



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Next Generation Plan Steering Committee

Meeting Notes

4:30 p.m ~ Thursday March 12, 2015
Golden Valley City Hall

Attendees: Committee Chair Linda Loomis; Commissioner Guy Mueller, Alternate Commissioners Lisa Goddard, Pat Crough, and Dave Tobelmann; TAC Member Jeff Oliver; Engineers Karen Chandler and Greg Williams; Administrator Laura Jester

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Loomis called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

2. Approve Meeting Notes from October 20, 2014 Plan Steering Committee Meetings

There were no changes suggested for these meeting notes. Consensus to approve as presented.

3. Discuss Commissioner Mueller's Comments

Administrator Jester thanked Commissioner Mueller for his thorough review of the Plan. Commissioner Mueller indicated that he would defer to the Commission Engineer as to how to handle his comments on Section 2 of the Plan. He noted these comments mostly included comments on the maps. Commission Engineer Chandler indicated that some references will be added to the maps and that the title of "tanks and leaks" on Figure 2-19 could be changed to "underground storage tanks." There was some discussion about whether or not to mention geese as a source of pollution. Administrator Jester noted that information might be better included in the Education and Outreach Plan.

Commissioner Mueller noted that he doesn't suggest actual changes to Section 3 of the Plan, rather his comments were meant to provoke thoughts about various opportunities for the Commission to improve water resources.

Regarding Commissioner Mueller's comments on Section 4 of the Plan (Goals and Policies), the group discussed the wording of the goals and related policies on aesthetics and recreation. Commissioner Mueller suggested that stronger language be used here. The group discussed how the Commission will consider aesthetics of a project and may be able to address recreation in some cases. Mr. Oliver reminded the group that the City cannot encourage kayaking or canoeing on the stream due to possible dangers and trespassing issues. After more discussion, the committee agreed to recommend changing the goal to "~~Consider~~ Take into account aesthetics and recreational opportunities within the watershed when completing BCWMC projects." Likewise, the word "consider" will be changed to "take into account" in policies 63 and 83. Policy 60 will be revised to incorporate Commissioner Mueller's suggested language aimed at providing a reason for the use of soft armoring techniques and parenthetical examples to clarify what "soft armoring" means.

4. Discuss Comments from Alternate Commissioners Goddard and Crough

Administrator Jester thanked Alt. Commissioners Crough and Goddard for their thorough review of the Plan and noted that their comments were mostly grammatical in nature or suggestions for improving figures, adding references, or adding other information. Alt. Commissioners Crough noted that many of his comments were suggestions, and asked the Engineer to “do what you can do.” The group did discuss Alt. Commissioner Goddard’s question about the classification of North Rice, South Rice and Grimes Ponds as “no priority” within the Plan. It was noted that these are the only waterbodies in the watershed within the City of Robbinsdale and that without a classification of either “priority 1 or 2” these ponds would no longer be monitored and would not be eligible for CIP projects (unless the project addressed a flooding issue or a TMDL). Administrator Jester reported that she had talked with Robbinsdale TAC member, Richard McCoy, about this issue and that he indicated that it would be nice to have these waterbodies classified as a priority by the Commission, but he could also see a reason for not including them in the priority list due to their position in the landscape and the fact that they are shallow.

The group discussed the parameters that originally went into classifying the Commission waterbodies as “priority 1, priority 2, or not a priority” and reviewed a table created for this discussion in 2013. It was noted that there may be expectations by residents for certain water quality if waterbodies are classified as a priority. There was discussion about waterbodies that were created for storm water management vs. natural waterbodies, about whether or not a waterbody could be listed as impaired, about the depth of the ponds, and about how the waterbody is connected to the creek. It was noted that this discussion called into question other waterbodies not listed as a priority in the Plan. There was discussion about the possibility of creating a third priority level that allowed for the Commission to support CAMP monitoring on 3rd priority waterbodies. Alt. Commissioner Tobelmann noted that it would be important to understand and record exactly how and why waterbodies are classified in certain ways. He also noted that just because a waterbody isn’t listed as a priority doesn’t mean the Commission doesn’t care about it but rather, the Commission’s resources would be primarily directed at higher priority waterbodies.

Staff was directed to bring more information on waterbody classification to the next Plan Steering Committee meeting so the group can make a more informed decision regarding North and South Rice and Grimes Ponds.

Alt. Commissioner Goddard also commented that flood elevations referenced in the Plan should include the datum that was used to determine the elevation. She also noted that the language on page 2-40 that states the “BCWMC will update flood profiles and flow rates per updated precipitation data published in Atlas 14” should be reviewed against the Plan policies, and revised as needed.

Administrator Jester noted [Commissioner Welch’s emailed?] comment regarding the requirements of Minnesota Statutes 103B.211, Subd. 4, which are not addressed in the draft Plan. The statute requires WMOs to have permitting programs for small appropriations from surface and ground water (i.e., those that are too small to trigger a MDNR permit).

5. Discuss Watershed Assessment Gaps

Committee Chair Loomis noted that the draft Plan does not address Minnesota Statutes 103B.211, Subd. 4, which requires watershed management organizations to have permitting programs for small appropriations from surface and ground water (i.e., those that are too small to trigger a MDNR permit). The remainder of the discussion on this item was tabled until the next meeting due to the absence of Commissioner Welch.

6. Review and Discuss Comments from Review Agencies and Draft Responses

The group walked through draft responses highlighted by staff as more significant or potentially controversial. The group agreed with the draft responses to comments from the BWSR, noting that more information is needed in the draft CIP table (Table 5-3). Staff noted they were currently working with the TAC to improve and refine the table and will bring a revised table to the next Plan Steering Committee meeting.

The group discussed the comment from the Association of Medicine Lake Area Citizens (AMLAC) that the Plan should address Medicine Lake water levels in a meaningful manner. The group suggested that more factual information about water levels in Medicine Lake over time be included in Section 2 of the Plan. The group also suggested including in the response to comments the Commission's plans to collaborate with local and state agencies to better understand groundwater-surface water interactions, as stated in Policy 47 . Additionally, the group suggested adding information to Section 3 of the Plan regarding how the Commission has addressed and been involved with the Medicine Lake water level issue over the years. Staff will bring suggested language changes to the next Plan Steering Committee meeting.

Aside from the response to AMLAC's comment, the group approved the draft responses to comments from the BWSR, MPCA, Hennepin County, MDNR, Met Council, MPRB, MDA, MnDOT, Plymouth Environmental Quality Commission, and two comments from the City of Minneapolis. The group ran out of time to discuss the remainder of the comments and responses and will continue this item at the next Plan Steering Committee Meeting.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday March 23, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. at Golden Valley City Hall.



Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Next Generation Plan Steering Committee

DRAFT Meeting Notes

4:30 p.m. ~ Thursday March 23, 2015

Golden Valley City Hall

Attendees: Committee Chair Linda Loomis; Commissioners Michael Welch and Guy Mueller, Alternate Commissioners Lisa Goddard, Pat Crough, and Dave Tobelmann; TAC Member Eric Eckman; Engineers Karen Chandler and Greg Williams; Administrator Laura Jester

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Loomis called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

2. Approve Meeting Notes from March 12, 2015 Plan Steering Committee Meetings

There were no changes suggested for these meeting notes. Consensus to approve as presented.

3. Finalize Recommendations for Waterbody Classification

This discussion was a continuation from the 3/12/15 Plan Steering Committee meeting. Commission Engineers Chandler and Williams walked through a memo and table to review the characteristics of waterbodies and the criteria that were used to generate classifications (i.e., priority status) of waterbodies for inclusion in the draft Plan. It was noted that priority waterbody lakes were identified as public waters lakes with a surface area of at least 10 acres because these waterbodies could be listed as impaired for nutrients. To distinguish between priority 1 and priority 2 waterbody lakes – priority 2 lakes typically had no public access and had no intercommunity drainage area. The Commission Engineer recommended that a new category of “priority wetlands” be created and that Turtle Lake be moved to this category and that North and South Rice Ponds be added to this category.

The group discussed the reasons for prioritizing waterbodies in the first place (to help the Commission focus its resources); the implications of a priority status (priority waterbodies are eligible for CIP projects, would be monitored, and some would require buffers); and that there should be a clear record showing how the Commission assigned priority status to different waterbodies. There was consensus that the table showing different pieces of information about each waterbody should be included in the appendices of the Plan, with minor edits (i.e., the public access column) and grouping and identifying the criteria used to determine the classifications.

Commissioner Mueller stated that he believes Bassett Creek Park Pond should be included in the list of priority waterbodies as it's the focal point of Crystal's most important park and loved by the neighborhood and community. He also noted it is a “wide spot” in the North Branch of Bassett Creek and that it has poor water quality. The Commission Engineer noted it is part of the Flood Control Project and the Trunk System (and thus eligible for BCWMC CIP project funding without being a priority waterbody). The group discussed how this pond differs or is similar to other priority waterbodies. After further discussion the group agreed to remove it from the table that lists all waterbodies and their characteristics and to, instead, add a footnote with North Branch Bassett Creek that indicates it includes Bassett Creek Park Pond.

