



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Minutes of Regular Meeting Thursday, July 16, 2020 8:30 a.m.

Via video conference due to the COVID-19 global pandemic

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

On Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 8:31 a.m. via video conference, Chair Prom called the meeting of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) to order.

Commissioners and city staff present:

City	Commissioner	Alternate Commissioner	Technical Advisory Committee Members (City Staff)
Crystal	Dave Anderson	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Mark Ray
Golden Valley	Stacy Harwell (Treasurer)	Jane McDonald Black	Jeff Oliver, Eric Eckman
Medicine Lake	Clint Carlson	Gary Holter	<i>Absent</i>
Minneapolis	Michael Welch (Vice Chair)	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Liz Stout
Minnetonka	Mike Fruen	<i>Vacant Position</i>	Leslie Yetka
New Hope	<i>Absent</i>	Patrick Crough	Megan Hedstrom
Plymouth	James Prom (Chair)	Catherine Cesnik	Ben Scharenbroich
Robbinsdale	<i>Vacant Position</i>	<i>Absent</i>	Marta Roser, Richard McCoy
St. Louis Park	Jim de Lambert (Secretary)	<i>Absent</i>	Erick Francis
Administrator	Laura Jester, Keystone Waters		
Engineer	Karen Chandler, Barr Engineering Meg Rattei, Barr Engineering		
Recorder	Dawn Pape, Lawn Chair Gardener		
Legal Counsel	Dave Anderson, Kennedy & Graven		
Presenters/ Guests/Public			

2. PUBLIC FORUM ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Harwell moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Welch seconded the motion. Upon a rollcall vote, the motion carried 7-0, with the cities of New Hope and Robbinsdale absent.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda: June commission meeting minutes, July financial report, payment of invoices, approval of salt symposium registration reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner Cesnik, and 1230 Angelo Drive Shoreline repair project in Golden Valley.

The general and construction account balances reported in the July 2020 Financial Report are as follows:

Checking Account Balance	720,492.14
TOTAL GENERAL FUND BALANCE	720,492.14
TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENTS ON-HAND (7/8/20)	4,021,241.64
CIP Projects Levied – Budget Remaining	(4,542,135.65)
Closed Projects Remaining Balance	1,585,555.67
2015-2018 Anticipated Tax Levy Revenue	2,288.14
2019 Anticipated Tax Levy Revenue	4,953.76
Anticipated Closed Project Balance	1,592,797.57

MOTION: Commissioner Welch moved to approve the consent agenda with the exception of item 4E which is to be added to the business agenda as 5F. Commissioner Anderson seconded the motion. Upon a rollcall vote, the motion carried 7-0, with the cities of New Hope and Robbinsdale absent.

[Alternate Commissioner Crough, New Hope, joins meeting.]

5. BUSINESS

A. Receive Update on Main Stem Lagoon Dredging Project and Maximum Levy Discussions

Administrator Jester provided an update on recent discussions regarding the maximum levy and the Main Stem Lagoon Dredging Project. She noted that Minneapolis Park and Rec Board staff are supportive of the project, they may be able to assist with certain grant applications, that the project fits into the park’s master plan, that MPRB may be able to contribute capital funds in 2023, and that they would provide access and permits. She also noted the MPRB staff indicated they may not have the staff capacity to implement the project in the next few years and that since there is no structure to own or maintain with this project, it may be a good opportunity for the Commission to implement the project rather than a city or partner.

Administrator Jester reported on a recent discussion with Bill Emory, Hennepin County Commissioner Fernando’s Policy Aide. She noted that a meeting with Commissioner Fernando is arranged for July 30th and that Mr. Emory indicated that although Commissioner Fernando is extremely supportive of the BCWMC and its work, it would be difficult to support such an increase in levy amounts right now. She noted that many county

commissioners are hoping to have no increase in the 2021 tax levy over 2020 levels, or perhaps to even lower the levy.

Administrator Jester then reviewed another option for keeping the levy at or just below the current level, while still implementing the lagoon dredging project starting in 2021: spreading the cost of the project over 4 years instead of 3 years and using more Closed Project Account funds in 2021.

There was some discussion about grant opportunities and the fact that one state grant cannot be used to match another state grant or state funding. Commissioner Harwell stated that she liked the four-year option because it takes the financial situation into account, but also implements the project in phases.

Commissioner Welch brought up that even though Hennepin County Environmental Response Funds (ERF) haven't historically been used for this type of project, it would be worth checking with ERF staff before meeting with Commissioner Fernando. There was further discussion about logistics and talking points for the meeting with Commissioner Fernando.

