



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Meeting Notes of the
Watershed Plan Steering Committee
April 3, 2024 @ 8:30 a.m.
Brookview, Golden Valley

Meeting Attendees:

Committee Chair Kennedy; Commissioners Cesnik, Welch and Hauer; Alternate Commissioner Polzin; Community Member Loomis; TAC Members Eckman and Scharenbroich; Administrator Jester; Commission Engineers Chandler and Williams

1. WELCOME

Committee Chair Kennedy opened the meeting at approximately 8:40 a.m.

2. REVIEW MARCH 7 MEETING NOTES

The March 7, 2024 Plan Steering Committee meeting notes were approved by consensus with no changes.

3. DISCUSS NEXT STEPS TO ADDRESS FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Staff confirmed some next steps that were articulated at the March PSC meeting including:

- A. Continue to improve commissioner knowledge and engagement, working primarily through the Administrative Services Committee, and to add the ability to compensate commissioners in the updated JPA.
- B. Consider increasing staff capacity as early as 2025. The Budget Committee is reviewing budget implications of this action.
- C. Include an action within the first two years of watershed plan implementation to perform a comprehensive analysis of the options for organizational structure and funding mechanism(s).

Staff also wished to: 1) confirm that future implementation structure and funding will be discussed at a future Commission workshop but not before; and 2) receive direction on the desired timing of input from the TAC.

Committee member Hauer noted that increasing staff as early as 2025 should result from a specific need and have a distinct timeline. It was noted that 2025 could be an interim step before full plan implementation (considering the plan won't be fully adopted until 2026). Committee member Welch acknowledged that a future Commission workshop would cover the need for a governance and funding analysis and requested that since these topics were broached at the March Commission meeting, that a written document regarding the topic was needed in the short term (before a workshop). There was discussion on the best timing for discussion with the Commission, a desire to keep development of the goals moving forward, and an idea to have a regular, written update to the Commission each month.

Administrator Jester outlined a potential timeline for moving forward to: update the Commission each month with a written report on PSC discussions and progress; complete development of the goals so the full breadth of the potential capacity needed during plan implementation is laid out; perform a comprehensive analysis of the options for organizational structure and funding mechanism(s) in the first year of plan implementation; include flexibility and tiers in the implementation plan to account for different levels of activity and spending depending on outcomes of the structure and funding analysis.

The group generally agreed on this path forward and moved on in the agenda.

4. REVIEW ISSUE STATEMENTS AND DRAFT GOALS FOR WATERBODY & WATERSHED QUALITY CATEGORY

The committee reviewed and provided revisions to the remaining issues in this section including Groundwater-Surface Water Interactions, Degradation of Upland Areas, Degradation of Riparian Areas, and Groundwater Quality. Edits to the issue statements, desired future conditions, and goals were made within the goals table. It was noted that parallel language was needed across all goal statements. It was also noted that the definition of “riparian areas” (vs. lakeshore) should be included in the plan.

During discussion of degradation of upland areas, some noted that upland areas may not be within the purview of the Commission. Administrator Jester reminded the group that residents responding to the public survey noted that natural areas were important in their communities – this likely includes areas not adjacent to waterbodies. There was consensus that partnership and support from the Commission on projects that benefit upland habitat may be valuable for partners and the overall health of watershed natural resources.

5. DISCUSS PLANS FOR NEXT PLANNING TAC MEETING

Commission staff requested input on how to best utilize Planning TAC expertise when the Planning TAC convenes for a 2nd meeting and the desired timing and format for the meeting. Committee member Welch indicated he didn’t know if convening the Planning TAC would be valuable, noting that the initial input from review agencies should be enough to help guide plan development (and that we should ensure that the draft plan is addressing agency issues provided initially). Staff noted that it is likely valuable to get feedback and input on the potential goals and implementation plans so that the official review process is more streamlined. (Committee members were reminded that every comment received during the official 60-day comment period will require a written response.) There was some concern that Planning TAC members would effectively dictate plan content. Staff indicated that the Commission ultimately decides on plan content. But, they indicated that input from groups knowledgeable about what programs work elsewhere is valuable. The group agreed that Planning TAC input should avoid wordsmithing.

There was consensus that the draft issue statements and goals through climate resiliency would be sent to the Planning TAC members for input and that the Planning TAC would be reconvened after all goals were drafted.

6. DISCUSS POTENTIAL TO SHIFT SCHEDULE FOR JUNE AND JULY PSC MEETINGS

Due to staff vacations and the 4th of July holiday, the committee agreed to reschedule the June 5th and July 3rd meetings to June 12th and July 10th.

7. REVIEW ISSUE STATEMENTS AND DRAFT GOALS FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Moved to future agenda due to time constraints.

8. ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:35 a.m.