



Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Planning Commission Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 06/23/2022

Minutes prepared by: Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center, Conference Room L139

Attendance

Members Present

- Amy Hunting
- Tony Nelson
- Jerry Rich
- Jill Smith
- John Ross
- Nate Reitz
- James Guttman
- Dennis Peine

Staff Present

- Kurt Chatfield
- Liz Hansen
- Valerie Neppel
- Jill Trescott
- Chris Klatt
- Tom Lewanski

Others Present

- Ashley Gallagher, Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:00 p.m.
- Due to Chair Oxley's absence, Vice-Chair Amy Hunting leads the meeting.
- By: Chair Hunting

Audience items not on the agenda

- Comments/Notes: No one was present in the audience.

Approval of Agenda

- Amendment to the Agenda by the removal of item VII "Recommend approval of North Creek Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan" from the agenda (action on the North Creek Greenway NRMP was

postponed in order to make a presentation to and receive comments from the Apple Valley Park and Recreation Committee scheduled for August 4th, 2022).

- Motion by: Commissioner Smith
- Second: Commissioner Nelson
- Vote: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes (from May 26, 2022)

- Amendment to the approval of the Minutes, pg. 5 change of sentence “The chair did not call for a first and second motion” to “The chair sought unanimous consent to adjourn”
- Motion by: Commissioner Reitz
- Second: Commissioner Nelson
- Vote: unanimously approved.

Item #1 Recommend approval of Lake Marion Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan – Action

Chris Klatt, Natural Resource Specialist, presented this item and responded to questions. Tom Lewanski, Natural Resources Manager, was also present.

Comments/Notes:

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

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the amendments to the draft Lake Marion Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan. At least one Planning Commissioner had attended the Lakeville Park and Natural Resources Committee presentation and expressed gratitude to staff for presenting at that meeting.

The Planning Commission discussed how water levels have risen on Lake Marion and other lakes along the greenway since the 1937 areal photography. *Staff responded that water levels had risen significantly since that time in part due to urban runoff.*

Several Planning Commission members commented on the thoroughness and quality of the plan and thanked staff for their work.

The Planning Commission recommended the adoption of the final draft of the Lake Marion Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan.

Motion by: Commissioner Guttman

Second: Commissioner Peine

Vote: Unanimously approved

Item #2 Recommend that the Agricultural Reduction Effort (ACRE) Plan be released for public review – Action

Valerie Neppi, Groundwater Protection Supervisor, presented this item and responded to questions. Jill Trescott, Senior Environmental Specialist, and Ashley Gallagher from the Soil and Water Conservation District were also present and responded to questions.

Comments/Notes:

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

A Planning Commissioner asked whether the state regulates nitrogen application in agricultural areas similar to the way that phosphorus is regulated in suburban areas. *Staff responded that nitrogen use is not restricted in the same way and that farmers determine how much nitrogen to apply based on a variety of factors such as soil type and time of year. Fall application of nitrogen fertilizer is regulated by the state and is not allowed for much of Dakota County because of the sensitive soils.*

The Planning Commission discussed whether the voluntary strategies in the ACRE plan will work without regulatory strategies. *Staff responded that it is too soon to know how many farmers will follow the voluntary strategies in the plan, but that monitoring efforts should provide a clear picture of whether nitrates and pesticides are being reduced. If voluntary efforts are not effective, the County will have good data from which to decide whether the plan needs to be amended to include regulations.*

A Planning Commissioner asked about the role of WMOs in the development of the draft ACRE Plan. *Staff responded that WMOs have been part of the plan development process. Dakota County worked closely with North Cannon River and the Vermillion River watersheds, both of which consist primarily of agricultural land.*

A Commissioner asked staff to describe whether the economics of the incentives were studied. *Staff responded that for many of the strategies in the plan, Dakota County farmers will be in a better economic position than they are today. In the public outreach efforts, many farmers expressed an interest in multi-generational farming and would like to be able to farm sustainably into the future. Staff stated that cost-share incentives appear to be an important motivator to changing farming practices.*

Planning Commissioners discussed the need to modify this plan after 5-10 years based on the effectiveness of the strategies as informed by the monitoring data. *Staff agreed that both data gathered during the next 5-10 years as well as new agricultural science, should be used to periodically update the plan.*

The Planning Commission discussed the benefits of using a single farm where all of the groundwater protection strategies are applied as a “model” from which other farmers could learn. The model farm may require significant monetary incentives to mitigate the financial risks associated with the new strategies. *Staff agreed that a model farm is a good idea and that there may be some opportunities to work with the University of Minnesota at UMORE to test some of the strategies. The SWCD could also recognize and promote land owners in that area using innovative practices.*

A Commissioner expressed that farmers may need hard figures for persuasion based on complex economic models. *Staff responded that there are demonstration projects and nitrate certification programs.*

A Commissioner asked whether nitrate and pesticide contamination is a factor in adjacent counties and if there are impacts on Dakota County. *Staff responded that northern Goodhue County has similar soil and geology and, therefore similar problems. However, because of the direction of groundwater flow, Goodhue County groundwater contamination is not likely to impact Dakota County groundwater. It would make sense to work with Goodhue County and other counties toward common solutions through the Department of Agriculture.*

A commissioner commended staff for the work on this plan.

The Planning Commission recommended that the draft ACRE Plan be released for a 30-Day Public Review and comment period from July 20 - August 19, 2022.

Motion by: Commissioner Reitz

Second: Commissioner Nelson

Vote: Unanimously approved

Item #3 New County Commissioner Districts for 2023 – Information

Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, presented this item and responded to questions.

In response to questions raised at the May Planning Commission meeting, staff provided an overview of how the redistricting of County Commissioner districts would impact the Planning Commission. Staff described that the Planning Commission will serve in its current format through the end of the year. At the first meeting of 2023, the County Commissioners will appoint members to the Planning Commission according to the new districts.

Staff presented the new County Commissioner district boundaries that will go into effect in 2023, and Planning Commissioners were able to locate their homes relative to the new boundaries. Planning Commission members were provided with the following link to review the boundaries via email after the meeting:

<https://dakotacounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f2499633bfb542548c21df4917cc229e>

Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions at Physical Development Committee

Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, provided the Planning Commission with an update on the following County Board Actions:

Comments/Notes:

- Authorized acquisition of the McMenomy Woods property along the Vermillion Highlands Greenway in Rosemount
- Awarded bid for Thompson Oaks segment (former city golf course) along the River to River Greenway

Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

- County Road 26 (Lone Oak) Open House Tuesday, June 28th, 4:30pm-6:30pm Eagan Community Center
- Veterans Memorial Greenway Interpretive Plan Open House, Wednesday, June 29th, 4:30pm-6:30pm Inver Grove Heights Veterans Community Center
- County Road 11/Burnsville Parkway Roundabout Open House, July 21st, 4pm – 6pm (exhibits up until 9pm) Nicollet Plaza, Party on the Plaza, Pop-up tent at Nicollet Commons Park

Topics for next meeting (Thursday, July 28, 2022)

- None at this time – Meeting may be canceled

Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:

A Commissioner asked for an update on the Reintroduction of the Bison this fall. *Staff responded that October 2022 is when the bison are scheduled to be introduced to Spring Lake Park. Currently, the fencing has been installed.*

Adjourn

- Motion by: Commissioner Guttman
- Second: Commissioner Reitz
- Vote: unanimously approved.
- Time: 8:40 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, July 28, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley