contest to create the City of Forest Lake's logo, and recommended this option over hiring a graphic design firm to create the logo. The logo should have individuality and connection to the local area, which an outside firm may not be able to provide. Mr. Kinney clarified that the suggestion of bringing in an outside firm is not to create the logo, but to educate the Board and staff on what elements make up a good design. He indicated that staff is in agreement that the community should be involved in developing the new logo. He suggested that the District may also want to consider updating its Communication Plan, which was written in early 2015.

Manager Schmaltz expressed that the District's main objective is to get as many projects in the ground as quickly as possible, and the District has a limited budget. What does getting a new logo buy us? There was general agreement that the logo discussion should be part of the 2019 budgeting process, and that utilizing the services of in-house staff as well as the community can help keep costs low. Mr. Kinney indicated that staff can inquire as to the expected cost of having a design professional attend a board meeting. There was discussion about target audiences such as the general public and other local organizations and municipalities. Manager Schmaltz suggested that the design firm may be able to help facilitate the public input process for logo development.

5. Old Business

a) District Communications, Board Committees, and Liaisons

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled due to two managers being absent.

b) Program & Project Updates

Mr. Kinney noted that there is a joint Washington County-Watershed District board meeting scheduled for May 21st and the MAWD Summer Tour is scheduled for June 20-22. There was discussion about attendance for each event. Mr. Kinney noted that a small informational neighborhood meeting for nine landowners directly adjacent to the Shields Lake Stormwater Harvest project is scheduled for next week. A bigger open

house for the project will be held later this summer. Approximately 60 households in the neighborhood near the project will be invited.

6. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Mr. Kinney explained that the purpose of this agenda item is to develop a process for each meeting that will distinguish between managers' general comments and specific direction to staff that is given by the whole Board. He noted that, given the fact that most of the items on the list were suggested by Manager Anderson, she has indicated that she would like to be present for discussion of those items.

Vice President Spence noted that the Board is regularly prone to making suggestions, but doesn't always mean to give direction that may impact the work plan or budget. He expressed that managers should be prepared to clarify their comments so that the direction to staff is clear and so the rest of the Board can decide to support the direction or disagree. One manager's comments do not necessarily reflect the direction of the entire Board.

There was discussion about one of the items on the list regarding considering how the buffer law could be coordinated with the District's cost-share program. Mr. Kinney clarified that the buffer law does not require a native prairie buffer on lakeshores; perennial turf grass satisfies the buffer law in those instances. The law largely applies in agricultural situations where earth is being tilled and regularly exposed. The county soil and water conservation districts are charged with enforcing the buffer law. Manager Schmaltz expressed concern for the time and financial burden associated with taking on additional initiatives through the cost-share program. There was consensus to table further discussion until Manager Anderson is present.

Manager Schmaltz noted a previous Board discussion about managers submitting specific education and outreach ideas for EMWREP to work on. He distributed his list of ideas and priorities to the other managers and indicated that he had previously submitted them to Administrator Kinney as well. He stressed the importance of completing these suggestions soon because the year is almost halfway over.

There was discussion about the point on the Summary of Staff Direction list regarding shifting emphasis of the cost-share plant grant program to emergent plants rather than terrestrial plants. Mr. Kinney explained that the original idea for use of emergent plants was a pilot program for a single residence on Forest Lake. Since then, soil and water conservation district staff have advised that Forest Lake is not an ideal lake for such a program. The Board agreed with including emergent plants as an option as part of the existing program, but terrestrial plants would still be offered as well. This wouldn't require a major shift in the program or staff work plan to accomplish.

The next item on the list was discussed - keep the public updated as the Shields Lake Fish Barrier Retrofit project moves forward. It was clarified that the District held its public hearing for the project earlier this year and statute doesn't require any further public input past that stage. Manager Schmaltz suggested submitting an article to the local newspapers

when construction on the project begins. Ms. Lindemyer noted that a journalist from the Forest Lake Lowdown recently published an article about the project and indicated to staff that she's looking to publish a follow-up article soon.

7. Adjourn

- a) Washington County – Watershed Districts Joint Boards meeting – Monday, May 21, 2018**
- b) Next regular board meeting – Tuesday, May 22, 2018**

Manager McNamara moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 p.m. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Wayne S. Moe, Secretary _____