There was further discussion about wetlands: Commissioner Welch indicated he thought that either all high quality wetlands should be included as priority wetlands or that no wetlands should be designated as priority wetlands. He noted that simply because the Commission has a history of monitoring certain wetlands doesn't mean they are a priority. He wondered if the Commission should place more importance on understanding wetland resources in the watershed and/or working on wetland restoration projects. Commission Engineer Chandler noted that wetlands have not historically been a high priority for the Commission because the Commission is not the LGU administering the Wetland Conservation Act throughout the entire watershed. Commission Engineer Williams noted that currently, the gate keeper questions would likely keep a wetland restoration project off the CIP list. The group looked back to the gaps analysis and stakeholder input and determined that wetland health and/or restoration were not identified as gaps or priorities for the Commission. The group agreed this issue could be researched during the life of this plan. Additionally, the group agreed to delete the "priority wetlands" designation and to not include Turtle Lake, South Rice and North Rice Ponds on the list of priority waterbodies. It was noted these waterbodies (and any waterbodies) could be monitored through CAMP and that because these waterbodies are part of the trunk system, they would be eligible for CIP projects.

4. Discuss Watershed Assessment Gaps

The above discussion on wetlands led into the discussion of other possible assessment gaps in the watershed. Commissioner Welch expressed concern that perhaps the Commission should have done more assessments of problems to help inform this Plan. He noted the Medicine Lake TMDL Implementation Plan does not offer much detail, that functions and values of wetlands and other resources are lacking and that it's difficult for Commissioners to know how and why CIP projects get implemented when and where they do. Administrator Jester noted that the Commission has a wealth of information and data about its lakes and streams, has three TMDLs and previous assessments, and that between the cities, Commissioners, and watershed staff, she thinks the Commission has a good idea where problems lie and where opportunities for improvement exist. She noted that CIP projects are placed on the list for various reasons including city readiness, coordination with other projects, and keeping the tax levy relatively stable. There was some discussion about whether or not more prescriptive prioritization of CIP projects should happen. Administrator Jester noted that previous discussions about this topic with the TAC (and possibly other groups) resulted in the current system of CIP list generation without quantitative methods. It was noted that policy 110 in the draft Plan lays out this method, which includes the "gatekeeper" criteria and additional criteria to aid in the CIP project prioritization process.

5. Review and Discuss Comments from Review Agencies and Draft Responses

The group continued from the last committee meeting the review and discussion of comments on the Plan and draft responses. Regarding a comment (#63) from the City of Minneapolis on policy 35, Engineer Chandler noted that the policy could be rewritten to only prohibit basements in the floodplain and that all other proposed infrastructure in the floodplain would be subject to Commission review. After some discussion about what is current practice in floodplains, the group agreed to change the policy per Engineer Chandler's suggestion.

Alternate Commissioner Goddard asked about policy 122, and Commission Engineer Chandler reported that she discussed the City of Minneapolis' comment (#66) with Minneapolis staff. The group agreed the policy should be revised to clarify that it only applies to city acquisition of easements, etc. for Commission-ordered projects (e.g., the policy could start with "For CIP projects that have been ordered by the BCWMC,").

The group agreed with recommended responses to comment #67 regarding the correct identification of the trunk system and the flood control project features.

After some discussion, the group agreed that staff should draft an appropriate response, given TAC discussion, to address comment #68 from Minneapolis regarding communication among cities, developers and Commission staff.

The group reviewed staff's proposed additional language in Section 3.2 of the Plan to help address AMLAC's comment regarding the Medicine Lake water level issue. After some discussion about the Commission's possible future role in the issue, the group agreed that additional language is also needed in Section 5.2.1.1 regarding how the Commission will consider requests from member cities regarding water resource issues, and will analyze the Commission's possible role in addressing the issue, taking into account the policies and criteria established in the Plan. Alternate Commissioner Tobelmann asked that the new language in 3.2 be bulleted rather than written in paragraph form.

6. Discuss Presentation of Draft Responses to Commission

The group agreed that all comments and draft responses should be presented to the Commission at their April meeting with significant comments and draft responses highlighted for discussion at the meeting. The group agreed that staff should determine which comments and responses should be highlighted.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m. There are no more meetings of this committee anticipated.