



Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission Meeting

September 14, 2022 – 4 p.m.

In-person and Microsoft Teams Videoconference

WPC Members in Attendance

Mark Henry James Kotz
Josh Borton Andy Riesgraf
Steve Hamrick
Chuck Clanton

Staff in Attendance

Mark Ryan, VRWJPO
Brita Moore-Kutz, VRWJPO
Mark Zabel, VRWJPO
Travis Thiel, VRWJPO

Others in Attendance

Curt Coudron, Dakota County SWCD
Linda Larson, Rosemount resident

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

2. Roll Call

All members present.

3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

4. Approval of Agenda

Chair Henry asked for approval of the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commissioner Borton, to approve the agenda as distributed. The agenda was approved by a 6-0 vote.

5. Approval of Minutes from the July 13, 2022 Meeting

Chair Henry requested any adjustments to the minutes as presented.

Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commissioner Borton, to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2022 meeting, as presented. The minutes were approved by a 6-0 vote.

6. Business Items

- a. **Recommend Adoption of Amendment to the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Implementation Section**

Mark Zabel introduced the procedural requirement for the item to appear before the Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission as the two primary functions for Citizen Advisory Committees (WPC in our case) identified in Minnesota Rules 8410 is for input to updates to Watershed Plans and when Plans are amended. This amendment to the Plan is considered a minor amendment by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in their review of its content; but it is a major consideration on the part of our organization because it is going to allow us to implement projects going forward. Thus, it is important for your review and recommendation.

Travis Thiel noted that the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board authorized release of the amendment for comment on July 20, 2022. That provided 30 days to collect comments from the public and review agencies. The VRWJPO received three comments which were supportive of the amendment as presented.

Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commissioner Kotz, recommending adoption of the amendment to the Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Implementation Section to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

7. Updates

a. Chairperson's Report

Chair Henry introduced Linda Larson who is an applicant to serve on the Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission. Linda provided information on her background and interest stating that she is a resident of the City of Rosemount in a rural residential setting. She is a member and President of the Dakota County Chapter of Farmer's Union, though she is no longer farming. She is concerned about water, generally, but that interest was piqued when there was a proposal to appropriate water in Dakota County and ship it by rail to the southwest United States or other areas of high need of potable water. Linda does not claim expertise in water resources but has a strong interest. Mark Zabel noted that the people who serve are expected to provide a broad range of voices with varied interests. Linda's application is currently the only application in consideration and with support from the review team will be on the agenda for appointment at the next meeting of the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board.

Commissioner Clanton asked about any changes regarding meeting time for the WPC. Commissioner Riesgraf noted that coming from his work location in downtown Minneapolis to get to the meeting on time can be challenging. A discussion about what might be an appropriate meeting time took place.

Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second buy Commissioner Kotz, to change the start time of meetings to 4:30PM. The notion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Commissioner Clanton asked about the new email security system that encrypts outgoing emails. Mark Zabel explained that Dakota County has applied this new email security system as an added layer of cyber security. The system seems to apply when attachments are added to an

email. The work around would be to send a link to the meeting packet on our website instead of sending it as an attachment. If members are comfortable downloading the packet from the website we can proceed with sending the link as the solution. If there are issues with that approach, Zabel asked members to contact him and staff can work on another solution.

Commissioner Kotz asked about member terms and that question led into a brief discussion about membership issues. Mark Zabel indicated that the members of the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board are very aware of the recruitment and appointment of new members and have asked staff to explore this and bring them some alternatives to consider. Staff will be bringing suggested alternatives forward for discussion and recommendations over the next few months. Any significant change may require amending the empowering joint powers agreement, which would require action by the Dakota and Scott County Boards. Linda Larson asked how well known the Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission is among the public. She suggested perhaps making a trifold brochure that could be placed in County park and library kiosks that might introduce the WPC to more people and spark interest with those who might be willing to serve as members. Mark Ryan suggested that one change to consider might be the number of meetings. Commissioner Riesgraf noted that the primary target audience for recruitment are those who have time to devote to this activity such as retirees and was wondering if we are reaching that target audience.

b. Staff Updates

Brita Moore-Kutz reported that she will be a presenter at the Outdoor Education Days put on by the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District in the next week. She will be staffing the water station talking about the overall scarcity of water worldwide, and will be presenting around a storm drain model conveying the vulnerability of stormwater. "We Are Water MN" exhibit will be launched on October 13, 2022, at the Pleasant Hill Library in Hastings and will be there until December 5, 2022. There will also be a smaller outdoor "We Are Water MN" exhibit at Lebanon Hills Regional Park Visitor Center. There will be a feature article about this in the VRWJPO Fall Newsletter.

