



**Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission**

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**REGULAR MEETING**

**Minutes**

**May 16, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER.** A regular meeting of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission was called to order by Chair Joe Baker at 6:04 p.m., Thursday, May 16, 2024, at Maple Plain City Hall, 5050 Independence Street, Maple Plain, MN.

Present: Mark Workcuff, Greenfield; Joe Baker, Independence; Brenda Daniels, Loretto; Pat Wulff, Medina; Peter Vickery, Minnetrista; Roz Davis and Karen Galles, Hennepin County Environment and Energy (HCEE); Andrew Vistad, Hakanson-Anderson; Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); and Amy Juntunen, JASS.

**2. AGENDA.** Motion by Daniels, second by Vickery to approve the agenda\* as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

**3. CONSENT AGENDA.** Motion by Workcuff, second by Daniels to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

a. **April 18, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes.\***

b. **May Treasurer’s Report/Monthly Claims \*** totaling \$3,181.88.

**4. OPEN FORUM.**

**5. ACTION ITEMS.**

a. **2025 Budget and Member Assessments.\*** The 2025 operating budget totals \$150,695 including a one-time expense of \$15,000 for the Lake Sarah TMDL update and an increase in the Hennepin County outreach and technical assistance line item to \$20,000. The budget includes a deficit of \$31,195 which will be funded from the Commission’s unreserved fund balance. Member dues total \$133,000, which includes \$105,000 dedicated to operations and \$28,000 dedicated to the CIP fund for project implementation and grant match. Motion by Workcuff, second by Daniels to approve the 2025 budget and member assessments as presented. *Motion carried unanimously.*

2025	2024 Market Value PSC Basin	Increase in MV over Prev Year	2025 Op Budget		Increase over Prev Year	
			%age	Amount	%age	Amount
Greenfield	730,087,100	0.03%	29.90	39,769.37	0.69%	272.96
Independence	897,562,800	0.42%	36.76	48,892.12	1.08%	524.36
Loretto	98,833,200	0.00%	4.05	5,383.65	0.66%	35.35
Maple Plain	198,274,300	0.29%	8.12	10,800.41	0.95%	101.37
Medina	239,318,600	0.55%	9.80	13,036.18	1.22%	156.51
Minnetrista	277,541,500	0.07%	11.37	15,118.26	0.73%	109.45
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,441,617,500</b>	<b>0.25%</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>133,000.00</b>	<b>0.91%</b>	<b>1,200.00</b>

Greenfield • Independence • Loretto • Maple Plain • Medina • Minnetrista

\*Included in meeting packet.

**b. Letter of Support, Hennepin County LCCMR Grant.\*** Protecting and connecting the last-best natural areas within Hennepin County is a vision that has long been shared by Hennepin County, Three Rivers Park District and its natural resource partners like the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission and its member communities. The data and tools to accomplish this, however, are difficult to access, have become outdated, and are not easily understood and applied by those who are routinely making and influencing land use decisions and investments.

This proposal,\* put together by members of the County's Dept. of Environment and Energy, is part of a multi-phase partner coalition aimed at better facilitating collaboration and enhancing vital natural resource networks across the county. The proposal will develop better interactive mapping tools, a centralized clearinghouse for natural resources data and best practices, and provide technical assistance from trusted partners that is more readily available and tailored to local needs.

Crucial to the Commission's purpose and future objectives, the project will help the Commission, its member cities, and County staff evaluate and prioritize opportunities to work with communities and developers to find opportunities to go above and beyond Commission requirements to improve water quality and protect and restore natural resources. Identification of these opportunities has become an important theme in County and Commission cooperative agreements over the last several years as we seek to align goals and actions to eliminate water quality impairments and make progress toward TMDL goals. Knowing where these opportunities exist (e.g., projects from subwatershed assessments) and influencing projects has become increasingly important as our region has started to experience the impacts of climate change. Building climate resiliency into new construction and redevelopment, when possible, will insulate water quality improvements from the effect of changing precipitation patterns. It will also help protect public infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.

Hennepin County and Three Rivers Park District are building a coalition of partners to elevate the role of natural systems in ensuring that Hennepin County remains resilient, healthy, and thriving as rainfall patterns become more extreme in a changing climate. Coalition partners will include cities, park districts, watersheds, nonprofit organizations, and private developers. Advancing a unified and deliberate countywide vision for protecting, restoring, and managing natural resources will contribute to a sustainable and healthy community that supports well-being, housing, economic prosperity, and engaged communities. The Coalition will:

- 1) Improve data to be ready for the 2050 comprehensive plan cycle, which will set land use, transportation, housing, parks, and water resources policy for the next few decades.
- 2) Create a countywide natural resources priority and opportunity map that is informed

- by local knowledge and data, not limited by jurisdictional boundaries, and reflects the interconnectedness and complexities of natural communities and waterways.
- 3) Build a collaboration framework that identifies how each partner can remain dedicated to their jurisdictional role while identifying opportunities and potential partners for broader impact.
  - 4) Develop tools that are readily accessible and easy to understand when opportunities and challenges arise.
  - 5) Share resources and expertise to help partners integrate the map, data, and tools into day-to-day operations and decision making
  - 6) Practice bold and courageous leadership in advocating for changes to policies and priorities that center the full value of natural systems

County and Park District staff are hosting an interactive workshop for planning and natural resources staff. The workshop will begin the process of expanding the Coalition and will gather local knowledge and data that will inform the countywide priority and opportunity map. Staff from several ECWMC member communities received invitations. Space is limited but contact to Karen Galles ([Karen.Galles@hennepin.us](mailto:Karen.Galles@hennepin.us)) if you are interested in attending. Additional opportunities to provide input will also be available over the next several months.