MOTION: Commissioner Harwell moved to include the new option of funding the Main Stem Lagoon Dredging Project over four years, using \$500,000 of Closed Project Account funding in 2021, and keeping the levy under \$1.5M. Alternate Commissioner Crough seconded the motion.

There was further discussion about the "Plan B," or secondary option that Commissioner Fernando may be able to support, particularly for the Hennepin County Committee of the Whole meeting on August 4th. There was discussion about possibly drafting a formal statement from the Commission recognizing budget constraints and the financial crisis.

Commissioner Welch volunteered to make the presentation at the meeting with Commissioner Fernando. Chair Prom and Administrator Jester were authorized to revise the levy request. There was discussion about the contingency amount of 30% (of construction costs) included in the total project cost and the fact that spreading the cost over four years might increase the overall cost, but most likely within the contingency amount.

VOTE: Upon a rollcall vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of Minnetonka absent.

i. Consider Submitting Application for Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant

Administrator Jester noted that grant applications for the competitive Clean Water Fund grant are due August 17th and relayed her recent conversations with BWSR staff. She noted that dredging for BMP maintenance is not fundable, but that BWSR staff agreed this project might be considered for funding because the lagoons were not designed as BMPs. Commissioner Welch stated the Hennepin County Environmental Response Funds and the county's Opportunity Grants should be the first priority for grant applications. He noted the Clean Water Funds don't typically fund dredging projects.

Commissioner Engineer Chandler noted that DNR funding is unlikely since the dredging wouldn't decrease flooding or increase flood storage by a significant amount. There was consensus not to move forward with a Clean Water Fund grant application, but to continue looking into other grant opportunities, including working with MPRB staff on the possibility of historical preservation funds, pursuing BWSR watershed based implementation funds, and Hennepin County Opportunity grant funds. Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black noted the significance of the MPRB ranking of Theodore Wirth Park as its #1 Equity Park.

B . Review Report and Receive Presentation of North Branch Bassett Creek 2018-2019 Water Quality and Biotic Index Monitoring Results

Commission Engineer Chandler introduced Meg Rattei, a Senior Biologist at Barr Engineering. Chair Prom requested that commissioners hold questions until the end of the presentation.

Ms. Rattei gave a presentation on the results of monitoring in the North Branch Bassett Creek, noting it was the first stream to be monitored as part of the Commission's new stream monitoring program. As of 2018, the BCWMC monitoring program includes monitoring streams not only for biota, but also for water quality and flow. In order to spread out costs, only one stream is monitored at a time. The monitoring occurs over a two-year period. The North Branch Bassett Creek was monitored in 2018 and 2019 including the collection of 30 samples split between storm sampling with an automatic sampler and baseflow sampling with grab samples. Ms. Rattei presented the results.

Average stream flow was 2.9 and 5.4 cubic feet per second in 2018 and 2019, respectively. The stream met MPCA standards for temperature, metals, and stream eutrophication, but failed to meet standards for chlorides and total suspended solids. The stream also failed to meet the MPCA numerical standard for *E. coli* bacteria in 2018 and 2019, but the MPCA requires collection of a minimum number of samples within a 10-year period before determining impairment. Since the number of samples collected was less than the required minimum, not enough data was collected to determine impairment.

Between 1980 and 2018, the BCWMC collected benthic macroinvertebrates (aka bottom-dwelling organisms) from the North Branch of Bassett Creek on 11 occasions. The purpose of the sampling was to evaluate water quality and detect changes over time. The 2018 monitoring program sampled for macroinvertebrates and assessed habitat.

Three biotic indices were used to assess the macroinvertebrate data: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI), Invertebrate Community Index (ICI), and Macroinvertebrate Index of Biotic Integrity (M-IBI). The MPCA developed the M-IBI and added it to Minnesota's water quality standards to help identify biologically impaired rivers and streams.

Ms. Rattei reported that biological scores improved slightly in 2015, likely due to implementation of Commission stream restoration projects, but that the 2018 Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI) and Invertebrate Community Index (ICI) scores were generally consistent with past values. She reported that none of the locations monitored from 2006 through 2018 met the MPCA M-IBI impairment standard and poorer M-IBI scores were documented at the North Branch in 2018. Thus, the North Branch of Bassett Creek would be considered biologically impaired. The 2018 decrease in score may be due to the negative impacts of increased flow and increased pollutant loading during a major precipitation event that occurred 2 weeks prior to collection of the 2018 macroinvertebrate samples.

Because the North Branch of Bassett Creek is biologically impaired and failed to meet MPCA standards for total suspended solids, chlorides, and *E. coli* bacteria from 2018 through 2019, it is recommended that BCWMC continue to assess and monitor the North Branch of Bassett Creek and continue education to reduce chloride use in the watershed.

Commissioner Welch asked about the need to analyze for parameters that don't have MPCA standards. Ms. Rattei noted those parameters are measured because the data are used to calculate values for some other parameters with standards. Chair Prom asked why more bacteria samples weren't collected in order to meet the monitoring requirements to determine impairment. Ms. Rattei noted that bacteria samples can only be done through grab sampling and that it is expensive to collect grab samples. She also noted that the *E. coli* standard is an aggregate of samples over 10 years, so there is still time to collect the appropriate number of samples within that time frame.

There was discussion about chloride state standards vs. total suspended solids standards. Commissioner Harwell asked why macroinvertebrates were collected only 2 weeks after a major flooding event. Ms. Rattei replied that early October is typically the best time to collect bug samples and there wasn't room in schedule to collect them later. Commissioner Harwell stated the need for actual projects and programs for chloride reduction in addition to education. There was a brief discussion about using volunteers for *E. coli* collection and other opportunities for collaboration.

C. Review Report and Receive Presentation of Main Stem Bassett Creek Biotic Index Monitoring Results

Ms. Rattei continued with a presentation on the biological monitoring of the Main Stem of Bassett Creek. Administrator Jester noted that the Commission relies on the water quality and flow data from the WOMP station, which is reported by Met Council and not included here.

Between 1980 and 2018, the BCWMC has collected data on biota and habitat from the Main Stem of Bassett Creek on 11 occasions in order to evaluate water quality and detect changes. In 2018, the BCWMC monitored the Main Stem of Bassett Creek at two locations: 1) east of Brookridge Avenue, and 2) at Rhode Island Avenue. The Met Council monitored the Main Stem at Irving Avenue in 2018 for both water quality (through the WOMP program) and biota/habitat.

In 2018, a statistically significant trend toward improving HBI scores (indicating improving oxygen conditions) was documented at the Main Stem Irving Avenue location. The improved HBI score at this location appears to have resulted from a Commission 2015 Main Stem stream restoration project which stabilized the stream and reduced sediment from Golden Valley Road to Glenwood Avenue. Sediment contains organic matter, which consumes oxygen during degradation, lowering oxygen levels in the stream. The significant improvement in HBI score documents the improved quality due to the sediment reductions in the stream following completion of the project. The 2018 ICI score from the Main Stem at Irving Avenue and the 2018 HBI and ICI scores from all other Main Stem sampling locations were consistent with past scores.

Improved M-IBI scores were documented at all Main Stem locations in 2018. Consistently improving M-IBI scores were documented at the east of Brookridge location since 2012 and at the Irving Avenue location since 2008. The long-term improvements appear to show the positive impacts of multiple Commission stream restoration projects completed from 2012 through 2018.

Commissioner Welch asked what does this all mean for the Commission's work; how can the data be used to develop policy decisions? Ms. Rattei agreed that it is disappointing that biological standards still aren't met, but that at least the trend is going upwards rather than downwards. The Commission work has been successful, it's just that this is a challenging stream and it is not yet "over the finish line."

Administrator Jester agreed that the Commission should work to better use its data to pinpoint needs and projects.

There was discussion about how the M-IBI standard was developed and where in the state the standard is being met. Commissioners wondered if meeting the standard is even attainable in an urban stream. Ms. Rattei noted that the M-IBI was introduced by the MPCA in 2015 and approved by the EPA in 2018 but that explanations for how it was developed remain unanswered and that outside entities weren't allowed to give input in developing the standards. She did note that biotic scores are very tied to good habitat and that the Commission should continue to find opportunities to improve habitat.

There was further discussion about understanding where the M-IBI standard is being met and the relationship between the Commission's monitoring results and how it does or does not inform projects and policies. Ms. Rattei noted that other watersheds are still trying to determine if investing in biotic assessments is the right thing to do. She offered to gather information on where the M-IBI is being measured and where it's being met or not met across the state.

D. Consider Submitting Resolution for 2021 MAWD Legislative Platform

Administrator Jester gave an overview of the MAWD request for resolutions and informed the Commission that the proposed resolutions are due September 1st. She asked if any Commissioners have ideas.

Commissioner Welch said there is an existing limited liability chloride resolution and we should consider asking for that to be pursued. Commissioner Welch also mentioned considering the Commission's levy structure, noting the MWMO was added to the list of organizations that can levy taxes. Chair Prom indicated his belief that only elected officials should be able to levy taxes.

Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black asked if MAWD could create a database of M-IBI scores across all watersheds. Commissioner Welch said that idea could be brought to Metro MAWD meeting next week. Commissioner Harwell noted that the Commission should not advocate for lowering a standard, but is interested in a comparison among watersheds.

4E. From Consent Agenda: Approval of Bassett's Creek Park (North) Phase 1 Improvement Project, Minneapolis

Commissioner Welch asked the identity of the applicant and wondered why there are impervious surfaces in a park. Commission Engineer Chandler noted the Minneapolis Park and Rec Board is the applicant and pointed out that the summary information in the memo states that the impervious surfaces are the trails and sidewalks.

MOTION: Commissioner Welch moved to approve the Bassett's Creek Park (North) Phase I Improvement Project. Commissioner Harwell seconded the motion. Upon a rollcall vote, the motion carried 8-0, with the city of Minnetonka absent from the vote.

F. Discuss Meeting Format for August 20th BCWMC Meeting

Chair Prom shared that he is comfortable with going back to meeting in person. Commissioner Harwell shared that the DNR directive is to work from home. Chair Prom listened to other members and sensed that the majority would like to continue meeting virtually. The August meeting will be via web conference.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Administrator's Report

i. Medicine Lake Mapping AIS with Drone

Through contract with Hennepin County, a private company is flying specialized drones in hopes of identifying and delineating different AIS in Medicine Lake. So far, results are encouraging. Administrator Jester will keep the Commission apprised of results, when available.

ii. Potential Restoration Partnership with Friends of the Mississippi River

Administrator Jester and Commissioner Welch met with members of a Bryn Mawr neighborhood group hoping to better organize restoration near the creek in Bassett's Creek Park including invasive species removal and native plantings. Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) may also get involved by developing a restoration plan, in cooperation with the MPRB. Administrator Jester reported on a recent meeting with FMR staff on this possibility and will keep the Commission apprised if and when things move forward.

ii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work

Administrator Jester reported that she recently participated in a Metro Watershed Partners meeting on this topic and is working to better understand how the Commission can provide for more inclusion, diversity and equity to address environmental injustices in the watershed.

Administrator Jester also noted that due to Boundary Waters trip, the August meeting packet may be sent/posted one day late. She also reminded commissioners about her agenda memo in the meeting packet which provides a good overview of agenda items.

B. Chair

Chair Prom commended the Commission for still getting its work done despite the pandemic and holding virtual meetings.

C. Commissioners

Commissioner Harwell asked if there is anything that can be done to block the spam to her email since she is listed as treasurer. Administrator Jester will look into the possibility of using BCWMC-specific email addresses on the website.

Commissioner Carlson noted that the staff gage at the Medicine Lake dam is missing and asked about the survey of the dam performed by the city last year. Ben Scharenbroich with city of Plymouth said he would investigate the staff gage and noted there wasn't a formal survey report developed but the results were filed.

D. TAC Members

Nothing to report

E. Committees

Nothing to report

F. Education Consultant

i. Latest Education Video raingardens. The videos are doing well on Facebook and the AIS video will be coming out soon.

G. Legal Counsel

Nothing to report

H. Engineer

i. Sweeney Lake Water Quality Improvement Project
The first round of carp removal was completed from Sweeney Lake and Schaper Pond. 334 carp were removed from Sweeney Lake and 82 from Schaper Pond. The nets might be left in Schaper pond for the season. There will be a fall alum treatment.

7. INFORMATION ONLY (Information online only)

- A. CIP Project Updates <http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects>
- B. Grant Tracking Summary and Spreadsheet
- C. 2020 BCWMC Administrative Calendar
- D. Letter of Support for USACE Mississippi River Drawdown
- E. 2020 Salt Symposium (online; registration reimbursement available)
- F. Lakeshore Restoration Animated Video by Anoka SWCD (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwjAoRwLrmM>)
- G. Lawns to Legumes Progress Report to BWSR
- H. WCA Notice of Decision, Plymouth
- I. WCA Notice of Application, Plymouth

8. ADJOURNMENT

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Metro MAWD – Tuesday July 21st – Online through Go To Meeting
- 2020 Salt Symposium – August 4 – 5; online and live streamed; register at <https://fortinconsulting.com/saltsymposium/>
- Bassett Creek Watershed Mgmt Commission Meeting: Thursday August 20th, 8:30 a.m., via web conference
- Minnesota Water Resources Conference – October 20 – 21; St. Paul River Centre; <https://ccaps.umn.edu/minnesota-water-resources-conference>

Chair Prom adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Signature/Title Date

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