Curt Coudron of the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District reported that we are now fully in project installation activities. Cover crops will be going in following harvest over the next month, a stream bank stabilization was just completed in Lakeville, there is a bioretention project in Rosemount that is being completed this Fall, and there are a couple of native prairie projects that are going in.

Mark Ryan reported that the Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM) Crew was out at Empire Linear Park removing some deadfalls (dead and downed trees) from the river in areas where there was some accelerated erosion and flow stagnation caused by the deadfalls. Curt and Matt from the Dakota County SWCD will be returning to the area with the CCM Crew placing some cedar revetments to provide some erosion protection in this area. Commissioner Borton asked how much of the river received this treatment. Mark responded that only a small reach in the publicly owned park was treated. Mark Zabel noted that removing deadfalls as a general practice if widely implemented is not beneficial to the river as the natural occurrence of woody

debris in the stream provides habitat and feeds the stream with organic matter (supporting the food web of the stream). Mark Ryan also noted that clearing or partially clearing deadfalls from the stream for supporting recreation is a larger conversation and generally doing this type of work to clear large sections of the river is time, labor, and cost intensive. Mark Ryan mentioned that he and Travis have been working on a couple of construction projects, one being the restoration of sediment control basins in Ravenna Township, another being the nitrate treatment wetland south of Farmington that is need of some maintenance. Mark Ryan informed members that he would be attending the upcoming Township Officers Meeting to discuss the plan amendment and talk about ordinance updates for those townships that haven't yet updated their ordinances to incorporate the updated VRWJPO Standards.

Travis Thiel reported VRWJPO staff having applied to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for a Clean Water Fund Grant in August for a potential fish barrier project near East Lake in the City of Lakeville. Staff have applied two other times to different grant sources unsuccessfully, and this is one of the last possibilities for outside funding to support this capital improvement project. The purpose of the project is to create a barrier to movement of carp and goldfish in and out of East Lake, and then other potential in-lake efforts to reduce populations to manageable levels can be implemented and water quality improved. We would expect notification on this application sometime in December. Commissioner Clanton asked about costs. Travis responded that this project is estimated at approximately \$315,000. This would be a low voltage electric barrier similar to what has been implemented in other locations in Minnesota. Commissioner Clanton asked if the VRWJPO might fund this in partnership with the City of Lakeville if the grant proposal is rejected. Mark Zabel responded that this could be a discussion for 2024 and could include other partners. Travis noted that once we have exercised all outside funding options we would return to discussions with partners for potential options for local funding. Commissioner Riesgraf asked if East Lake has been commercially fished for rough fish removal. Travis responded that it has not. Mark Ryan added that this is an option to be considered after placement of the fish barrier. Travis and Mark Zabel noted that there is a high likelihood of repopulation from local wetlands without placement of a fish barrier. Commissioner Riesgraf mentioned that rough fish harvest is something that has been employed with some success in driving down the biomass in other lakes and settings and that it could be implemented independently of placement of a fish barrier. In addition, Travis reported that he has been inspecting previously completed watershed CIP projects for current conditions, as these projects have maintenance agreements associated with them. Travis did not have any major concerns to report as a result of these inspections, and staff are working with city partners on addressing minor issues. Commissioner Henry asked about requirements for permitting for culvert cleanouts. Staff commented that permitting may be required from DNR and that any permit requirement may revolve around timing for spawning periods and offered to inquire with the DNR on this issue related to local roads

Mark Zabel reported that the VRWJPO is expecting the report from the BWSR Performance Review and Assistance Program on their Organizational Review for the VRWJPO. BWSR staff will be reporting to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board at this month's meeting on September 22, 2022 and we expect to have a report at the next WPC meeting.

8. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Clanton, second by Commissioner Borton, to adjourn the meeting at 4:49 p.m. The motion passed on an 6-0 vote.

DRAFT