County and Park District staff are requesting a Letter of Support for the grant proposal to the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota's Resources (LCCMR). A suggested template for the letter and a 2-page description of the grant proposal\* were also included in the meeting packet. A Letter of Support does not imply financial commitment or a commitment of any other kind on the part of the commission.

Motion by Daniels, second by Workcuff to approve sending the letter of support.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**6. OLD BUSINESS.**

**7. NEW BUSINESS.**

**8. EDUCATION.** Davis presented Soil Health 101\* an educational overview of what soil health is and the County's soil health initiatives. Good soil health has five principals and benefits include improved water quality, reduced greenhouse gas, reduced soil inputs over time, and potential long-term yield boosts. The average row crop farm loses 3.3 tons per acre per year in TSS and 5.28 lbs per acre per year of TP, though topography does make a difference. Practices like cover crops, conservation tillage, diversified crop rotation and no-till practices reduce those exports dramatically. The County offers incentive payments for these practices, as well as free soil testing for agricultural land.

County Conservation staff have a goal of hosting a field day on the Kohnen parcel to allow people to see the visual, on-site application, and/or partnering with Carver and Wright Counties to host a field day. Vlach noted that soil health practices can easily be incorporated into the TMDL models to gauge results.

## 9. STAFF REPORTS.

a. **Engineer's Report.\*** Vistad will include a letter regarding water appropriations permits in the next meeting packet to be sent to cities and lake associations. The Commission is supportive of pumping water from lakes instead of using potable city water for watering as long as lake levels support the use.

b. **HCEE Report.\*** Water quality improvement calculations have been made for the **Adelmann and Kingston** properties with the design changes proposed to include beaches instead of shoreline restoration. The installed rock channel on the Adelmann property does reduce TP by 1.24 lbs./year and the total landscape plan reduces TP on the property by 2.96 lbs./year with the sand beach installation and re-grading the slope to reduce steepness. The Kingston water quality benefit is yet to be determined based on changing plans to remove a berm on the property. It was noted that other SWCDs and watershed organizations do not provide any cost share for sand beach installations. MnDNR still needs to review and approve plans for sand beaches. This item will be further discussed at the next meeting as the rock channel may qualify for cost-share funding but has already been installed to improve drainage from the home to the ravine settling basin. The County will ask the contractor if they would be willing to install biologists on the bluff and shoreline restoration with riprap and native vegetation at the edges of the property, which would qualify for cost share funding.

It is unlikely that the **Dance Hall Creek project** would be ready for a Clean Water Fund grant application by August. It may be better to have Stantec focus on the Highway 55 wetland project to allow more time to do outreach and gain support with landowners. The survey work cannot be completed without landowner permission to access the property. Landowners may be more receptive to discussion if they could see a rendering of what the wetland area would look like after implementation as many are concerned about what it would look like.

The wetland survey infiltration data on the **Vinland property** has been completed and sent to EOR for review.

BWSR has \$3 million in grant funding available for habitat enhancement under their **HELP grant**. Hennepin County may apply for cost share funds to convert turfgrass to native prairie. This may also be a good option for the TRPD Kingston Park project. This grant requires a 10% contribution. If the Commission is interested in partnering, a special cost-share format could be used, such as a Commission contribution maximum of \$1,000 per project or per pound of TP removal, since these projects are not necessarily water quality focused but can have a water quality and habitat impact such as opportunities on the Sellstad and Serenity Hills HOA properties with large areas that could be converted to prairie. Other options may include assistance in hosting an educational event regarding landscape change. Commissioners noted that they support the County in habitat enhancement but the Commission's primary task is water quality improvement and protection. County staff will provide more information at the June meeting.

c. **TRPD Report.** Vlach presented at the LICA annual meeting last month. The Lake Sarah sediment analysis is nearly complete. Baker Park is having the Tree Climbing Championship and Festival of Trees this weekend.

d. **Admin Report.** The TAC will meet at 5 pm prior to the next regular Commission meeting to discuss the CIP and potential projects for WBIF funding.

**10. COMMISSIONER REPORTS.**

a. **Wulff** shared that Lake Independence is officially on the slow, no wake restriction and is currently 2.17" above the trigger for that restriction. The lake level would have to sustain a 2.2" drop from current levels for three consecutive days to lift the slow, no wake restriction. LICA has not received any complaints yet and many people were fishing over the weekend, though not as many as past fishing openers due to the road construction. LICA is looking for someone to fly a drone up the outlet channel to see if there are any beaver dams, cattail bogs or other obstructions slowing the flow out of the lake.

b. **Vickery.** Minnetrista partnered with the Halstead Bay Association to sell rain barrels this year and the event went well. The City contributed \$10 per barrel and they were sold for \$90 each. Next year the Commission will work with the city to identify a CAMP volunteer on Ox Yoke Lake.

c. **Baker** noted that Lake Sarah received herbicide treatment for CLP last week. The Association (LSIA) did not receive a grant for treating AIS this year, so the watershed will be asked to contribute a higher amount than in past years. The Commission has been funding treatments annually for the past several years.

d. **Workcuff.** The Greenfield Road project just went out for bid. There will be a project review for this project at the June meeting.

e. **Daniels** commented that there was a lot of dirt piled across from her home due to the County Road 19 project.

**11. OTHER BUSINESS.**

a. A Lake Sarah board member has asked to install a sign at the boat landing soliciting donations to LSIA.

b. The **next regular meeting** is scheduled for June 20, 2024, at Maple Plain City Hall.

**12. ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business, motion by Burak, second by Baker to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Amy Juntunen  
Administrator  
AAJ:tim

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