

**Dakota County Planning Commission
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes-Final
Date: July 22, 2021
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

Members Present		Staff Present		Others Present
Jerry Rich	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Robert Timmerman	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lori Hansen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nate Reitz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jill Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jim Guttman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Greg Oxley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tony Nelson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Amy Hunting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donald Post	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Barry Graham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dennis Peine	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ramraj Singh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		Kurt Chatfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Tom Lewanski	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Chris Klatt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Mary Jackson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Liz Hansen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Ben Rutter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		BJ Battig	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Taud Hoopingarner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Meeting Called to Order
Time: 7:00 p.m.
By: Chair Oxley

Public Comment
None.

Approval of Agenda
Motion by: Commissioner Graham
Second by: Commissioner Hansen
Vote: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes (from June 24, 2021 meeting)
Motion by: Commissioner Singh
Second by: Commissioner Hansen
Commissioner Hunting withstanding.
Vote: Unanimously approved.

Welcome New Planning Commissioner Dennis Peine
Comments/Notes: Commissioner Peine was not in attendance.

Item #1: All-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Action / Information

Comments/Notes: Ben Rutter, Homeland Security Specialist, provided an overview of the All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mary Jackson, Senior Planner, also presented on this topic.

Questions and comments by Commissioners along with responses from staff (italics):

The Planning Commission discussed the overlapping goals between the All-Hazard Management Plan and the Land Conservation Plan, including goals in both plans to reduce flooding and protect groundwater supplies.

The Planning Commission discussed the public participation process for the plan to date, noting that the surveys that have been conducted as part of the plan are not scientific and are also heavily influenced by the latest crisis, such as the current pandemic. *Staff agreed with this comment.*

A suggestion was made to prioritize risks in the All Hazard plan according to the probability of threat and estimated danger to numbers of people and damage to property once the threat emerges, similar to a method used by the U.S. Military. *Staff expressed interest in this method and committed to following up on the suggestion.*

The Planning Commission discussed that the All-Hazard Plan needs to be updated on a regular basis in response to new threats as they become known. *Staff responded that the Federal Emergency Management Agency requires that these plans be updated every five years consistent with this reason.*

It was noted that Goal #4 of the plan addresses reinforcing facilities but maybe should be expanded to include protecting the County's physical data records as well. *Staff suggested that the plan be amended to address physical records.*

The Planning Commission discussed the new hazard of civil unrest. A suggestion was made to preemptively engage religious leaders prior to address civil unrest. Communication with religious leaders and places of worship may be tools to diffuse civil unrest. A related comment was to work with school service officers. *Staff agreed with the Planning Commission's comments.*

Item #2: North Creek and Lake Marion Greenway Natural Resource Management Plans

Action / Information

Comments/Notes: Chris Klatt, Parks Natural Resource Specialist, provided an overview of the approach to prepare new Natural Resource Management Plans for both the North Creek and Lake Marion Greenway corridors.

Questions and comments by Commissioners along with responses from staff (italics):

The Planning Commission discussed the relationship between the new Natural Resource Management Plans and the existing Master Plans for the two greenways. A comment was made that the new natural resource management plans should be used to inform and refine the trail alignments in the adopted master plans. *Staff responded in agreement with the comment and stated the importance of natural resource restoration as part of the County's larger greenway vision.*

A question was raised about whether the specific strategy to restore pollinator plantings addresses other natural resource goals, such as improving water quality. *Staff responded that in most cases, the practice of restoring native grasses to pollinator habitat accomplishes other natural resource goals, but that other land restoration methods will also be considered within the plans depending on the specifics of individual locations.*

Item #3: Land Conservation Plan Evaluation Criteria

Review & Comment

Comments/Notes: Al Singer, Land Conservation Manager, provided an overview of the draft Land Conservation Plan Program Criteria and responded to questions.

Questions and comments by Commissioners along with responses from staff (italics):

The topic of overlapping goals between the Land Conservation Plan and the All Hazard Plan was discussed, along with a question about whether mitigating flood damage was intentional in this plan. *Staff responded that yes, there was intent on keeping water on the landscape and slow water down through land conservation and wetland restoration. One complicating factor is knowing the location of existing drain tile, which accelerates runoff from agricultural fields.*

Several refinements to the scoring system were suggested by Planning Commissioners regarding proximity to underserved populations and also for the category of public access. An error in the scoring system was also noted. *Staff stated that changes to the scoring system would be made based on the comments received.*

The topic of whether all township officials support the plan was raised, especially for townships that have extensive Conservation Focus Areas (CFAs). *Staff responded that the CFAs boundaries in the plan were modified in some townships to address their concerns prior to adoption of the plan.*

There was discussion regarding how city restoration projects will be prioritized. A suggestion was made to use the land protection criteria to prioritize city restoration projects if funding is in short supply.

A question was asked about whether tribal representatives have been engaged in the scoring process? *Staff responded that tribal representatives had not been engaged, although it is anticipated that they would typically support the conservation goals and areas within the plan. Dakota County staff have worked closely with Tribal Preservation Officers on land preservation and site-specific restoration projects, the most recent being the effort to restore and interpret the Native American significance of the Pilot Knob.*

The Planning Commission and staff discussed some of the challenges of implementing the program, such as the lengthy and expensive property appraisal process and the requirements placed on projects by funding partners. Several suggestions were made to streamline processes and implement the plan.

Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions

- Authorized Bison funding and enclosure contract at Spring Lake Park Reserve
- Adopted Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan
- Received update on Transportation Pedestrian Crossing Safety Assessment

Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

CSAH 4 (Butler Avenue) Trail Design Study Open House	July 27, 6:00pm-8:00pm Thompson Park Lodge
Bison Reintroduction Groundbreaking	July 30, 9:45am
CSAH 32 Final Design Open House	Aug 5, 5:00pm-7:00pm Lebanon Hills Visitor Center outdoor area
CSAH 46 Study - Hastings Open House	August TBD

Topics for Next Meeting (Thursday, August 26)

- Dakota County Park Ordinance Update

Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates

Planning Commissioner Singh attended the County Road 42 corridor open house along with County Board members Workman and Hamann-Roland. He stated that the meeting was well attended and that many of the attendees were passionate about the future of the highway corridor.

A question was asked about the process for replacing the Parks Director position. Taud Hoopingarner provided an overview of the process and the timeframe for filling the position.

The Planning Commission discussed the topic of hybrid meetings, and a question was raised as to whether a hybrid meeting format may be used in the future. Staff described the circumstances by which a Planning Commissioner may attend an in-person meeting remotely according to the County Attorney’s Office, including the changes that would need to be made to the meeting itself (e.g., roll call voting). At this time, the Planning Commission’s regular meeting room is not equipped for a hybrid meeting format that meets legal requirements that all Planning Commissioners and the audience be able to see and hear one another. Technology issues aside, it appeared that most or all Planning Commissioners expressed a desire to meet in person, although there was some discussion about the advantages of individuals being able to meet remotely when there are extenuating circumstances such as out-of-town travel. Planning Commission members concluded their discussion by asking that the Planning Manager monitor any changes to Minnesota’s remote meeting laws as a result of the pandemic and update the Planning Commission as appropriate.

Adjourn: 9:05 p.m.

Motion by: Commissioner Hansen

Second: Commissioner Reitz

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, August 26, 2021. The next meeting is planned to be in person at Western Service Center. This meeting may be canceled due to a lack of agenda items.