Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission (VRWPC) Meeting
March 8, 2017
Dakota County Western Service Center, Room 334, Apple Valley, MN

WPC Members in Attendance
Mark Henry
Jim Guttmann
Chuck Clanton
Tony Wotzka
Jeanie Fredlund

Staff in Attendance
Mark Zabel, VRWJPO
Mark Ryan, VRWJPO

Others in Attendance
Curt Coudron, Dakota SWCD
Dee McDaniels, Dakota Co.

1. Call to Order.
The meeting was called to order by Chair Guttmann at 3:35 p.m., and opened with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Carolyn Miller introduced herself as the new WPC member from Scott County. Carolyn is from the City of Elko New Market and has served on the city council and city planning commission.

2. Approval of the Agenda
Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commissioner Wotzka, to approve the agenda as presented. The agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes
Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commissioner Henry, to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2017, meeting with the following corrections: Change the year of the meeting from 2016 to 2017; note that Mark Ryan was the presenter at the February meeting for items c-f; correct the spelling of Commissioner Fredlund’s name.

4. Business Items
a. Overview of the Dakota County Land Conservation Program
Al Singer, Land Conservation Manager for Dakota County, gave a presentation of the Land Conservation program. Al said a 2001 residential citizen survey showed 96% of respondents believed that the County’s role in protected natural areas was very important or somewhat important. The same survey showed 91% of respondents believed that the County’s role in protected farmland was very important or somewhat important.

In 2002, the County Board approved a 20 million dollar bond referendum and the voters approved the bond referendum in 2002. That led to Dakota County being eligible for access to State and Federal matching funds. Fundamental elements of the program are to:

- Protect environment – especially water
- Protect a mix of farmland and natural areas
- Include broad, County-wide geographic focus
- Fund permanent easements – not temporary
- Fund public and private property protection
- Match County funds with other funding
Since 2003, Dakota County, along with State and Federal partners working with willing landowners have acquired 16 Natural Area easements and 10 fee title projects totaling over 1,937 acres. Landowner contributions were an important element and additional value to the program. Pilot Knob in Mendota Heights and a large portion of Hampton woods are examples of the natural areas that have been protected. Farmland protection includes 28 agricultural easements totaling over 3,116 acres.

Dakota County has leveraged $25.7M in donated easement value, $31M in federal, state, regional, and local government and non-profit funds, and currently has three Outdoor Heritage grants with approximately $4.6M available for acquisition and restoration.

b. Highway 50 Phosphorus Treatment Enhancement Project in the City of Lakeville
Mark Ryan said the Vermillion River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) project identified Lake Marion as a water body requiring protection strategies for phosphorus because the lake’s current concentrations are approaching the applicable lake standard while not exceeding it.

During planning and design for County Road 50 on the east side of Lake Marion, the VRWJPO, the County, and the City identified a location where stormwater from the roadway and an upstream drainage area could be treated to remove phosphorus. The original site on school-owned property was not available to manage stormwater runoff for the road project, so another site was identified where the project could be constructed. The County Transportation Department is purchasing a property for trail purposes and it will also have a filtration basin.

A basin consisting of a treatment train including a pretreatment sediment basin, standard bioretention, and an iron-enhanced sand filter was designed into the project to help reduce phosphorus beyond the road project needs. Pollutant reduction modeling indicates that the project has the potential to reduce 19.7 pounds of phosphorus and 4,258 pounds of sediment from entering Lake Marion annually.

5. Updates
a. Chairman’s Report
Chairman Guttmann reminded the WPC of an email from Chuck Clanton regarding an upcoming seminar.

b. Staff Updates
Mark Ryan distributed the revised JPA dollar amounts for the five grant projects. Mark Zabel explained that if a grant is awarded for $100,000, the grant recipient is allowed 10% for administrative costs or $10,000. The JPA between the Watershed and a city would be for the maximum amount that could be spent on implementing the project, which is $90,000.

Commissioner Clanton asked if additional dollars are needed for in-kind. Mark Zabel said that in-kind contribution would be part of project match funds and additional in-kind is not required.

Mark Zabel said he will be participating in a meeting at MPCA on March 15, to talk about E.coli and the E.coli standard. Staff has been sampling high levels at the monitoring station near the headwaters. At this time, staff is uncertain if the high levels are from cattle or human sources or from sediment sources and addressing the distinction between the potential sources may be challenging. Staff will be doing more sampling this spring. Funds have been budgeted for the work with Scott SWCD.

Commissioner Henry mentioned that the DNR was proposing to raise user fees this year. He believes it’s a good idea to fund the work the DNR is doing.

6. Adjourn
Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commission Fredlund, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 at 3:30 p.m.
Dakota County Western Service Center, Room 334, Apple Valley, MN