



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Meeting Notes of the
Watershed Plan Steering Committee
July 11, 2023 @ 10:30 a.m.
Golden Valley City Hall

Meeting Attendees:

Commissioners Cesnik and Welch; Alternate Commissioners Polzin, Kennedy, and Vadali; TAC Members Ray and Scharenbroich; Golden Valley resident Linda Loomis; Administrator Jester; Commission Engineers Chandler and Williams

1. WELCOME & REVIEW GROUND RULES

Administrator Jester reviewed the ground rules and expectations that were discussed at the first PSC meeting in May. Ground rules and expectations of committee members include:

- Come prepared; review materials before meeting
- Respect all input and be open minded; realize not all voices are represented
- Step up/step back; make sure you're heard and make space for others
- Commit to active participation
- Route Communications through Administrator
- Work with a spirit of brainstorming; keeping everything on table at beginning

Decision Making:

- Strive for consensus among all members
- If votes needed, base decision on simple majority among all members in attendance

Expectations for staff include:

- Prepare agenda, materials, meeting notes
- Provide the data and information to help committee make informed decisions
- Start and end meeting on time
- Bring snacks and drinks
- Respect all input and be open minded
- Meeting materials one week in advance (online), especially weekends

There was some discussion about how committee appointments were made, noting that all commissioners, alternate commissioners, and TAC members were invited to participate. Community members also able to be on BCWMC committees. It was noted that this group is recommending the overall policy direction of the organization. It was acknowledged that it is imperative that the entire Commission understand and agree on "who the Commission is and where it's going as an organization." There was discussion about the possible need for revising the BCWMC mission statement (Stewardship of water resources to protect and enhance our communities) and/or developing a vision statement, guiding principles, or list of values.

It was noted that the purposes of a watershed management organization from MN Rule 8410 should be aligned with priority issues for presentation at the Commission workshop where issues are identified and prioritized.

Commissioner Cesnik noted that she believes that between the 2015 Plan and the recent gaps analysis, there is a good foundation to start from. She wondered if a workshop is needed for developing a vision and mission.

Commissioner Welch indicated that there are many issues and opportunities throughout the watershed but added that focus is needed. He indicated that the Commission could start with a statement such as "this plan will focus on addressing impairments Bassett Creek and its tributaries, improving water quality in Medicine Lake, and

working with member cities to improve climate resilience and reduce flood impacts.”

Alt. Commissioner Polzin agreed that a more water resource focus is needed and she advocated for a resource-based approach rather than an issues-based approach.

There was more discussion about the need to target/focus on addressing certain issues with achievable outcomes by the end of 10 years. Committee Chair Kennedy relayed a good rule of thumb to consider: spend 80% of your resources on most important targets (biggest games changers) and 20% of resources on all other issues.

Linda Loomis introduced herself to the group as a new committee member, noting that she’s a former Golden Valley mayor, former chair of the Commission, and led the Plan Steering Committee for the 2015 Plan.

2. REVIEW MAY 24 MEETING NOTES

Commissioner Welch had a few suggested edits. Rather than reviewing those at this meeting, it was decided that the next meeting would include two sets of meeting notes.

3. REVIEW NEW PROCESS FLOWCHART GRAPHIC

Engineer Williams walked through the new planning process graphic pointing out where input is used to make decisions. He noted that the plan can have broad goals but that outcomes should be measurable (such as how many pounds of total phosphorus will be removed from X waterbody).

4. REVIEW DRAFT TABLE OF CONTENTS

Administrator Jester noted the table of contents (TOC) in the meeting packet was developed as a starting point to better understand the information that will go into the plan. There was some discussion about the potential section on acknowledging Native cultures and their care for land and water. Administrator Jester noted that there may be some Native practices that could be incorporated into the Commission’s resource management or project implementation. It was noted that even though the Commission uses an engineering approach to water management, there may be room for other approaches as well.

Administrator Jester noted that the TOC includes an idea to distinguish responsibilities of the Commission as “strategies” and responsibilities of the member cities as “policies.” There was discussion about how the 2015 Plan was poorly structured; how the Minnehaha Creek WD plan may be a good model to consider; how the Mississippi WMO plan includes a good reference table for use by cities; and how Brown’s Creek WD plan is streamlined and simple. It was acknowledged that the final TOC will be informed by the information, issues, goals, and implementation activities developed through the plan process. There was some discussion on Alt. Commissioner Polzin’s idea to structure the TOC around resources or subwatersheds (which would need to be delineated). It was noted that fact sheets on each waterbody could be incorporated into the plan that may be useful particularly for new commissioners.

5. REVISIT CURRENT CONDITIONS

Engineer Williams reviewed the summary of the gaps analysis. There was acknowledgment that the committee should discuss staffing and organizational capacity in the near future to determine what can realistically be accomplished by the Commission in the next 10 years.

Administrator Jester reviewed the recommendations from the 2021 Assessment including education, CIP implementation, and developing clear and measurable goals. There was discussion about how education is a tool but may not be a primary function of the Commission and about how the new Hennepin County Education

Coordinator may be able to help meet some education goals.

6. REVIEW/BRAINSTORM NEW AND ONGOING ISSUES

Committee members were asked to take 5 minutes to review the list of issues provided with meeting materials and to make notes, determine if issues are missing, and cross off any irrelevant issues.

Discussion: Committee Chair Kennedy noted the “buckets” or categories may need to change and gave “climate change” as an overarching issue that impacts many other issues. There was acknowledgement that maintaining the Flood Control Project is a core function of the Commission and, therefore, a high priority. However, there is a difference between high priority issues that need a significant amount of work and resources to address, and high priorities that are core functions (easier to address in the plan).

7. ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:35. The committee will pick up where they left of at the August 1st meeting. Administrator Jester noted that she’s hopeful the August 17th Commission meeting will have a short business meeting with enough time to hold the Commission’s Issue Prioritization Workshop.