



Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Planning Commission Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 09/22/2022

Minutes prepared by: Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center, Conference Room L139

Attendance

Members Present

- Greg Oxley
- Amy Hunting
- Jill Smith
- Barry Graham
- Anna Boroff
- Lori Hansen
- Tony Nelson
- James Guttman
- Nate Reitz
- Dennis Peine

Staff Present

- Kurt Chatfield
- Liz Hansen
- Valerie Neppl
- Lil Leatham
- Georg Fischer

Others Present

- None

Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:03 p.m.
- By: Chair Oxley

Audience items not on the agenda

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

Approval of Agenda

- Motion by: Commissioner Graham
- Second: Commissioner Smith

- Vote: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes (from June 23, 2022, and August 25, 2022)

One additional amendment to the June 23, 2022, minutes was noted. A misspelling of a commissioner's name in the approval details on item #1.

- Motion by: Commissioner Graham
- Second: Commissioner Smtih
- Vote: unanimously approved.

Item #1 Recommend Approval of Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort Plan – Action (Valerie Neppl– Environmental and Natural Resources)

Valerie Neppl, Groundwater Protection Supervisor, presented this item and responded to questions.

Comments/Notes:

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

Is Dakota County concerned about other forms of water contamination other than from agricultural sources? *Staff responded that the recently adopted Groundwater Plan addresses all sources of contamination, but a follow-up Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort (ACRE) plan was necessary to address the extent of nitrate and agricultural chemical levels attributed to farming primarily in southern Dakota County.*

Several questions were raised about public and private wells and whether contamination data from these wells are available to Dakota County. *Staff responded that data from Municipal wells are available and regularly collected by the MPCA. Dakota County does not have access to data about private wells once they have been constructed. The County is installing monitoring wells in surficial aquifers to monitor nitrate levels in the agricultural area. It can use this information to evaluate whether nitrate levels increase or decrease over time.*

Several questions were raised about nitrate contamination in the Hastings Drinking Water Supply Area and the role of the State vs. the County in addressing contamination. *Staff responded that the state had imposed agricultural regulations in this area because nitrate levels exceeded eight parts per million. Dakota County's role will be to offer informational resources about best management practices and incentives to encourage farmers to reduce nitrate levels.*

Planning Commissioners inquired about the number of people that are on private wells. *Staff responded that an estimated 8,000 households are on private wells, many of which are located in the southern part of Inver Grove Heights.*

Planning Commissioners inquired about sinkholes and their potential impact on surface water and groundwater contamination. *Staff responded that Dakota County does not have an inventory of all sinkholes but confirmed that some Karst topography is present in Dakota County and that Karst topography can be a source of rapid transmission of contaminants. Staff map sink hole locations, but Dakota County does not have regulations regarding sinkholes.*

Planning Commissioners had a lengthy discussion on whether agricultural groups were adequately engaged in preparing and reviewing the plan. Commissioners discussed the importance of using effective methods and timing of communication to engage farmers and farm groups. *Staff provided an overview of the public engagement process, which included: 1) attending individual township meetings at each town hall, 2) the use of a task force that included a farm group representative, 3) direct email notification and draft plan documents sent to farm groups for review and comment, 4) one on one conversations with farm group leaders to make them aware of the ACRE plan and public comment process. Staff reported that while there were not many comments from farm groups, an extensive effort was made to invite farm groups into the process and receive comments.*

Several Planning Commissioner members concluded the discussion by complimenting staff on the completeness and quality of the plan and the thoroughness of the public engagement effort.

The Planning Commission recommended the approval of the Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort Plan.

- Motion by: Commissioner Graham
- Second: Commissioner Smith
- Vote: unanimously approved.

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:

- New County Commissioner Districts for 2023 - map and reappointment process
- Reviewed Lebanon Hills Sustainable Trails Study – written report presented at Physical Development Committee of the Whole.
- Adopted the North Creek Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan
- Adopted the All-Hazard Mitigation Plan

A Commissioner expressed appreciation for sharing the Lebanon Hills Sustainable Trails Study with the Planning Commission. Several commissioners expressed their support for the Sustainable Trails Study and noted that there appear to be some significant issues that will need to be addressed. Planning Commissioners discussed the need to protect water bodies from trail erosion and provide safe and enjoyable recreational trail experiences by separating uses. *Staff acknowledged the comments made by Planning Commissioners and responded that the County Board would prioritize the trail needs through the County's 5-year Capital Improvement Program.*

A question was raised about the status of the draft Park Ordinance update. Staff responded that the draft Park Ordinance is scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning Commission at their October meeting.

Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

Meeting	Details
Lake Marion Greenway Improvements Pop Up Event	Saturday, September 17, 1030am- 12:30pm Lakeville Parks Pioneer Plaza (Dntn Lakeville) 20785 Holyoke Ave
Dakota County Crisis and Recovery Center – Guild West St. Paul City Council Work Session	Monday, September 26, 5:00pm West St. Paul City Hall
Vermillion Highlands Greenway – Rosemount Segment Pop Up Event	Friday, September 29 th , 4:00pm-6:00pm Allesbury Park in Rosemount
117 th Street Improvements (CSAH 32) Open House	Wednesday, October 5, 4:30pm-6:30pm Veterans Memorial Community Center Inver Grove Heights
Oakdale/Thompson Roundabout Improvements Open House	Wednesday, October 12, 5:00pm-7:00pm Wentworth Library (Large Mtg Room)

Topics for next meeting (Thursday, October 27, 2022)

- Review Draft Parks Ordinance Update

Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:

A Commissioner asked about the status of the bison and when they expect to arrive at Spring Lake Park Reserve. *Staff responded that the bison are set to arrive on October 5th or 6th.*

Several Planning Commissioners inquired about the status of the bison safety procedures and asked for a copy of the report. *Staff responded that a summary of bison safety procedures would be shared with Planning Commissioners in a follow-up email.*

Adjourn

- Motion by: Commissioner Boroff
- Second: Commissioner Hansen
- Vote: unanimously approved.
- Time: 8:11 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, October 27, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley