

**MEETING NOTES OF THE
COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 14th, 2023**

Present: Tom Furey, Jerry Grundtner, Geneva Kubal

Others: Aidan Read

1. Watershed Update

Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist, provided a brief update on activities in the watershed district. The update included the status of winter lake monitoring, the status of winter project implementation, and an update on events of interest in the District.

2. Residential Policy Revision

Mr. Read provided an overview of a draft residential policy revision and the Committee offered comments and discussion. The first round of comments regarded the proposed changes to the former Plant Grant program. The newly proposed mini-grant will allow funds to be used for maintenance with applicants eligible every three years. It was discussed that ongoing maintenance costs may be inquired annually, and that exiting language in the proposed policy would already restrict applicants that have received funds in the past to applying in the second half of the year. The Committee recommended that applicants be able to apply for maintenance funds annually.

Another point was raised by Jerry Grundtner regarding the eligibility of renters to apply for cost-share funds. As written, the draft policy allows renters to apply for cost-share funding with consent of the landowner. Mr. Grundtner brought up the point that this could raise difficulties with maintenance agreements and the lifespan of certain projects.

One element of the proposed cost-share policy that was heavily discussed was the proposal to require deed restrictions for shoreline projects receiving a higher funding threshold. The committee was generally opposed to the idea of deed restrictions as they could have an adverse effect on property values at time of sale. Mr. Read explained that deed restrictions or easements are commonly used to ensure projects meet their intended lifespan, and the intent is to justify the cost-benefit of publicly funding projects on private property. The Committee agreed with the idea of projects receiving ranking preference for voluntary deed restrictions, but generally disagreed with requiring any restrictions.

On the newly proposed Watershed Legacy Payment Program that would provide property tax credits to residents meeting certain criteria, the Committee was generally in favor, but thought that payment amounts should be higher than the recommended \$100. It was also suggested that this program could be used to pay for maintenance costs on newly

constructed native plantings. This maintenance payment would work by having residents with newly installed native plantings receiving automatic eligibility for a certain number of years. The credit would be determined as a percent of project cost with a not to exceed amount.

On the remainder of the proposed program revision, comments were broadly positive. Mr. Grundtner specifically noted that the proposal to provide soil testing to residents would be a great engagement tool.

Mr. Read noted that all comments would be discussed with staff and taken into account in the creation of a draft program proposal to be brought to the Board of Managers.

3. High School Collaboration Update

At the January meeting a proposal to work with the High School on a tree planting project was tabled until more information could be acquired. Mr. Read provided an update on conversations with staff at the High School. One proposal being discussed is the creation of a gravel tree bed on school property using their newly installed stormwater reuse system. This would allow students to use the tree bed as a learning tool in the spring and fall with education and technical support from CLFLWD staff. Beyond the education benefit of such a system, it would also promote the reforestation of the District. Committee members generally approved of this direction, and requested updates as the conversation with school staff continues.

4. Closing and Selection of March Chair

No chair was selected for the month of March.

*Next regular meeting of the Citizen's Advisory Committee will be Tuesday, March 14th at 5:00pm.
The Manager in attendance for the March meeting is Manager Jackie Anderson. The meeting
will be held remotely via Zoom.*