



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

MEETING NOTES OF THE COMFORT LAKE-FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE Tuesday, March 19th, 2024

Present: Tom Furey, Ted Hansen, Rich Johnson

Others: Manager Stephen Schmaltz, Aidan Read, Adam Hjelm

1. **Watershed Update & New Staff Introduction**

Tom Furey was elected chair of the meeting, and the agenda was approved. Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist, reviewed ongoing projects and program updates from the last month, including work at the North Shore Trail Nature Area, the Moody Capstone Project, and the upcoming monitoring season. Mr. Read also reported on the shoreline contractor workshop that was held on March 4th. There were 26 attendees at the workshop which included presentations from CLFLWD staff and other Lower St Croix partners.

2. **Staff Introduction**

The Committee was introduced to Adam Hjelm, Education and Outreach Coordinator. Mr. Hjelm provided an overview of his background and experiences, and then provided an update on upcoming educational events and workshops. Upcoming lake-specific shoreline informational meetings were discussed, as well as potential outreach opportunities for those meetings.

3. **2024 Cost-Share Policy**

Mr. Read introduced the 2024 Cost-Share Policy and noted that the item had been tabled by the Board of Managers to be discussed again at the March 28th meeting. The only substantial change introduced is the proposed name change from "Legacy Payment Program" to "Watershed Property Tax Credit Payment Program". Mr. Read mentioned that staff had been advised by counsel to avoid the term "tax credit" as the payment provided by the program will not be an actual tax credit and could lead to confusion. Mr. Read noted that none of the participants in the pilot cohort had expressed interest in the property tax payment. Manager Schmaltz stated that he thought the idea of a payment as a percentage of property taxes may be more appealing than a direct payment. A conversation was held on the idea of promoting



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natural shorelines to preserve and enhance property values. Ted Hansen expressed some concern about the proposed payment program name, citing his accounting experience, and a desire to keep things simple.

4. Overview of District Properties

Mr. Read provided an overview of properties owned by the Watershed District, as requested at a previous meeting by the Committee. Properties discussed include the Hwy 61 Wetland, the Hayward Ave Wetland, North Shore Trail Nature Area, and the Houle Property.

5. Closing & Election of Chair

Upcoming agenda items were reviewed. Tom Furey confirmed he would be Chair of the April meeting, as elected at the February meeting.

Manager Jackie Anderson is the Manager in attendance at the CAC meeting on April 16th.